

EGERTON
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN

2020-2040

Pre-submission Draft
March 2020

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
What does neighbourhood planning mean for Egerton?	6
How does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan fit into the planning system?	7
What period does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan cover?	8
The Egerton Neighbourhood Area.....	8
Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment	9
PREPARING THE EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	10
The Planning Process	10
Community Consultation.....	11
EGERTON NOW.....	12
Economic activity.....	17
The Community.	17
Village Assets.	18
Local infrastructure.	18
Vision and Key Objectives.....	21
Protect	22
Sustain	22
Develop.....	23
Protecting and conserving Egerton’s individual character and environment	24
Distinctive Landscape Character.....	24
Trees, woodland and hedges.....	28
Local green space policy and designation	31
Key Views and Vistas	32
Heritage	33
Light Pollution – Conserving our Dark Skies	35
ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EGERTON	38
Background.....	38
Local services and businesses essential to sustaining village life	39
Education.....	40
Rural economy.....	40
Maintenance and enhancement of village facilities.....	41
The MUGA	42
Community open space at Egerton Forstal	43
Community Parking Provision	43

Footpaths, byways, roads and transport.....	44
Development to meet current and future need.....	47
Key aims for development 2020 - 2040.....	47
Design.....	48
Housing.....	53
Housing Policy to 2040.....	53
2018 Housing Needs Survey and results.....	55
Call for Sites and Site Selection.....	56
Local needs/ affordable housing.....	56
Older people's housing.....	58
Defining the village confines.....	59
Brownfield Sites and Small Scale Development.....	60
Infrastructure and facilities to support current and future development.....	62
Renewable energy and climate change impacts.....	64
Evidence Base.....	66
Maps.....	67
Conservation Area.....	67
Local Green Spaces.....	68
.....	69
Local Wildlife Sites.....	71
Tree Protection Orders and Ancient Tree Inventory.....	72
Village Confines.....	73
Appendix 1.....	76
Wide grass verges.....	76
Appendix 2.....	76
Non-designated Heritage Assets.....	76

(III) **List of policies:**

ENP P1	<i>Distinctive Landscape Character (p 27)</i>
ENP P2	<i>Trees, hedges and woodland (p 30)</i>
ENP P3	<i>Local Green Spaces (p 32)</i>
ENP P4	<i>Key Views and Vistas (p33)</i>
ENP P5	<i>Local Heritage Assets (p35)</i>
ENP P6	<i>Light Pollution and Dark Skies (p37)</i>
ENP S1	<i>Community Assets (p42)</i>
ENP S2	<i>Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal (p43)</i>
ENP S3	<i>Additional parking (p 44)</i>
ENP S4	<i>Footpaths, byways and roads (p45)</i>
ENP D1	<i>Development principles (p50)</i>
ENP D2	<i>Application of the Parish Design Statement (p52)</i>
ENP D3	<i>Housing Policy (p55)</i>
ENP D4	<i>Land at Gale Field, Egerton Forstal (p58)</i>
ENP D5	<i>Orchard Nurseries, Egerton (p59)</i>
ENP D6	<i>Reuse of redundant farm buildings (p61)</i>
ENP D7	<i>Water supply and Drainage (p63)</i>
ENP D8	<i>Renewable energy and climate change mitigation (p65)</i>

(iv) **List of maps**

<i>Neighbourhood area (p8)</i>
<i>Public Rights of Way (p14)</i>
<i>Ancient trees and Tree Preservation Orders (p72)</i>
<i>Local Green Spaces (pp 68-70)</i>
<i>Key Views (p75)</i>
<i>Conservation Area (p67)</i>
<i>Local Heritage Sites (p79)</i>
<i>Egerton Dark Skies (p36)</i>

Village Assets (pxx)

Village Confines (p75-6)

Allocated sites for development (pp 57-58)

[note: we will need to add a copyright acknowledgement on all maps]

1



INTRODUCTION

What does neighbourhood planning mean for Egerton?

1.1 Neighbourhood plans form part of the government's overall approach to planning and aim to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. If Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is passed at a referendum, it will be made (adopted) by Ashford Borough Council and will form part of the Development Plan for Egerton Parish. It will also become a legal document which must be used as part of the response to all planning applications in the parish of Egerton.

1.2 Neighbourhood planning has given people in the parish direct power to develop a shared vision for the long-term future of the parish and the distinctive countryside in which it is situated. It has allowed local people to shape the development and growth of the parish to ensure its future sustainability. It has enabled us to choose where we want new homes or businesses to be built and to have our say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. Neighbourhood planning has furnished us with a powerful set of tools for all of us to plan for the types of development to meet our community's needs whilst ensuring that the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

1.3 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 (ENP) takes as its starting point the principal conclusion of the Egerton Parish Plan as typified in the words of one resident - 'Please don't change too much. We love our village as it is'. Both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan recognise that some change is both inevitable and necessary for the sustainability of a rural community; and the Neighbourhood Plan, as a legal document, allows local people to have a voice in the process of change.

This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- protect the individual character and environment of Egerton
- ensure a sustainable future for the village
- improve the health and well-being of all residents
- facilitate the development of housing in the best positions geographically, socially and environmentally in order to meet the needs of local people
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design

How does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan fit into the planning system?

1.4 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) should be read in conjunction with the National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF, July 2018, updated February 2019) and Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan to 2030 (adopted February 2019).

1.5 Neighbourhood Plans must comply with European Regulations on strategic environmental assessments and habitats (see 1.9 below) and the NPPF, and generally conform to the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan. In order to future-proof the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (see Appendix 3 for membership and Terms of Reference) has also ensured through dialogue with Ashford Borough Council that the Plan takes account of up to date evidence of any strategic needs and constraints identified for the area.

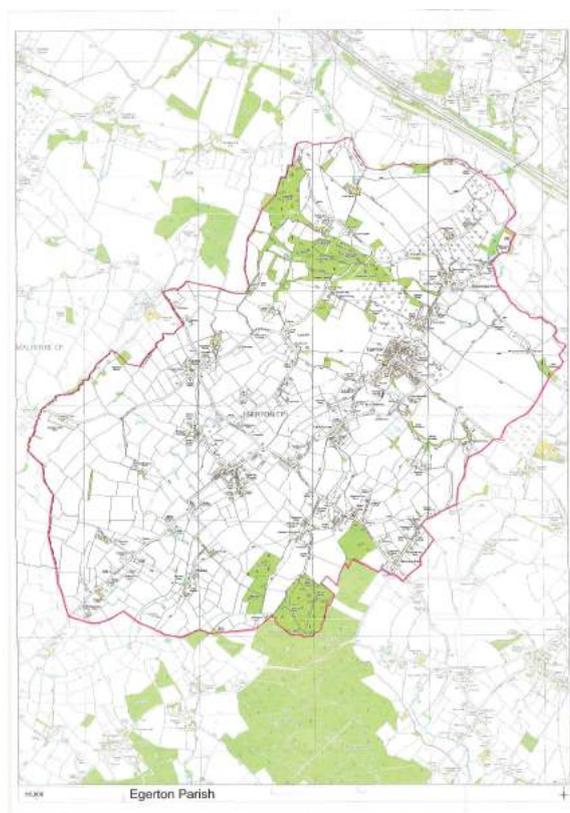
1.6 ENP policies do not duplicate policies already adopted in the Ashford Borough Council 2030 Plan but aim to provide strategic direction specific to Egerton and its environs.

What period does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan cover?

1.7 The ENP covers the period 2020 - 2040 but will be subject to review at five yearly intervals to ensure that its policies are still compliant with national and local policy, are responsive to climate and other environmental changes, and are meeting the overall strategic vision for the future of Egerton.

The Egerton Neighbourhood Area

1.8 In July 2017 Ashford Borough Council approved the designated neighbourhood area as the current parish boundary (see map). The parish covers an area of around 4.8 square miles, mostly farm land with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing with some pockets of woodland. The parish contains the main settlements of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal as well as smaller dispersed settlements including Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green.



Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment

1.9 Ashford Borough Council have prepared a Screening Statement on whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment is required for the ENP. This statement is currently being consulted on with the statutory bodies Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

2



PREPARING THE EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Process

2.1 In October 2016 Egerton Parish Council publicly announced their decision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, following completion of the Parish Plan and overwhelming public support at a well-attended public meeting. A Steering Group was formed, composed of a combination of parish councillors and volunteers. Terms of reference for the steering group were agreed in early 2017, followed by public consultation to determine the vision for Egerton's future and the key objectives to ensure its achievement.

2.2 In 2018 the Steering Group consulted on key views and vistas in the parish, initiated a Housing Needs Survey conducted on their behalf by Action with Rural Communities in Kent (ACRK) and issued a call for sites followed by workshops with residents to consider the key sites and draft site selection criteria.

2.3 In 2019 the Steering Group undertook, with the support of their consultants - the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service - a Local Green Space Assessment, a Local Heritage Sites Assessment and a refined Site Selection exercise based on criteria conforming with national and local planning policy guidelines. The Steering Group also reviewed the effectiveness of the Parish Design Statement as a guide both to new development and extensions to existing housing over the past ten years. The results of all these initiatives have informed the final plan.

Community Consultation

2.4 There has been extensive consultation with Egerton residents throughout the planning process:

- in a series of open meetings and workshops,
- at each of the annual Parish Assemblies,
- through regular updates at the monthly meetings of Egerton Parish Council,
- in printed fliers and questionnaires,
- in the village's quarterly newsletter, *Egerton Update*,
- on the Neighbourhood Plan web site
- and in other social media

2.5 At each stage in the process, village residents have been invited to express their views in person or in writing, and a full record of that consultation has been maintained by the Steering Group.

2.6 A full Community Consultation Statement will be presented when the Plan is submitted to Ashford Borough Council.

3



EGERTON NOW

3.1 Egerton parish covers an area of about 2,800 acres (4.8 square miles). Less than 3% of the total area is developed with buildings and roads. Most of the remaining land is farmed with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing for sheep and some cattle, with pockets of woodland.



3.2 The main settlement of Egerton stands on a 350 ft ridge of Greensand 9 miles north-west of Ashford and has one of the most magnificent and easily-accessible views to the south west across the Low Weald and beyond to the High Weald, and to the north east, the North Downs. The tower of the 13th Century Church of St. James dominates the skyline and the many old cottages around it.

3.3 Almost every type of domestic architecture is evident, from Hall Houses, Yeoman Houses, Kentish Barns and oasts, to modern bungalows, detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The predominant style in Egerton remains red brick with plain tile roofing, and some white weather boarding or hung clay tiles. Some of the farm houses, buildings and walls constructed with Kentish ragstone, are unique in their local distinctiveness.

3.4 The oldest surviving houses in the village date from about the 15th Century, but the presence of the Church with 13th Century origins clearly indicates that the settlement is older than it appears. The prominently sited long barrow (or tumulus) between Stonebridge Green Road and New Road indicates there was a Neolithic settlement here.

3.5 There are currently 84 listed buildings or structures of architectural interest in the Parish. The village centre was designated a conservation area in 1976, and contains 23 listed buildings.

3.6 On the Wealden clay area around and beyond Egerton Forstal there are many natural and man-made ponds, believed to have been dug out for clay. There is evidence of a Roman settlement, based on the finding of the remains of a charcoal-fired furnace to produce wrought iron from the iron ore in the clay and a cremation burial jar, as well as the remains of a Roman road near Bedlam Lane.

3.7 The scattering of dwellings indicates the importance of farming in the Parish, with homesteads built where the land was worked. Damp pasture on the Wealden Clays south of the village still support livestock grazing: richer soils on the better-drained Greensand Ridge support orchards and arable farming.

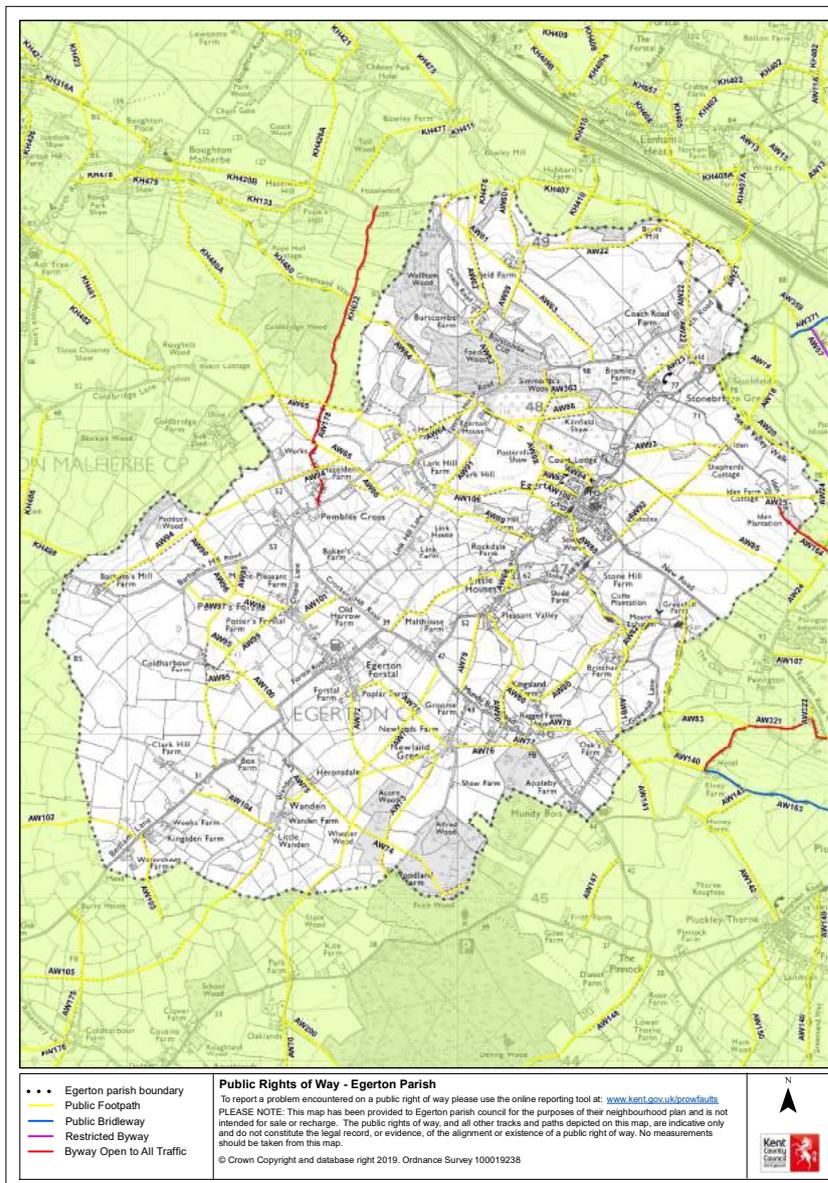
3.8 Much of the farmland is enclosed by mixed hedges, and there are many ponds, ditches and streams that feed into nearby rivers. There are springs on the edge of the Greensand Ridge.

3.9 There are also significant areas of woodland, including ancient woodland at Foxden Wood, Welham Wood (Egerton House Road/Coach Road) and Acorn Wood (Newland Green Lane). In addition, there are about 30 individual Tree Preservation Orders, many of which are in the Egerton Conservation Area at the top of the village.

3.10 Kent Wildlife Trust lists several Local Wildlife Sites in Egerton which, although without the legal protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, are considered important for the protection of wildlife at the local level. These are Dering Wood, Wanden Meadows and School Wood, Egerton Forstal, Foxden Wood and Pasture and Pemples Cross.

[see maps of Local Wildlife Sites and of Ancient Woodland and Tree Preservation Orders, pages 71 and 72]

3.11 The parish is criss-crossed by about 40 public rights of way.



3.12 One of the striking characteristics of Egerton is that whilst it is dissected by many roads, these are minor highways and Egerton is not on a direct through route from one village to another. By contrast, Egerton is traversed by frequent ramblers who are walking along the Greensand Way that stretches for miles and crosses the parish. This renders it a peaceful and tranquil location, with no through vehicle traffic, and it is one of the most desirable locations in which to live in Ashford borough. This is, however, a double-edged sword: the cost of housing in Egerton is significantly higher than in many other parts of the borough and is out of reach of many of the younger residents still living with their families and who wish to start out on their own.

3.13 The main **population** concentration is in the centre of the village, as are the church, shop, one of the inns, the school, the Millennium Hall and the garage. The lower part of Egerton, mainly in Egerton Forstal, is formed on Weald clay, where a 19th century Chapel is situated. Smaller settlements in the parish include Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green and there are several part-ribbons of development as in Rock Hill Road and Crockenhill. Beyond the settlements lies open countryside, sporadically dotted with farms, cottages, farm buildings and conversions of farm buildings.

3.14 Most settlements are just about within walking distance of the main village, on the road or by footpath. Public transport is very limited – only three buses a day to and from Ashford plus a term-time school bus to and from local secondary schools.



3.15 In 1801, the population was 731. In 1961, the population was 773; in 2011 it was 1,073; in 2013 it was 1,075. The average density is about 230 people per square mile, but this does not reflect the concentration of houses in a few settlement areas. The increase in population over the 50 years from 1961-2011 inevitably required an increase in both affordable and open market housing. Growth appears now to have slowed down, but the 2018 Housing Needs Survey (see Appendix 4) indicates a need for some additional housing for older people, and affordable housing to allow younger people and families to stay in the village.

3.16 In October 2013 the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Evidence Project recorded Egerton's **housing stock** as compared with England averages:

- 278 detached houses = 67.3% of dwellings (England average = 22.3%)
- 132 semi-detached houses = 27.2% of dwellings (England average = 30.7%)
- 49 terraced houses = 10.1% of dwellings (England average = 24.6%)
- 18 flats = 3.7% of dwellings (England average = 23.1%)
- 8 mobile homes or other temporary accommodation = 1.6% (England average = 0.4%).

3.17 The ACRE parish population statistics also showed some significant divergence from local and national averages, for example:

- 265 people over 65 = 24.9% (England average = 16.3%), and 65 single pensioner households = 14.8% (England average = 12.4%)
- above average owner occupation = 79.9% (England average = 64.1%) and house prices (10-15%)
- above average vacant household space = 6.6% (England average = 4.3%)
- 30 households without cars = 6.6% (England average = 25.8%)
- all travel times to key public services significantly longer than Kent average
- more residents working from home than the England average = 10.9% of people aged 16-74 (England = 3.5%), and higher than average self-employment = 21.1% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 9.8%).

3.18 One of the priorities identified in the Egerton Parish Plan, and illustrated by the considerably above average number of larger, higher-priced detached dwellings and the above average number of older residents, was the need for more housing for local people - both for older people wishing to downsize and stay in the village, and for younger people and those with young families wishing to remain but not able to do so without affordable housing. The statistics also indicate the importance of working from home, and the resultant need for improved telecommunication systems, and the paucity of public transport provision which has produced a dependency on private cars.

3.19 The Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Local Plan 2030 includes residential development for an indicative capacity of 15 units on a site in the south eastern edge of the village on New Road (Policy S30). In addition an adjoining site became available through a gift of land to the Parish Council as a suitable site for the development of 8 dwellings for older or disabled people in the village who wish to downsize and live in accommodation more appropriate for their needs (ENP Policy D5).

Economic activity.

3.20 Although most of the land is farmed, the number of Egerton residents working on the land is small. Ashford borough has the highest number (537) of agricultural holdings in the UK, covering 44,737 hectares and with 1,738 workers (not including the landowners/farmers). Kent overall has 2,714 agricultural holdings employing 12,957 people. Local employment opportunities may increase as diversification in agriculture leads to a greater emphasis on leisure and tourism, more B&B accommodation, and the conversion of farm buildings for wedding venues and/or catering and for permanent and holiday accommodation.

3.21 All businesses in the parish are small and most are family-owned. In addition to Egerton Stores and Post Office (currently closed), two garages, two inns and engineering and fencing companies, there are several businesses involved in catering and tourism, and a significant number of sole traders and individuals working full or part time from home. Opportunities for employment for younger people within the parish are limited, but the community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates that there is a potential demand for local needs housing for younger people who wish to remain in the village while commuting to work or working from home.

3.22 The current status of Egerton Stores and both inns is uncertain, but the continuing existence of at least a Post Office and convenience shop and one of the inns is of increasing importance to the sustainability of village life over the next 20 years. Both Egerton Stores and The Barrow House are listed as Assets of Community Value.

The Community.

3.23 Egerton residents have a strong sense of community involvement. They have pride in, and enjoyment of, the beauty of the rural environment. This is evidenced in the Parish Plan Appendices giving survey results (see Evidence) and the section on Community in the Parish Design Statement, published in 2009 (see Evidence). There are a number of clubs and societies with



active memberships, as well as sports and health clubs which actively encourage involvement in sporting and other physical activities by people of all ages. In a three year cycle, volunteers from the village organise a Village Fete, a Music Festival and a Cricket Week.



Village Assets.

3.24 The Millennium Hall, completed in 1999 with a combination of a Millennium Fund grant and funds raised by the village, not only acts as venue for many village events but also includes a computer centre which runs IT courses for village residents and a Saturday drop-in centre, run by village volunteers, for those with IT problems. Although in need of refurbishment, the Games Barn provides opportunities for indoor sport and well-being activities; and the Sports Pavilion not only provides a centre for the village sports clubs but also for other clubs and societies holding events or committee meetings.



Local infrastructure.

3.25 The village is currently raising funds to move the **pre-school** from its temporary home in the Millennium Hall to dedicated space within the grounds of the Church of England **Primary School**. There are no medical services in the village, the nearest being in the villages of Headcorn, Lenham and Charing. The **bus service** is extremely limited and the **road network** around the village is narrow and winding and in a poor state of repair. **Mobile telephone coverage** is poor, although high speed **broadband** coverage has improved considerably in recent years. In terms of **utilities**, mains gas is only available in the centre of the village and in the Forstal and, where mains sewerage systems are available (in the centre of the

village and in Egerton Forstal), they are already operating at capacity (see Parish Plan).

3.26 The following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Parish have been identified:

STRENGTHS

Beauty of landscape/ location, peace & tranquility

Desirable place to live

Historic nature of the settlement

Many buildings with character and appealing design

Community spirit, volunteering and range of activities, clubs and societies

Pre-school and primary school

Millennium Village Hall, Games Barn, Pavilion

Church, Chapel

Playing Fields

Pub/s and garage

Footpaths

Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows and green verges

Dark skies

Abundant wildlife

Not on a through route to anywhere

WEAKNESSES

Above average house prices

Above average commercial rents

Some newer buildings and their layout unsympathetic to the village setting

Poor mobile phone coverage

Inconsistent and insufficient broadband

Poor bus service and no connections to other public transport

High proportion of older residents

Lack of employment opportunities for young people

Heavy vehicles on narrow roads

Inadequate drainage

No local medical facility

Small farms employing fewer workers

Focus on grazing land not crops causing loss of wildlife species

Not on a through route to anywhere

OPPORTUNITIES

Scope for affordable local need housing

Community transport provision?

Gift of land to the parish (Orchard Nurseries)

Creation of a CLT or CIC for older peoples housing

Improving footpath to top of village

More farm diversification: different & more employment

Potential for well-situated and effective renewable energy sources

Creation of a purpose-built pre-school facility

Scope for public green space in lower village

Creation of enhanced wildlife habitat

Extensions to the Games Barn and Millennium Hall to improve facilities and increase/extend use

The MUGA (multi-use games area)

THREATS

Lenham Heath garden village and impact on roads and services

Inappropriately sited and unsympathetic new development

More barn conversions yet increased demand for new barn buildings

Decline in volunteering for village activities

Poorly sited and uncertain benefits of alternative energy generating systems

Closure of the village shop and post office

Damage to views and the natural environment

Loss of young people/young families if no scope for housing

Village sustainability in decline

Light pollution from expanding towns, unsympathetic domestic lighting

Wildlife displaced by human activity or lost altogether



Vision and Key Objectives

4.1 The vision and key objectives which follow have been developed after consultation with Egerton residents about their hopes and fears for the future of the village and the surrounding countryside. Egerton's Parish Plan also emerged from extensive consultation from 2013-16. Throughout 2017-20 the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have consulted on the vision and key objectives of Egerton's Neighbourhood Plan, both in workshops and open meetings and via the Neighbourhood Plan website at egertonnp.co.uk, the ENP Facebook page and other social media.

4.2 Our **vision** for the future of Egerton combines the need

- to **protect** and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents;
- to ensure that there is a **sustainable future** for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and
- to **develop** housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.



4.3 Our **key objectives** for future land use in Egerton are to protect the local environment, to ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents and to develop housing to meet local needs.

Protect

4.4 **Protection** of the overall quality of rural community life includes conservation and enhancement of:

- the distinctive rural, agricultural character of the village landscape that sets it apart from other parishes in the Ashford area, combining Greensand fruit farming in the upper part of the parish with mixed farmlands around Mundy Bois and extensive Wealden pasture for grazing;
- the views and vistas both down from the village centre over the Kent Weald and up from the outlying settlements towards Egerton;
- the amenity value of footpaths and bridleways;
- the conservation area at the heart of the village, its immediate environs and the existing overall settlement pattern of Egerton positioned at the top of a hill on the Greensand Ridge;
- the green spaces which enhance the setting and character of the existing built environment throughout the parish;
- heritage assets such as the church, the significant number and distribution of medieval and later timber frame buildings, Kentish ragstone farm buildings and walls, oast-houses and more modern buildings that have character and prominence such as the Millennium Hall;
- the quality of the physical environment, including trees and deciduous woodland, remnants of former orchards, mixed hedgerows and wildlife.

Sustain

4.5 **Sustainability** of village life includes:

- ensuring that the Parish contains a mix of housing reflecting local needs and therefore increasing the provision of housing for young people, families and older residents;
- providing facilities to support older and disabled people wishing to remain in the community;
- support for the local services and businesses essential to the maintenance of village life such as the local school and pre-school, the shop, garages, inns;

- support for the rural economy, including agriculture, local businesses and individuals working from home;
- maintenance and improvement of facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall and recreation ground.

Develop

4.6 Small-scale housing **development** and the infrastructure necessary to support it means:

- affordable, adaptable and smaller homes allowing younger people, older residents and/or families to stay in or return to the parish;
- energy-efficient, sensitively laid-out development that conforms with the vernacular materials, density and models described in the Parish Design Statement;
- small-scale local business premises;
- provision of essential services and utilities such as water, sewerage, drainage, high-speed broadband and adequate mobile phone signal.

5



Protecting and conserving Egerton’s individual character and environment

‘Please don’t change too much. We love our village as it is.’

This sentiment was voiced by one village resident during consultation on the Egerton Parish Plan but was repeated over and over again by the majority of village residents in the course of consultation on both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan. It is the richness of the landscape with its combination of sweeping views and historic patterns of agriculture and scattered settlement, the quality and serenity of the natural environment that gives the parish its distinctive landscape character so loved by residents.

Distinctive Landscape Character

5.1 In the Ashford Local Plan (2030), Policy ENV3a *Landscape Character and Design* identifies particular landscape characteristics, including; ‘the pattern and composition of trees and woodland’, ‘the type and composition of wildlife habitats’, field boundaries and ‘the pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths’. Development is required to be designed to complement the landscape character. In accordance with Policy ENV3a, all new development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character which are identified in ENP Policy P1.

5.2 The Greensand Way crosses the upper part of the parish, with significant views down over the Weald. Not currently designated as an Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty (AONB) as are other stretches of the Greensand Way in Kent, the proposal from Maidstone Borough Council to extend AONB protection from the Sevenoaks Commons to Ulcombe reinforces the environmental significance of the Greensand Way right across Kent.

5.3 The Conservation Area at the centre of the main settlement is already recognised and protected as of ‘special architectural and historic interest’ by Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Policy ENV14.

5.4 Many elements in Egerton’s landscape go back to medieval times, and field boundaries and hedgerows have often survived Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the post-medieval period. However, in common with the rest of the country, there has been a loss of hedgerows locally over the past 60 years. The relatively small fields that are bordered by hedgerows and veteran trees present an attractive patchwork landscape which is enhanced further for public enjoyment by an extensive pattern of over 40 footpaths. The tracts of ancient woodland and natural springs, ponds, ditches and grass verges provide the habitat for an abundance of wildlife.

5.5 Ashford Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) 2005 identifies Egerton as a hilltop settlement on the Greensand Ridge. The LCA also categorises parts of the parish as:

Egerton – Pluckley Greensand Fruit belt, key features of which are the Greensand Ridge, pasture within sheltered valleys and arable land on higher, more open ground, scarp face of the Greensand Ridge encloses the landscape to the south, mosaic field pattern with fields of different shapes and sizes, fruit orchards enclosed by shelterbelts within small and regular fields, scattered pockets of broadleaf woodland and chestnut coppice, historic hilltop settlements of Pluckley and Egerton centred around ragstone churches, distinctive architectural detailing with ‘Dering’ windows and chequered brickwork.

Smarden Bell Farmlands character area including Egerton Forstal, key features of which are flat to gently undulating, mixed land use, varied field pattern, hedgerow enclosed pasture with oak hedgerow trees, remnant orchards, plantations, large arable fields, field ponds, traditional timber framed buildings, converted farm buildings, recent housing and static caravans

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states 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 and that these areas should be protected. Some ancient woodland may represent the only link with the original post-glacial ‘wildwood’ and is more likely to contain vulnerable animal and plant species than any other habitat. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands – bluebells, wood

anemones, ramsons (wild garlic) – all of which provide havens for insects and bees - and the bird song of warblers and nightingales are part of the natural beauty and heritage of the Parish, and are rapidly disappearing elsewhere. Much of the valued woodland wildlife, invertebrates, lichens and fungi are associated with old trees, deadwood or open ground and are generally restricted to ancient woods and wood pasture but field boundaries and margins can also be a useful sanctuary for plants and creatures.

5.7 Grass verges, springs, streams and ponds, woodland, orchards and hedgerows add to the rural character of the Parish and to the setting of the dispersed settlements, businesses and residential dwellings. The felling of trees or removal of copses, hedgerows and other natural habitats for development could change the amenity and natural environment of the area, and seriously affect wildlife habitats.

5.8 Alongside its many lanes, many of which are enclosed by hedges and banks, Egerton has a large number of wide grass verges, some with ditches containing wildflowers in abundance depending on time of year such as primrose (*primula vulgaris*), cowslip (*primula veris*), celandine (*ficaria verna*), bluebell (*hyacinthoides non-scripta*), cuckoo flower (*cardamine pratensis*), yarrow (*achillea millefolium*), cow parsley/wild chervil (*anthriscus sylvestris*) and wild garlic (*allium ursinum*). Examples of wide grass verges are listed in Appendix 1.

5.9 These wide grass verges in the parish are significant as they contribute to the distinctive character of the environment and provide an essential habitat for wildlife, especially those with ditches. These should be maintained carefully to take away excess water from the highway, alleviate the effects of flooding in times of heavy rainfall, and contribute to the watercourses that feed rivers such as the Sherway and tributaries leading to the Stour (see Appendix 1)

5.10 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all new development is sensitive to the individual character and richness of Egerton's landscape, preserving and enhancing specified distinctive features and biodiversity.

Egerton NP Policy P1 - Distinctive Landscape Character

- 1. All new development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character.**
- 2. Egerton areas of distinctive character have been identified as;**
 - a) The Greensand Way**
 - b) the Conservation area at the centre of the main settlement**
 - c) ancient woodland, hedgerows and orchards**
 - d) the dispersed settlement pattern over the Greensand Ridge, its slopes and the Low Weald**
 - e) field patterns dating from medieval times, surrounded by native hedging and crossed by ancient stone pathways, sunken tracks and bridleways, reflecting the combination of Greensand fruit belt and Pluckley Mixed Farmland**
- 3. The sunken lanes of Egerton House Road, Greenhill, Stone Hill, Stonebridge Green and Field Mill to the boundary of Charing Heath are of historic and environmental importance and contribute to the distinctive character of the parish.**
- 4. Development proposals that can offer a net biodiversity gain will be supported.**
- 5. Development proposals that have the potential to result in damage to or loss of woodland habitats and wide grass verges or result in the loss of protected ancient trees, ancient woodland, veteran trees or hedgerows and which cause an adverse impact on biodiversity, which cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for, or which harm the locality's special qualities, will not be supported (see also ENP P2).**

Trees, woodland and hedges

5.11 Ashford borough is the most wooded borough in Kent, and Egerton parish contains several woods and narrow strips of woodland, called shaws.

5.12 Egerton benefits from several significant tracts of woodland high up on the Greensand ridge: Welham Wood, Foxden Wood, Simmonds Wood, and shaws such as Kinfield Shaw and Iden Plantation. On the Low Weald there is Acorn Wood, Alfred Wood, Frith Wood and Wheeler Wood. The predominant trees are oaks but there are also ash, birch, sweet and horse chestnut, black poplar and beech. Willow grows in the wetter low-lying areas.

5.13 The Woodland Trust has an ancient and veteran tree inventory that shows: a veteran pendunculate oak in Newland Green Lane; a veteran hawthorn and notable red horse chestnut in the Recreation Ground; two veteran yews, a veteran ash, a notable horse chestnut and common beech in the Churchyard; and in Foxden Wood, a veteran ash, a veteran sweet chestnut, and notable variegated sycamore, holly, sweet chestnut and common ash. *Tree Preservation Orders* (TPOs) legally protect a *tree* or group of *trees* to prevent them from being heavily pruned or cut down. They keep and protect woodland, *trees* or groups of *trees* which add to the appearance and character of the locality. There are several Tree Preservation Orders in place within Egerton: All trees in Frith Wood; a swathe above StoneHill Barn, 11 along the footpath off the Street between Stisted Way and the Glebe, 6 along Mundy Bois Road near the junction with Newland Green Lane, 6 at the lower end of Greenhill Lane, 2 along the track off the Street, 2 in Rock Hill road opposite Old School Court.

5.14 Hedges in Egerton represent decisions taken by our ancestors over hundreds of years, planted as a result of the enclosures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They indicate land ownership and administrative boundaries, assist with livestock management, provide shelter for farm animals and crops, and once would have been a source of timber and fuel. Most of the hedges in Egerton provide wildlife corridors across the landscape, linking small woodlands and other wildlife habitats. The older hedges consist of a variety of trees: field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, wild rose and hazel. They can harbour many different species of creatures, especially where dense with a bushy base. These include wood mice, shrews, voles, slow worms, and a variety of birds, caterpillars and insects. Trees that have been allowed to grow in the hedges are a characteristic feature of the Low Weald such as in Egerton Forstal, Wanden and Mundy Bois. Most of these trees are oak and ash.

5.15 Trees and hedges are critical for the future of the planet and for our own wellbeing, health and happiness. In just one day, a single tree provides enough

oxygen for four people. From the air we breathe to the water we drink, trees are vital to life on earth. They can also:

- reduce air pollution
- absorb CO2 from the atmosphere
- give us shade and shelter
- guard us against flooding
- enhance the attractiveness of an individual house or neighbourhood
- create vital homes for wildlife

5.16 Strategically-placed tree planting where there are few trees can make a huge impact on the character and quality of an area. It can also help to mitigate the impacts of climate change by helping cool the parts of Egerton that are more built-up.

5.17 Most of the woodland in and around Egerton has, historically, been coppiced. When undertaken correctly, coppicing creates both natural regeneration from the cut trees and a variety of habitats to support animal and insect life. The continued practice of coppicing should therefore be encouraged as the preferred method of woodland management both for its economic and environmental value.

5.18 In order to sustain the unique character, beauty and overall environment of the parish, not only should tree planting schemes be included in all new development plans but also, and in line with national and local policy, additional tree planting throughout the parish will be encouraged as a means of providing locally-sourced renewable energy and carbon offset resources.

5.19 Recent research by The Ash Project, The Woodland Trust and other bodies indicates that we may lose as much as 80% of all ash trees, and that the impact of ash die back could be five times as severe as that of Dutch elm disease. This reinforces the need for a more proactive approach to tree planting and improved woodland management across the parish.

5.20 The purpose of policy P2 is to preserve ancient woodland, individually important trees and hedgerows for their contribution to the character of the parish. The policy also seeks improved woodland and hedgerow management and new planting as a means of responding to the climate emergency, providing wildlife habitats and contributing to human well-being.

Egerton NP Policy P2 – Trees, hedges and woodland

- 1. Proposals for any new development should include carefully situated tree planting where there is currently none or little. New proposals that would damage or result in the loss of ancient trees, veteran trees, trees that are subject to Tree Protection Orders or trees that are of good arboricultural and amenity value, or loss of native hedges will not normally be supported.**
- 2. Proposals should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value, allowing for the extent of tree roots which must be protected.**
- 3. Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and any hedges on or bordering the site and ensure that:
 - a) there is no loss of ancient woodland and no net loss of woods and trees in general;**
 - b) any felled trees are replaced by indigenous trees on a 2 to 1 or 3 to 1 ratio in a suitable position; and**
 - c) there is no loss of native hedges except for necessary access points; green spaces with new native hedging to be included in site design and layout to compensate for any loss.****

Local green space policy and designation

5.21 Protecting and conserving the green spaces which enhance the setting and distinctive character of the existing built environment throughout the parish is one of the key objectives of this Plan.

5.22 There is no single national definition of green space; it can include a wide range of land including public parks, sports and recreational areas, allotments, cemeteries and areas with nature conservation importance. Examples of types of green space include land with sports pavilions, boating lakes, land around war memorials, allotments or spaces that provide a tranquil oasis. National guidance and Local Plan policies seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure to help link local green spaces as a means to support healthy lifestyles and to enhance the local environment. The NPPF provides local communities with the opportunity to designate areas that are demonstrably special to the local community as Local Green Space.

5.23 A long list of green spaces considered to reflect the individual open green character of the parish landscape, and which provide wildlife habitats and have local amenity value, was drawn up by the Steering Group after consultation with the community at open meetings and through the Neighbourhood Plan web site and social media. After consultation with the landowners, the list included some land that is in private ownership, since there are small fields or paddocks that create useful gaps of green space between existing development that add to the landscape character. The community believes these provide important visual value and should not be used for infill development. Other open spaces on the long list act as informal or formal recreational amenity space to the adjoining residential development as well as provide good sight lines for traffic or safe havens and should be retained.

5.24 The long list was evaluated by the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service and reduced to three sites considered to meet the NPPF criteria and all of which meet the key objective to maintain and improve facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall and recreation field (see maps p 70-72):

- The Glebe, The Street – designated principally for its recreational value to the community
- Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community
- Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community

Egerton NP Policy P3 - Local Green Spaces

- 1. The areas designated as Local Green Space area:**
 - a. The Street / the Glebe**
 - b. Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road**
 - c. Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road**

5.25 The purpose of this policy is to designate local green spaces which are demonstrably special to the local community.

Key Views and Vistas

5.26 The parish as a whole is scenic: attractive views of the surrounding landscape can be seen from most roads, lanes and footpaths. A central focus for many of the key views is the Grade 1 listed Church of St James'.

5.27 Through Neighbourhood Plan workshops, website and other media, local people identified a number of notable and uninterrupted views from footpaths and open spaces across the Parish both to the Weald and the North Downs towards the main village and its hamlets – for example, dramatic views can be gained from the Greensand ridge over the Weald below, notably near Egerton House, from the recreation ground and between Stone Hill House and Greenhill, where the sense of leafy openness is enormous. The findings in our workshops highlighted residents' strong opinions about the importance and need for protection of these views. The most significant are listed in Policy P4 for protection.

5.28 The purpose of this policy is to conserve and enhance certain key views outside the built settlements which contribute to the distinctive character of the parish or which are of historic or environmental significance.

Egerton NP Policy P4 - Key Views and Vistas

- 1. Development proposals should protect, and where possible, positively contribute to the following views and vistas:**
 - a) Court Lodge Farm to Charing/North Downs
 - b) New Road to Greenhill/ The Weald
 - c) New Road to the North Downs
 - d) Munday Bois Road to the village/church
 - e) Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge
 - f) Egerton House over the Weald
 - g) Link Hill to Pemples Cross/The Weald
 - h) Elm Close and the Recreation Ground to the Weald

- 2. The parish church of St James is a focus for many key views towards and within the village. Any new development should be sensitive to this and avoid obscuring this significant landmark.**

Heritage

5.29 The historic centre of Egerton is designated as a Conservation Area as shown on Map1 (see p 69). The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements. Ashford Local Plan (2030) - Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas states that development should not prejudice important views into or out of the conservation area.

5.30 Historic England lists one Scheduled Monument in the Egerton parish;

Bowl Barrow 350m south-east of Egerton church

List entry: 1012266

National Grid Reference: TQ91106 47350

There is one Grade I listed building;

Church of St. James

List Entry: 1071496

National Grid Reference: TQ 90815 47556

There are numerous Grade II listed buildings, mainly houses in the parish, but three additional entries have been listed for protection;

Wall and gate piers to churchyard, Church of St. James

List Entry: 1071497

National Grid Reference: TQ 90835 47537

Mounting Block, opposite Rock Hill House

List Entry: 1319909

TQ 90466 47209

K6 Telephone Kiosk

List Entry: 1275166

TQ 91196 48072

5.31 The ENP steering group organised a village workshop in the summer of 2018 to identify any additional 'heritage' sites and features that residents felt were worthy of protection. The list obtained from the workshop, and in subsequent consultation, identified buildings and heritage assets that are currently not on the Ashford Borough statutory list and which are proposed as non designated Parish Heritage Assets in addition to those buildings or features already protected as Listed Buildings. These have local significance for their historic, archaeological and architectural interest and their contribution to the communal life of the Parish. The list has been assessed using Historic England guidelines and was endorsed by residents in November 2019. The list of non-designated heritage assets are provided in **Appendix 2**.

:

Egerton NP Policy P5 - Local Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 1. New development in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan should protect, conserve and enhance the local non-designated heritage assets of historic or social significance to the community, and their setting as well as all scheduled monuments and listed buildings.**
- 2. Non-designated local heritage assets have been identified in Appendix 2**

5.21 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection for a list of non-designated local heritage assets identified by the local community and assessed using Historic England guidelines.

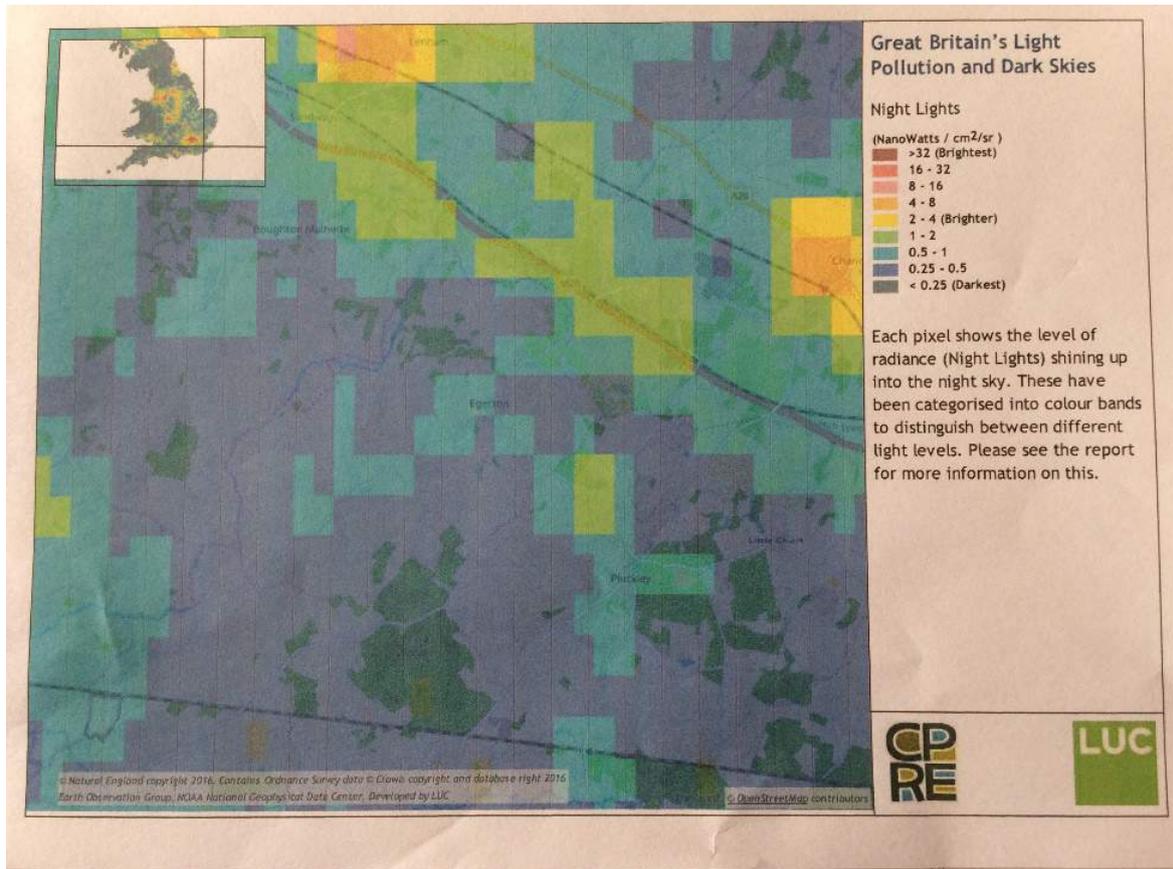
Light Pollution – Conserving our Dark Skies

5.22 Dark skies benefit both people and wildlife. Dark skies are a special quality of Ashford borough – the darkest skies in Kent are above us but they are still not the darkest skies in the country. They are generally defined as skies relatively free of light pollution where you can see a clear starry sky and importantly, our own galaxy the Milky Way, stretching as a ribbon of faint stars across the sky. Sadly, in the last few decades the South East of England has suffered a decline in dark skies quality; dark skies have gradually brightened as urban development and the population grows. The Ashford Local Plan 2030 also recognises the need to minimise the impact of lighting schemes in policy ENV4 Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies.

5.23 In recent years, the areas across Egerton that benefit from really dark sky have reduced. This is due to the effects of more development around us, which tends to bring more lighting, outside and inside, adversely affecting our own local environment. Nevertheless it is the case that most of the uninhabited parts of Egerton are in the second-to-lowest category for light pollution (see map below) and there is still scope to make some efforts to minimise the impact of lighting in our localised area. Wasted light is wasted energy and, in the interests of both energy conservation and preservation of dark skies, policy P6 will apply across the Parish.

In addition the Parish Council will encourage residents to reduce light pollution with measures that can be taken at home including switching off lights when not needed, use of proximity sensors and closing curtains at night time.

Note: Egerton is at the centre of the map below



Egerton NP Policy P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies

- 1. The following principles should apply for managing existing light schemes and for the introduction of any new lighting scheme:**
 - a) New lighting should not adversely degrade the sky quality beyond the immediate area to be lit;
 - b) Development proposals should demonstrate that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken, including avoiding the installation of exterior lighting wherever possible;
 - c) Angle Lights Downward – no unnecessary light above or near the horizontal
 - d) Lamps of 500 lumens and less are appropriate for most domestic purposes
 - e) Point where the light is needed not in a direction that causes a nuisance to neighbours or wildlife. Lighting directed at sensitive habitats including trees and hedgerows will not be supported;
 - f) Light to the appropriate illuminance – do not over light needlessly
 - g) Lamps above 500 lumens should be installed in dark sky friendly fixtures that prevent unnecessary upward light
 - h) Install at the lowest possible height to achieve required lighting levels
 - i) Avoid bright white and cooler temperature LED's

5.24 The purpose of this policy is to identify measures which will protect as far as possible Egerton's current dark skies from further light pollution and diminution of the dark skies already reduced by surrounding development.

6



ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EGERTON

Background

6.1 As set out in more detail in earlier sections, Egerton is a village of small, scattered settlements, narrow winding lanes, the steep hills on the Greensand ridge and flat pasture on Wealden clay. Population numbers have fluctuated over the period of census data collection, and village life in a relatively inaccessible location has continued to thrive and to retain a mix of long-established farming families and incomers, still capable of sustaining the primary school and pre-school, a shop, and post office two inns and two garages alongside other local businesses.

6.2 The beauty and variety of Egerton's topography, and its seclusion, explains in part the scattered settlements, its continuing attraction to incomers and why it is different from many other rural villages with a more homogeneous topographical and settlement pattern. Its present and future sustainability is, however, dependent less on the physical environment than on the spirit of community that has long been recognised as being particularly active and vibrant. In the recent past, the village won Ashford's Community of the Year in 1995, was the winner for Southern and South East England in the Regional Village of the Year Competition in 2001 and was runner up in the National Village of the Year Competition in 2001.

6.3 The range of social, cultural, educational and sporting activities taking place in the village and attracting participants from the surrounding communities is widely considered to be exceptional (see Evidence). Many of the clubs and societies are well established, well financed and supported by local fund-raising events and volunteers from within the village. They provide education, social gatherings, sport, health and well-being and entertainment for the local community. Their sustainability over the next twenty years is enhanced by the buildings and recreational spaces where these activities take place, provided that these are well maintained and/or enhanced to respond to changing needs. This spirit of involvement and community is also reflected in the groups and individuals who run community initiatives such as the Egerton Over-Sixties Club, Neighbourhood Watch, Community First Responders and Egerton Friends (which raises funds for village causes).

6.4 The continuing existence in the village of a shop and post office, pubs and garages, will also be essential to the sustainability of the village over the period of this plan, as will the maintenance of bus services to Ashford and the free 'home to school' bus service for secondary school students to Ashford, Tenterden and Lenham. Without these local services there is a risk that dependence on privately owned cars will not only cause environmental damage but will squeeze out lower income families which will, in turn, result in higher house prices and a further imbalance of age groups and income levels in the community. The housing needs survey undertaken in 2018 identified the need for additional local housing for lower income families and individuals.

6.5 Provision of housing to meet this need will go some way to offset economic imbalances in the community. In addition, economic opportunities exist in the community in areas outside the traditional agricultural activities and related services - for example there has been modest growth in catering and accommodation for rural tourism, providing local employment and work experience.

6.6 New technologies (including the provision of high-speed broadband) will also allow a greater degree of home-working and help to offset the economic threats to rural communities in the 21st century. Improvements in both mobile phone and high-speed broadband coverage need to focus on assistance for local people and local businesses to ensure that they can adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

Local services and businesses essential to sustaining village life

6.7 Local businesses directly serving the community and providing local employment include 2/3 pubs and 2 garages. The Barrow House's location at the centre of the main settlement makes it a natural focus for certain village activities as well as for tourists and other visitors. The pub is listed as an Asset of Community Value and is currently on the market as a going concern. Also being offered for sale, currently with no prospect of a buyer, the potential loss of the Queens Arms as a pub will be a blow to Egerton Forstal. Questions as to its future use will need very careful consideration. The Rose & Crown lies just outside the parish boundary (the pub car park is in Egerton Parish), but the pub itself is a natural part of the Mundy Bois settlement and as such is an important element in the sustainability of one of Egerton's outlying settlements. Also important to Egerton's sustainability is the existence of the Pluckley Farm Shop, owned by an Egerton resident and serving both communities with fresh local produce, some of which is produced in Egerton itself. Egerton Post Offices and Stores, at the centre of the village has recently closed by its present owners pending its sale. The Stores are also listed as an Asset of Community Value.

6.8 Other businesses based locally and contributing to the practicalities of sustainable daily life in a rural environment include building, carpentry, house painting, plumbing, engineering, fencing, hedging and gardening. Health and well-being is also well served with locally based businesses providing services such as physiotherapy, osteopathy and yoga; while residents can also call on Egerton-based insurance and accountancy services or web design and printing.

Education

6.9 At present there is both pre-school and primary school provision in Egerton. In a survey conducted for the Parish Plan in 2015, 87% of all respondents felt it was essential for the wellbeing of the village to sustain the primary school and the pre-school which feeds into it. Currently the pre-school meets every morning in the Millennium Hall but the relocation of the pre-school, which would enhance its functionality and role, was also considered a priority. On the initiative of the Egerton Parish Council, planning consent for a new purpose built facility has already been granted and it is anticipated that, once suitable funding has been obtained, a new building to house the pre-school will be constructed on the primary school site within the next 3 to 4 years. The Hall's position with far-reaching views has an attraction for outside organisations running large events and release of the space used by the pre-school is expected to generate more income.

6.10 Re-location to the primary school site will enable the pre-school to operate in both the mornings and afternoons, which it is unable to do at its present location, and also free up the Millennium Hall for other community uses. Our Church of England Primary School has received an overall good rating at its most recent inspection and is highly rated by families within and outside the village. Their current and, in the case of the pre-school, proposed locations at the centre of the main village settlement provide both an essential service within the community and an important opportunity for social connection between families from different parts of the parish.

6.11 Most students at secondary level travel by bus or car to Tenterden, Ashford, Lenham or possibly Maidstone on a daily basis. The continued provision by Kent County Council of free school buses is essential to the sustainability of a rural community where the nearest secondary schools are considerably over the 3-mile limit beyond which 'home to school' transport is currently provided free of charge in most cases.

Rural economy

6.12 The current range of business activities in Egerton is listed in the Evidence Base. Whilst some aspects of traditional agriculture are under threat, and the post-Brexit economic viability of small-scale farming enterprises is unclear, there are opportunities both to change farming practices and in diversification. Farm buildings may be converted either to provide accommodation and catering for rural tourists who may also take advantage of local activities and services, or into small scale business premises (see Policy D5).

6.13 **Working from home** is expected to play an increasingly important role in a wide range of business activities and provides opportunities in rural communities for parents with young children, as well as individuals, who do not have either the means or the time to commute. There is therefore a requirement not only that all the new small scale developments listed in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan should

be subject to the requirements outlined in policy EMP6 in the Ashford 2030 Plan on the Promotion of Fibre, Fibre To The Premises (FTTP), but also that FTTP, or acceptable alternatives providing speeds in excess of 24Mbps, should be available to all dwellings in all parish settlements.

Maintenance and enhancement of village facilities

6.14 Safe places for residents of all ages are essential to sustain village clubs and societies, the health and well-being of all residents and to respond to future need. Village facilities (not including registered Assets of Community Value) include the Millennium Hall and its possible extension, the Games Barn, the Sports Pavilion and Playing fields, recreation areas for younger children and St James' Church and the Chapel with Sunday School. Enhancement of some of these facilities, and a review of how to maximise use of the traditional buildings sympathetically, would provide additional space for both recreational activities and social activities for residents of all ages.

6.15 Community consultation both for the Parish Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan identified a need to protect **the Millennium Hall** and to improve and develop the existing building to facilitate additional space for village activities. If a change of location for the Pre-school is achieved, then medium scale modification to the existing layout and construction of additional room/s could help not only to alleviate the large demand for use of the Hall but possibly allow day-time commercial hire. The Hall is a vital amenity for the community and the income received allows the Hall to be self-funding currently. Any development would need a village fundraising initiative, but this ultimately could provide opportunities for further income generation and therefore help sustain this facility for the future. Some £10,000 has already been raised for this purpose (see Parish Plan).

Egerton NP Policy S1 - Community Facilities

- 1. Development will be supported where it will result in the improved management and enhancement of community facilities, where it would not damage the conservation area, listed buildings and the environmental quality, biodiversity or character of the area, and where it is designed to meet community needs as identified in the Ashford Local Plan (2030), Policy COM1.**
- 2. Community facilities in the Parish include:**

The Millennium Hall

The Games Barn

The Sports Pavilion

Any building/land registered as an Asset of Community Value.

6.16 The purpose of this policy is to protect key community facilities which host locally generated activities and are essential to the future sustainability of the rural community.

The MUGA

6.17 There has been interest in developing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) that could accommodate the sports of 5-a-side football, tennis, netball, basketball and walking football (a sport steering towards the older generation). This would complement the existing sports facilities in Egerton and provide an excellent all year round surface that could also complement the school curriculum. The Egerton Village MUGA Project, in memory of Josh Wilkinson, consulted the Egerton Parish Council and the Playing Fields Committee on two possible sites. A fund-raising initiative is current but no specified location approved. Siting of this proposed facility

needs to be accessible but sympathetic to the impact on neighbouring residents, on the environment, its setting and on wider views and vistas.

Community open space at Egerton Forstal

6.18 There is currently no recreation or amenity open space for Egerton Forstal residents, in particular families with children. Demand was identified during consultation for this plan at open meetings in 2017 and again in 2019. An opportunity to address this deficit should be identified in conjunction with a proposed local needs housing allocation determined in this Neighbourhood Plan at Section 7.

Egerton NP Policy S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal

- 1. Any significant new development (5 or more new homes) in or close to Egerton Forstal should make provision for new public open space to serve everyone in the locality.**

6.19 The purpose of this policy is to secure the provision of a new community open space in Egerton Forstal which currently has no public open space provision within the settlement.

Community Parking Provision

6.20 Parking for public buildings such as the primary school, the Millennium Hall and the playing fields is limited and is not covered by Ashford 2030 Policies TRA3a & 3b which deal with residential and non-residential parking standards but do not cover public buildings and spaces. Currently planned extensions to both the Games Barn and the Millennium Hall and increasing use of the playing fields and Sports Pavilion, which currently has parking space for only 3 cars, will require additional parking to improve access to these facilities and to the open sports and recreation spaces.

6.21 Additional parking to extend the parking spaces by the Sports Pavilion would be the most immediately beneficial and could be provided by the use of grass protecting matting or a similar permeable surface without damaging the physical character of the landscape or key views.

6.22 The purpose of this policy is to secure vital additional parking by the Sports Pavilion to support the continued use of the sports facilities.

Egerton NP Policy S3 – Additional parking

- 1. Egerton Parish Council will work with Egerton Playing Fields to secure funding and to develop approximately 10 additional parking spaces for the Sports Pavilion and Games pitches, using a permeable surface to allow drainage in accordance with Policy ENV9 of the Ashford Local Plan and to maintain the visual appearance of the playing fields.**
- 2. A cycle rack will also be installed in the same location.**
- 3. Where feasible, electric charging facilities will be provided.**

Footpaths, byways, roads and transport

6.23 The network of green corridors, public rights of way, quiet rural roads and sunken lanes characterise and support the nature of the parish, and should therefore be conserved and enhanced for the convenience and safety of users, for their ecological, landscape and recreational value, and to enhance connections across the village. In order to continue to protect the tranquillity of the parish roads should not be widened to accommodate increased traffic flows or larger vehicles in general. Most of these are protected in the Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy ENV5 – Protecting Important Rural Features which covers rural lanes and public rights of way.

6.24 **Public Transport** - Bus Services for rural communities such as Egerton are not covered by policies in the Ashford 2030 Plan as they are the responsibility of Kent County Council. As the only bus service at present, maintenance of the bus service to and from Ashford (the 123) is essential. There are no buses to and from Maidstone and Tenterden at present, which limits employment opportunities for some village residents. Wealden Wheels is a community not-for-profit transport initiative and is supported by Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and the Parish Councils of Charing, Chilham, Egerton, Pluckley and Smarden. It supplies mini buses for hire but regulations do not allow it to operate in place of a bus service. Although based in Pluckley, our neighbouring village, an annual donation from the Parish Council contributes to their costs.

6.25 The narrow and winding nature of almost all the roads in the parish make their use by **HGVs** a potential danger to other road users, whether on wheels or on foot. There is no reason to use any road in the parish as a through route to another destination. A 7 1/2 tonne weight limit (except for access) has already been imposed on the approach to the village from Charing Heath and the A20, and this includes several other local lanes. Representations should be made to Kent Highway Services to investigate a reduction of the speed limit to 40mph.

Egerton NP Policy S4 – Footpaths & byways

1. **Development in the Parish shall:**
 - a) **protect and improve these and other public rights of way, and**
 - b) **construct or provide proportionate contributions towards new rights of way or extensions to link any such development to the village centre.**

6.26 **Cycling** as an alternative to the car is to be encouraged. EPC should consider installation of cycle racks at the Millennium Hall and by the Games Barn to encourage more use of bicycles by providing secure storage. One or two charging points for electric bicycles should also be considered at both locations. Additionally, and in support of safety for all road users and a reduction in pollution levels, the speed limit along Mundy Bois Road, Bedlam Lane and New Road within the parish should be reduced to 40mph.

6.27 **Pedestrian routes.** There are some 40 footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way across the parish, most of which are used by pedestrians, runners and dog walkers and are of particular importance not only for the general health and well-being of residents but also for their safety by reducing pedestrian use of the narrow, winding roads in the parish. Maintenance of all existing public rights of way, including replacement of stiles to kissing gates where appropriate, is important to the continued health and well-being of the community.

6.28 The footpath which begins near the foot of Crockenhill and the junction with Forstal Road (AW368), and which runs from there up to the stile almost opposite the entrance to the memorial trees field (Lower Recreation Ground) in Rock Hill Road is ideal as a safe pedestrian route to the village centre and amenities both from Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill, minimising the need to walk on the narrow and crowded roads. With the agreement of the landowners, regular cutting of the grass in spring and early summer, regular cutting back of overhanging branches in one location, improvement or replacement of existing stiles and the addition of some gravel, scalplings or other reinforcement where necessary, this footpath would allow children and parents/carers to walk to school when weather permits. Kent County Council have visited the site, have included it in their Improvement Plan and have strongly advised inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Community Aspiration

Footpath AW368 from Crockenhill to a point on Rock Hill Road opposite Buss' Farm provides a safe walking route to and from the main village for all residents of Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill, including children's daily journey to and from the primary school.

With the support of Kent County Council, certain areas of the path will be improved and the full length maintained to allow its use in all seasons.

7



Development to meet current and future need

Key aims for development 2020 - 2040

7.1 The NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. The Ashford 2030 Plan develops these aims in Policy SP6 – Promoting High Quality Design and requires that development proposals should respond positively both to Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements. The 2030 Plan additionally requires ‘layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area’ in policy HOU3a for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (Egerton Forstal); and that ‘development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design’ in policy HOU5 for Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (Egerton main village settlement).

7.2 This Neighbourhood Plan sets out a clear design vision and expectations, so that future planning applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies were originally developed with our local community in the drawing up of the Egerton Parish Design Statement in 2006 to reflect local aspirations and were grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Unfortunately, not all new development in the parish since then has followed that guidance. This Plan aims to steer the design of new development to being more in tune with that guidance, and to place more emphasis on layout to complement and enhance its setting. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Thus the

Design Statement, which is an official planning document on Ashford Borough Council's website, will in future be treated as a valued and useful tool in considering planning applications and will be referred to by the Parish Council before making any comments to the planning authority (ABC). Wherever there is scope, the Parish Council will engage with prospective developers before any plans are finalised, in order to influence the design and layout of any new development.

7.3 Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape in Egerton would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location design or layout. Any development must be well integrated into the landscape - for example through the use of existing and new landscape buffers.

7.4 Areas of distinctive character within Egerton Parish include (Ashford Landscape Character Assessment 2005) the Greensand Fruit Belt and the Sutton Valence to Pluckley Mixed Farmlands (see para. 5.5).

7.5 This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- facilitate the development of housing that meets the needs of local people
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design
- locate development in the best possible positions geographically, socially and environmentally

Design

High Quality Design

7.6 There are several elements that combine to create good design for built development, including the form, scale, and detailing of the building, the site layout, positioning and spacing, together with its relationship to neighbouring buildings and the wider landscape. New developments often fail to have regard to every aspect, because they have tried to import an alien design at variance from the special local characteristics of the parish.

7.7 The distinctive character of Egerton is informed by those special traits that positively contribute to the local environment, which may not be unique but are typical of the locality. Characteristics which are harmful to the overall appeal of the locality are unworthy of repetition and should be guarded against, if the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard the local character. Rather than resisting new development, this means that the Plan should seek to manage it so that it accords

with key design principles, without unnecessarily stifling compatible innovative designs.

7.8 Key aspects that need to be considered are common failings in new developments, which can often be remedied if addressed early on in the design process. The *scale* of new buildings is frequently incompatible with neighbouring development and the local context, where designers have looked no further than the site boundary, or simply sought to introduce an alien design. The visual *appearance* of new development can be harmful to its surroundings where inadequate attention has been given to detailing and articulation. The appropriate choice of external building *materials* (masonry, roofing and fenestration) also has a great impact on the compatibility of new buildings with existing development and can assist modern buildings to successfully sit in the historic context. Sensitive choice of *boundary treatment* (trees and hedging, medium height fencing or walling using local materials) helps to assimilate new development in the streetscape and the local landscape, by avoiding unsightly hard edges and the introduction of anachronistic urban and suburban features (such as high walls, security gates and oppressive fencing).

7.9 One of the aspects on Design, that came out of the earlier public engagement workshops, was that many residents wanted to ensure that creative and innovative building designs were not ruled out by other policies advocating more traditional designs. Both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Design Statement before it aim to avoid stifling any modern approaches to design, if they can be successfully accommodated without eroding the overall special character of the settlement and the surrounding landscape. There are ways of achieving that, apart from seeking a secluded or unobtrusive site, such as respecting the scale and proportions of existing properties even if the external materials differ or using similar external materials even though the scale and proportions might differ. National planning policy guidance already makes provision for creative designs in the countryside, but only where of exceptional architectural design quality, so the Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy more applicable to lesser grandiose developments.

7.10 The following Policy aims to ensure that new development in the parish is of a high standard, is compatible with existing development and preserves the local character:

Egerton NP Policy D1 – Development Principles

- 1. All new development is expected to meet a high standard of design and to make a positive contribution to the local character of Egerton.**
- 2. Proposals must respect and enhance Egerton’s distinctive built character and its high quality countryside setting. Where innovative and contemporary building designs are proposed, they must be complementary to their local context, and respect the scale, spacing and external materials of existing buildings.**
- 3. All development proposals should take into account the relevant planning and design guidance issued by Ashford Borough Council, of which the Egerton Parish Design Statement forms a part.**

7.11 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all development is of the highest design quality which reflects and respects the local character of Egerton.

7.12 Reference to the **Egerton Parish Design Statement** at an early stage in the design process would avoid developments that harm the local character, in favour of those that could positively contribute to protecting and maintaining it. In particular, the Design Statement explores the local characteristics of the various parts of the parish and includes recommendations in its Style Guide for different types of development.

7.13 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, it was decided to assess the effectiveness of the Egerton Parish Design Statement, by examining the built developments that have occurred since in the parish. There have been few substantial developments in Egerton since the Design Statement was published in 2004, with the exception of the local needs housing at Chantlers Meadow. Most developments have been replacement dwellings or domestic extensions, including some major extensions of existing properties. Overall there is a disappointing lack of

referencing to the Parish Design Statement by the planning applicants, agents and architects, and also by the Local Planning Authority.

7.14 It was concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan itself ought to re-affirm the key principles of the Design Statement, and include some clear policy encouraging developers to refer to the design guidelines before embarking on development projects, rather than unconsciously importing alien designs and materials and eroding the local character of the environment that they have come here to enjoy. Suggested actions included:

- the Parish Council to more closely and consistently refer to the Parish Design Statement in responding to planning applications (whether positively, negatively or neutrally disposed to a particular development proposal);
- policies to be included in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan to re-affirm the key design principles of the Parish Design Statement, and to encourage developers to take its guidelines into consideration in deciding development proposals; and
- consideration to be given to re-issuing the Egerton Parish Design Statement, to broadcast its key messages and principles, via the village websites and in Welcome Packs for households new to the Parish.

7.15 Egerton Parish Design Statement has been adopted by Ashford Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and is a companion document to the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, with its contents and principles being broadly supported in more recent public engagement sessions on the Neighbourhood Plan.

7.16 Policy D2 reaffirms the key principles of the Design Statement, and the importance of good design to preserve the distinctive local character of the parish. Building projects which fall outside the scope of planning control should still take into consideration the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement.

Egerton NP Policy D2 – Application of the Parish Design Statement

- 1. Proposals for all new development in the Parish, including extensions to, and the conversion or replacement of, existing properties, shall include details of how far the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement have been taken into consideration in formulating the proposals, in order to maintain the special local characteristics of the Parish. In devising and assessing proposals for new development account should be taken where appropriate of:**
 - a) development that creates places that are sustainable, durable, safe and suitable for their location and use, whilst meeting the relevant policies of the Development Plan;**
 - b) building form and style that is valued and promoted locally, including smaller houses with characteristically pitched and/or hipped roofing, richly detailed walls, small panel windows, timber doors, with subservient garaging and outbuildings;**
 - c) the use of locally distinctive external building materials, as appropriate to the location, such as clay roof tiles, Kentish ragstone, timber weatherboarding, red stock bricks;**
 - d) suitable boundary treatments, such as traditional mixed hedging, red brickwork or ragstone walls, as an attractive method of delineating new boundaries;**
 - e) attention to design detail, with the discreet positioning of service features, such as bin stores cycle stores, meter boxes flues and ventilation ducts, renewable energy components, external lighting, satellite dishes, aerials, telephone cabling, etc.**

- 2. Dwellings should be limited to two-storey in height to prevent a prominent visual edge to the village or obscuring key views and vistas, including views of the Church tower.**

7.17 The purpose of this policy is to ensure all relevant development proposals incorporate the principles and guidelines of the Parish Design Statement and to provide examples of locally distinctive styles, materials and boundary treatments.

Housing

Housing Policy to 2040

7.18 Egerton’s housing need up to 2023 was identified In a Housing Needs Survey (see para. 7.21 below) as a requirement for 27 dwellings, of which 12 need to be affordable. The Ashford Borough Council Local Plan (2030) allocates a site on New Road for an indicative 15 new homes, of which 40% should be affordable (5/6 affordable homes), with a mix of 1-2 for rent and the remainder for shared ownership or affordable ownership. The Orchard Nurseries site owned by Egerton Parish Council is allocated in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (Policy D5) for 8 open market dwellings for older residents. Therefore, there is a shortfall of affordable housing. Following a call for sites and detailed site assessment (see para.7.25) the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address this shortfall by allocating the Gale Field site (Policy D4) for affordable housing. In combination, the Orchard Nurseries site and the Gale Field site provide both housing for older residents and affordable local needs housing as exception sites. Table 7.1 sets out the housing need for Egerton as identified in the Housing Need Survey and how this is provided for through the ENP and Ashford Local Plan.

Table 7.1

	Total No. of homes	Affordable homes	Open Market homes
Housing Needs Survey 2018-2023	27	12	15
Land on New Road (Ashford Local Plan Policy S30)	15	6 ⁱ	9
Gale Field (ENP Policy D4)	11	10	1 ⁱⁱ
Orchard Nurseries (ENP Policy D5)	8		8 ⁱⁱⁱ
Total provision in Ashford Local Plan & ENP	34	16	18

ⁱ The HNS analysis of incomes for the local needs affordable housing indicated that 8 should be rented and 1 shared ownership. Only 1-2 houses on the New Road site would meet this need, resulting in a shortfall of 10 local needs affordable dwellings, of which 3 would be for older residents.

ⁱⁱ The NPPF provides scope for cross-subsidy for local needs affordable housing in rural areas and this may be a consideration.

ⁱⁱⁱ The open market homes at Orchard Nurseries will be for older people with a local connection to the parish.

7.19 The current housing need can be met by the provision of homes that are:

- a) affordable for local people (see 7.25-27 below and Policy D5)
 - to rent, or
 - for shared ownership
- b) suitable for local older or disabled people (see 7.28 and Policy D4)
 - who are owner-occupiers requiring different accommodation
 - to rent.
- c) on a small scale to allow integration with the existing pattern of development.

7.20 Any additional housing requirement beyond the 5 year period covered by the 2018 Housing Needs Survey will be subject to review every 5-7 years either for affordable local needs or open market housing. It is anticipated that any additional requirement for open market housing to 2040 will be met by a combination of:

- a) the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential dwellings at a rate of 1 per year (analysis of the current rate of conversion over the past 10 years suggests a rate of 2 per year on average):
- b) larger houses released by older residents downsizing to the accommodation in Orchard Nurseries, and
- c) of applications covered by policies HOU3a and HOU5 in the Ashford 2030 Plan – residential windfall development within settlements and the countryside.

Egerton NP Policy D3 –Housing Policy

- 1. The ENP makes provision for 6-10 affordable local needs dwellings to meet Egerton’s affordable housing need up to 2023. The ENP also makes provision for approximately 8 open market dwellings to meet the needs of older people within the parish..**
- 2. Additional housing requirements over the full period of this plan will be subject to review at 5-7 year intervals.**
- 3. Where there is a mix of affordable and open market housing, the houses will be appropriately spread through and integrated into each development so that affordable housing is indistinguishable from the equivalent market housing.**

7.21 The purpose of this policy is to define and quantify the local housing requirement to 2023 and beyond as identified in the Housing Needs Survey (November 2018), in addition to the housing already identified in the Ashford Local Plan.

2018 Housing Needs Survey and results

7.22 The Housing Need Survey undertaken for Egerton Parish Council by Action with Communities in Rural Kent in 2018 identified a need over the next five years for 27 additional dwellings. Of these, 12 affordable homes for single people, couples and families were identified, 8 of which should be rentable, 3 for older people and 1 for shared ownership. The survey also identified a need for 12 homes for older households (including the 3 mentioned above), split equally between couples and single people; plus a need for 6 open market homes excluding those for older households and ranging between single people and couples and families.

7.23 The Ashford Local Plan site, land on New Road (ALP Policy S30) in combination with the ENP Orchard Nurseries site (Policy D5) will provide an indicative number of 17-18 open market dwellings i.e. 2-3 more than the 15 open market need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. These sites will also in combination provide 12-13 dwellings to meet identified local needs. The shortfall of affordable local needs housing identified by the Housing Needs Survey is between 6-10 dwellings.

7.24 One small additional site is therefore required to provide the additional affordable, local needs housing identified above.

Call for Sites and Site Selection

7.25 As part of the preparation of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, a call for sites resulted in suggestions from a number of landowners and developers for sites outside the current village confines. A number of the suggestions were ruled out after consultation. The remaining suggestions, with modifications in some cases, were formally assessed against criteria based on national and local policy (see Evidence Base for Site Assessment Criteria and outcomes) and the findings of the Housing Needs Survey.

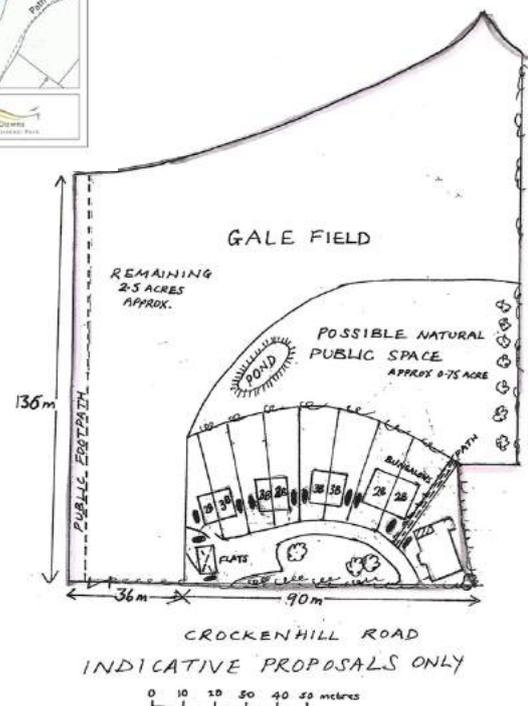
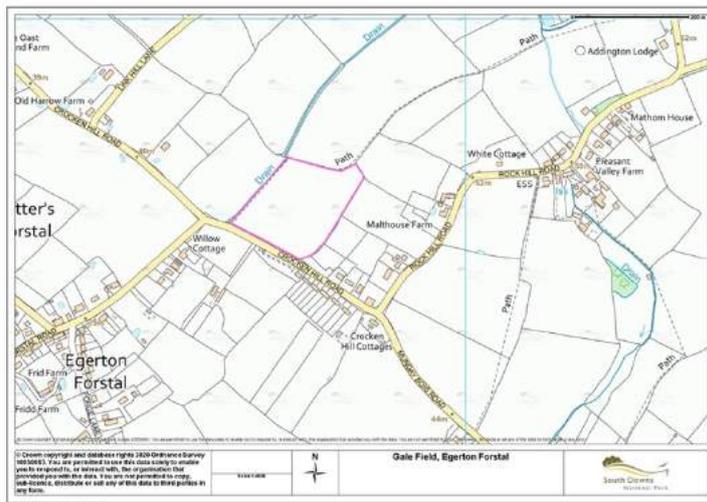
Local needs/ affordable housing

7.26 Our research and consultation has established that the main concern of some of the younger people and families in the Parish is the lack of available properties in the village either to rent or at an affordable price for first time buyers. There is a continuing demand for the existing 27 local needs housing units already available in Egerton, almost all of which are rental properties. However, there is a shortfall both of rental properties and of very low-cost properties to enable young people to gain a foothold on the 'property ladder' and at the same time remain in the village.

7.27 An additional scheme is therefore needed to provide affordable housing for local young people in Egerton to rent or buy. The development would be on an exception site and developed either by a recognised developer of affordable housing or by a locally created 'not for profit' Community Interest Company (CIC), established to provide housing to meet local needs. The land would be acquired at 'exception

site' value and the provider or CIC would build up to 8 'affordable' units, varying in size from single bed studios to 3 bedroom houses, to meet local needs.

7.28 The following allocation site comprises of land at Gale Field on Crockenhill. The site was put forward by the landowner in response to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's call for sites in 2018, with the specific requirement that it should be made available for affordable local needs housing. It was the only site offered both at a significantly lower than market price to allow financing of affordable housing and of sufficient size to contain the 6-10 affordable dwellings identified as needed in the 2018 Housing Needs Survey. It also provides the opportunity for safe recreational facilities for young children and valuable green space (see Policy S2), and is close to a footpath from Crockenhill leading up to the main village and all main parish facilities (see Community Aspiration, p49). It has no adverse impact on neighbouring properties, maintains key views and vistas and does not impact adversely on the environment or landscape character of its surroundings. It provides ample space for off street parking for residents, visitors and, possibly, neighbouring properties.



Egerton NP Policy D4 – Land at Gale Field, Egerton Forstal

1. Land at Gale Field, Egerton Forstal is allocated for the development of 6-11 local needs affordable residential dwellings in line with Policy HOU2 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030.
2. Development of the site will be required to provide a publicly accessible off-road pedestrian route to the new public open space adjacent to the site.

Older people's housing

7.29 A key requirement in the Egerton Parish Plan (see Evidence Base) was the creation of dedicated semi-sheltered accommodation specifically to meet local needs and designed to be readily adapted to deal with growing disabilities and other problems of old age. A small working group was established by the Parish Council to take this proposal forward. After consideration of several potential sites, a site at 'Orchard Nurseries' was gifted to the Parish in 2017 by Derek Marks, a former Parish Council Chairman, and was agreed by ABC to be a suitable exception site for homes for older people of the village, although rather small for the purpose. 8 dwellings are proposed on this site. It is anticipated that access to the site will be possible through the designated site on New Road. The project will be managed through a Community Interest Company which will ensure that the village as a whole benefits from the original donation.



Egerton NP Policy D5 – Orchard Nurseries, Egerton

- 1. Land at the former Orchard Nurseries, Egerton is allocated for the development of up to 8 residential dwellings for older people with a local connection to the parish.**

Defining the village confines

7.30 The Ashford Local Plan 2030 policies HOU3a and HOU5 – residential windfall development - apply to developments in the main Egerton settlement, covering any development within or adjacent to the settlement. Policy HOU3a also applies to Egerton Forstal and limits further development to the current confines in which space is already severely limited.

7.31 Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan (2030) describes the change from the traditional approach of defining a settlement area in a written statement to the use of a boundary line drawn on a map.

7.32 The confines of a settlement are defined as:

'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (ie garden areas).'

7.33 The Local Plan (2030) also sets out policies for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (HOU3a) and Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (HOU5). HOU3a confirms the requirements that must be met for residential development 'that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement', including compatibility with the character and density of the surrounding area and avoidance of 'significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents' and 'significant harm to the landscape, heritage assets or biodiversity

interests'. HOU5 covers proposals for 'residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines' of the settlement provided that design is of a high quality, sustainability criteria are met, and that conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and heritage assets are ensured.

7.34 The pattern of settlement in the parish is of two larger settlement areas (the centre of the village and Egerton Forstal), smaller settlements such as Stonebridge Green, Mundy Bois and Newland Green, and more isolated farmhouses and farm buildings. After consultation, the village confines have been defined around the two main settlement areas and are shown in the maps at pages 76 and 77.

Brownfield Sites and Small Scale Development

7.35 The reclamation and reuse of brownfield sites is a key factor in the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy integrating a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives. Brownfield redevelopment not only cleans up environmental health hazards and eyesores, but it is also a catalyst for community regeneration, particularly when communities are brought into the consultation process of site identification and restoration. Managed effectively as a sustainable redevelopment scheme, brownfield sites can provide affordable housing, create opportunities for employment or home working, promote conservation and wildlife, and offer a shared place for play and enjoyment. The transformation of a brownfield site is a vision of hope for the future.

7.36 Policies EMP1 (New Employment Uses), EMP3 (Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area) and EMP4 (Conversion of Rural Buildings to Non-Residential Uses) in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) permit conversion of rural buildings for employment provided that there is no adverse impact on the character of the buildings themselves, on the surrounding countryside, on the road network and on neighbouring residential amenities. EMP5 (New Employment Premises in the Countryside) discourages new development in the countryside unless it is essential.

7.37 There are several farms in the parish that contain redundant buildings. To date, many of these have been converted to individual dwellings, either for permanent residence or holiday lets. These individual cases would be classed as "windfalls". A few other such sites exist, somewhat derelict, redundant or partially redundant. Although none of these sites was put forward by their owners, they need to be borne in mind in the event of proposals for new businesses. It would not be

appropriate to develop a greenfield site, in the open countryside, when brownfield sites and some capacity in already developed sites exist.

7.38 All brownfield sites need to be assessed by an experienced environmental consultant before they can be redeveloped. This involves an analysis of the soil, groundwater and surface water through testing for hazardous compounds, and ensures that appropriate measures are taken to reduce identified risks and liabilities. Any development plans must comply with regulations. Licences are required to reclaim brownfield sites; strict environmental regulations in relation to wildlife habitat and other issues can be prohibitive for developers. If the environmental assessment is positive and supports the redevelopment, the next step is to take any remedial action needed to render the site safe.

7.39 The purpose of this policy is to support the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings for local business use as well as for residential development, where appropriate.

Egerton NP Policy D6 - Reuse of redundant farm buildings

- 1. Development of small scale business premises or appropriate residential or visitor accommodation use on existing sites with redundant farm buildings will be supported.**
- 2. Development in such cases should not have unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and vehicular movement on the local highway network.**

Infrastructure and facilities to support current and future development

7.40 **Mobile phone reception coverage and broadband coverage.** Good, reliable mobile phone coverage and high-speed broadband availability over the whole of the parish is essential to replace the currently inconsistent and unsatisfactory provision. Efficient mobile phone technology and high-speed broadband will increasingly be essential for business use and for working at home as an alternative to commuting, as well as for everyday living in rural areas (for example the operation of smart meters for public utilities). Expansion and improvement will ultimately be a commercial decision taken by private providers, and therefore not directly within the Neighbourhood Plan's scope, Egerton Parish Council should treat as a priority the need to encourage providers to improve both mobile phone reception and broadband coverage as a means of communication and access to services for the entire local community.

7.41 **Utilities.** All new developments for 10 or more dwellings, must include the provision of adequate water supply and sewerage systems to meet current environmental policy (ABC ENV8) and public health requirements. As the existing sewerage systems serving the centre of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal are already at maximum capacity, future provision for developments of less than 10 dwellings should also meet the ENV8 requirement. In some cases an individual system will be required and any such system should also meet current environmental policy requirements.

7.42 **Sustainable drainage and flood risk.** In accordance with the Ashford 2030 Plan (ENV9) 'All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality'. This is of particular importance in Egerton where surface water draining off the slopes regularly causes localised flooding.

7.43 Landowners will be encouraged to maintain and regularly clear ditches and culverts to minimise the risk of surface water flooding. Initiatives to reduce surface water run-off from agricultural land will also be encouraged.

7.44 In line with the ABC Local Plan (2030) - ENV6 - new development will only be permitted where there would not be 'an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site itself, and there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere'. Drainage systems should be designed to manage both the risk of flooding (groundwater and flash flooding) and surface water run-off.

Egerton NP Policy D7 - Water Supply and Drainage

- 1. Any direct connection of new developments to the Egerton water supply and primary sewer network, and/or expansion to existing developments connected to the network, will only be supported if it can be shown by rigorous analysis that there is sufficient capacity in the local sewerage system and that the new connection will not increase the risk of system back up/flooding.**
- 2. In cases where there is no possibility of connection to the primary sewer network, the developer should provide a private site-specific solution to manage drainage and sewerage which meets relevant regulations and has no adverse impact on the community as a whole.**

7.45 The purpose of this policy is to address current difficulties across the parish in relation to water supply and drainage by requiring the impact assessment of new development on the current water infrastructure, the provision of additional capacity if required and the installation of site specific approved systems where no network connection is possible.

Renewable energy and climate change impacts

7.46 Climate change is a key sustainability issue, and it is critical to determine how resilient we are to its potential consequences, such as flooding, heatwaves and drought. The impact of climate change will vary from place to place, and different communities will be more or less resilient (or vulnerable) to these different impacts. Older and listed buildings may present challenges to sustainability and carbon neutrality targets; however, all future development in the parish should be designed to achieve to achieve both.

7.47 Parliament has confirmed that climate change represents a national and international emergency. The current figure for production of electricity from renewable energy sources is 40% and this needs to increase if the targets set for 2040 are to be met. Technology is moving rapidly in this area and locally-based small scale schemes, such as locally generated clean energy initiatives should be actively investigated by Egerton Parish Council and positively supported. For sites already allocated within this plan, landowners and developers should work together to deliver exceptional sustainability benefits for the community.

7.48 In line with Policy ENV10 in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) renewable and low carbon energy systems will be encouraged, not only on all new buildings and all substantial conversions, but also on existing properties, including solar thermal and photovoltaics panels, ground or air source heat pumps and combined heat and power systems provided that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts on neighbouring properties or on the key views and vistas detailed in this plan. Any larger scale proposal for renewable energy creation should be encouraged if potentially adverse impact on neighbouring properties or on key views and vistas detailed in this plan can be mitigated.

7.49 Energy efficiency in all heating systems and improved insulation for both existing and new developments will be actively encouraged and supported to reduce reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves and to reduce energy bills, reducing fuel poverty and limiting flows of money out of the local economy. The ideal would be to achieve passive housing - a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological/carbon footprint. It results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling. There is an example of this in a converted building at Coldharbour Farm. Approved Document L of the Government's Building Regulations provides guidance on the conservation of fuel and power, which will be followed closely for future amendments to take account of advances in technology.

Egerton NP Policy D8 - Renewable Energy and climate change mitigation

- 1. Energy efficient buildings will be expected on the grounds of sustainability, and should:**
 - a) deliver warmer homes to improve comfort and better health, including a minimum 19% carbon dioxide reduction against Part L (2013) of the Government's Building Regulations on energy conservation through energy efficiency of the building.**
 - b) Use of Passive House principles will be supported.**
- 2. All residential development should minimise water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day. Water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling will be supported.**
- 3. The provision of charging points for electric vehicles will be encouraged.**

7.50 The purpose of this policy is to specify requirements for energy efficient buildings and services to ensure sustainability in the context of the climate emergency.

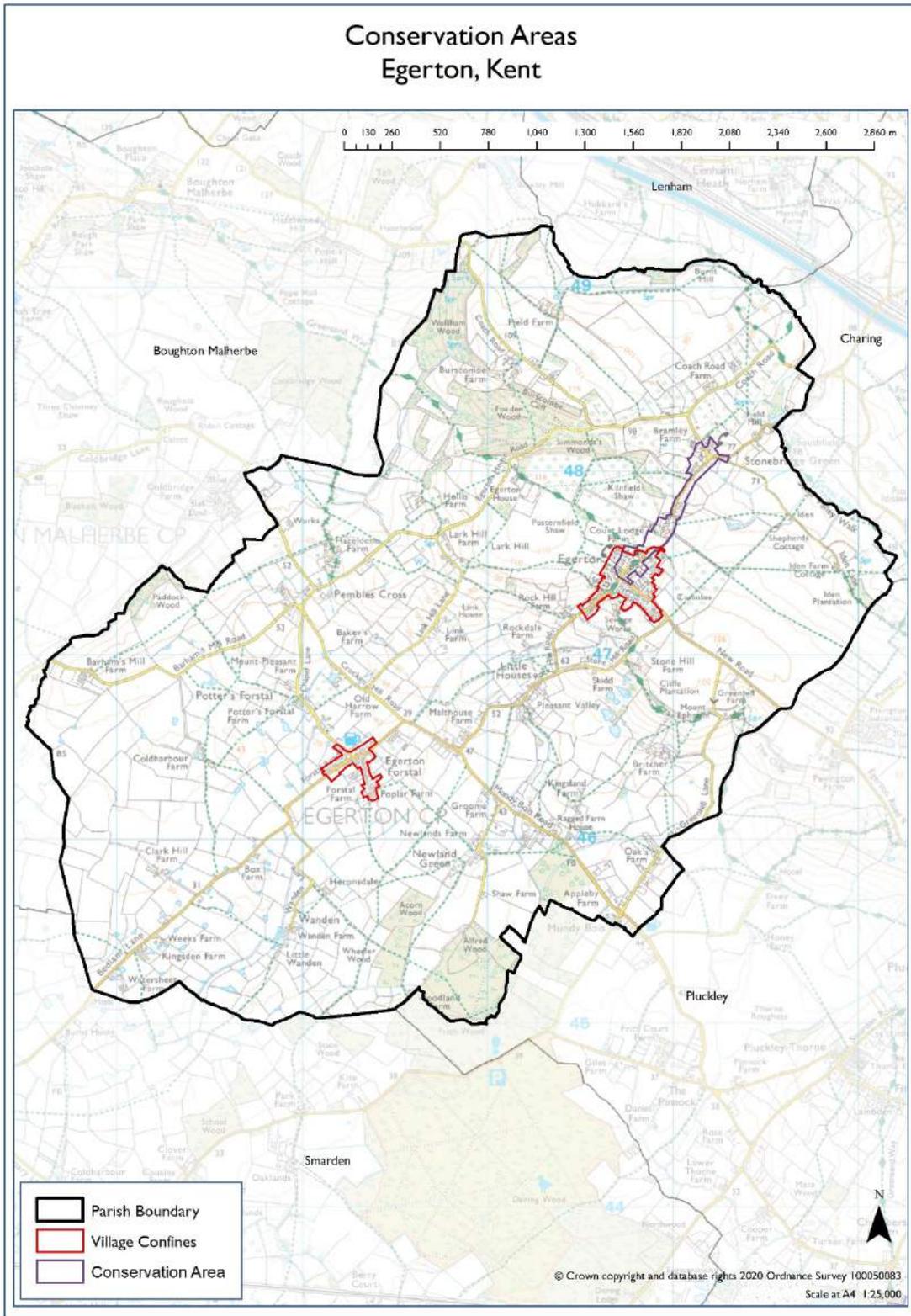
Evidence Base

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is based on the views of residents, businesses, statutory consultees and other interested parties gathered during consultation and a range of studies the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and other parties have carried out. These documents include, but are not limited to the following:

- Egerton Parish Plan
- Egerton Parish Design Statement
- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group membership and Terms of Reference
- Housing Needs Survey Report
- Community Consultation Statement
- Local Green Spaces Assessment
- Key Views and Vistas – maps and photographs
- Village Clubs and activities
- Business activities in Egerton
- Older People’s Housing Survey Results, 2015-16
- Site Assessment Criteria and Outcomes
- Application of the Parish Design Statement recommendations on development since its publication – a review

Maps

Conservation Area



Local Green Spaces



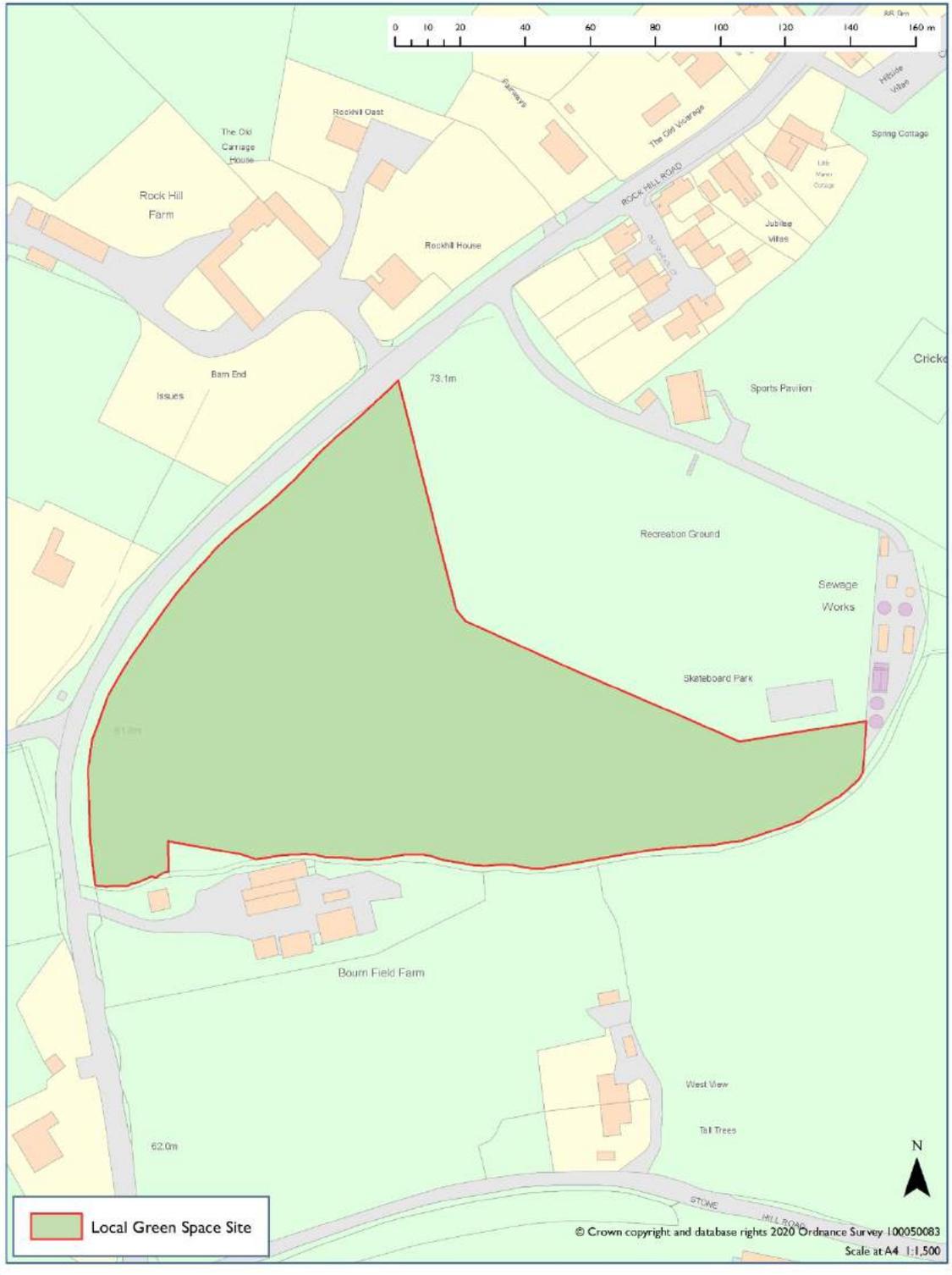
Local Green Space - Egerton, Kent

Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road, Egerton

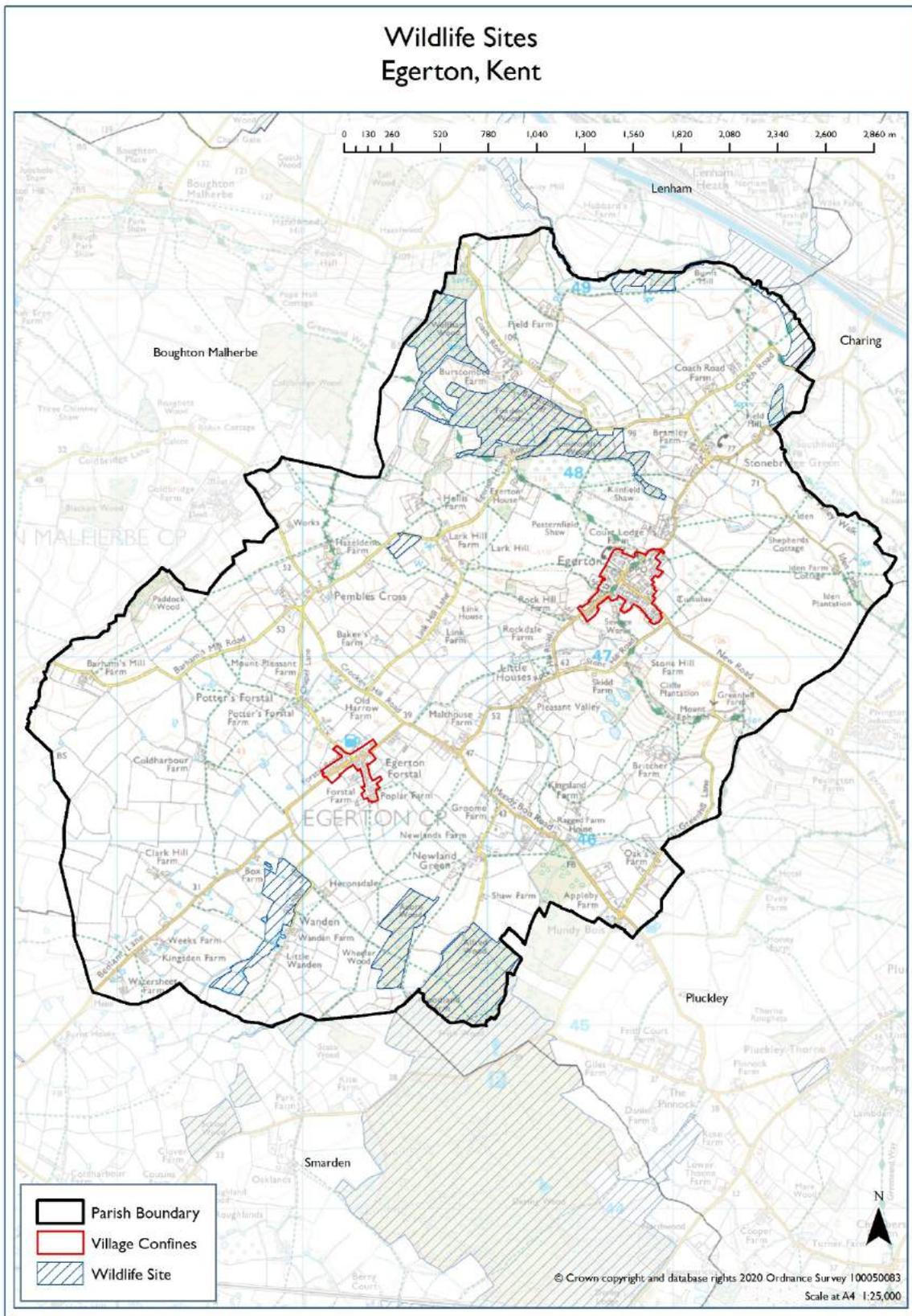


Local Green Space - Egerton, Kent

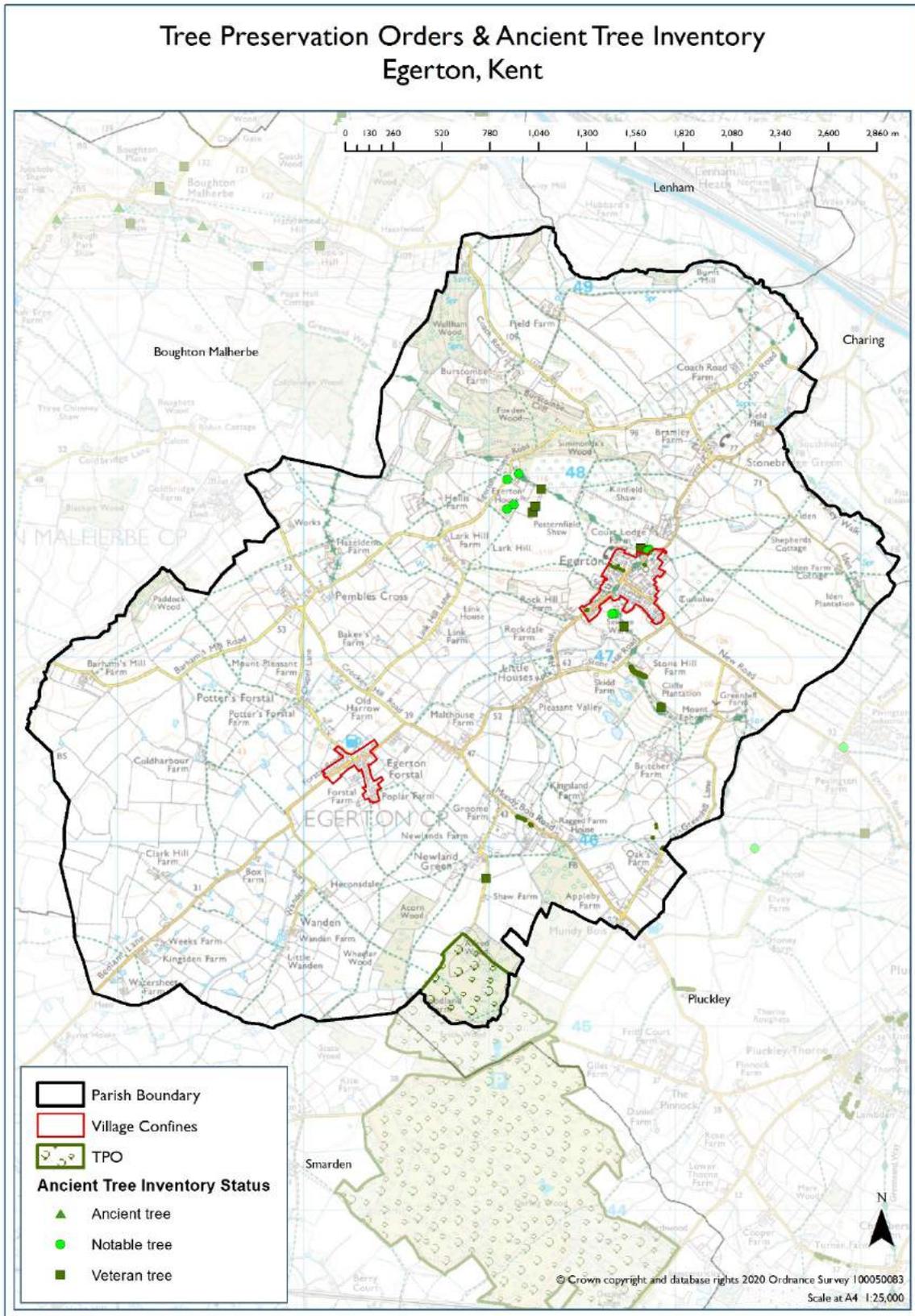
Lower recreation field, Rock Hill Road, Egerton



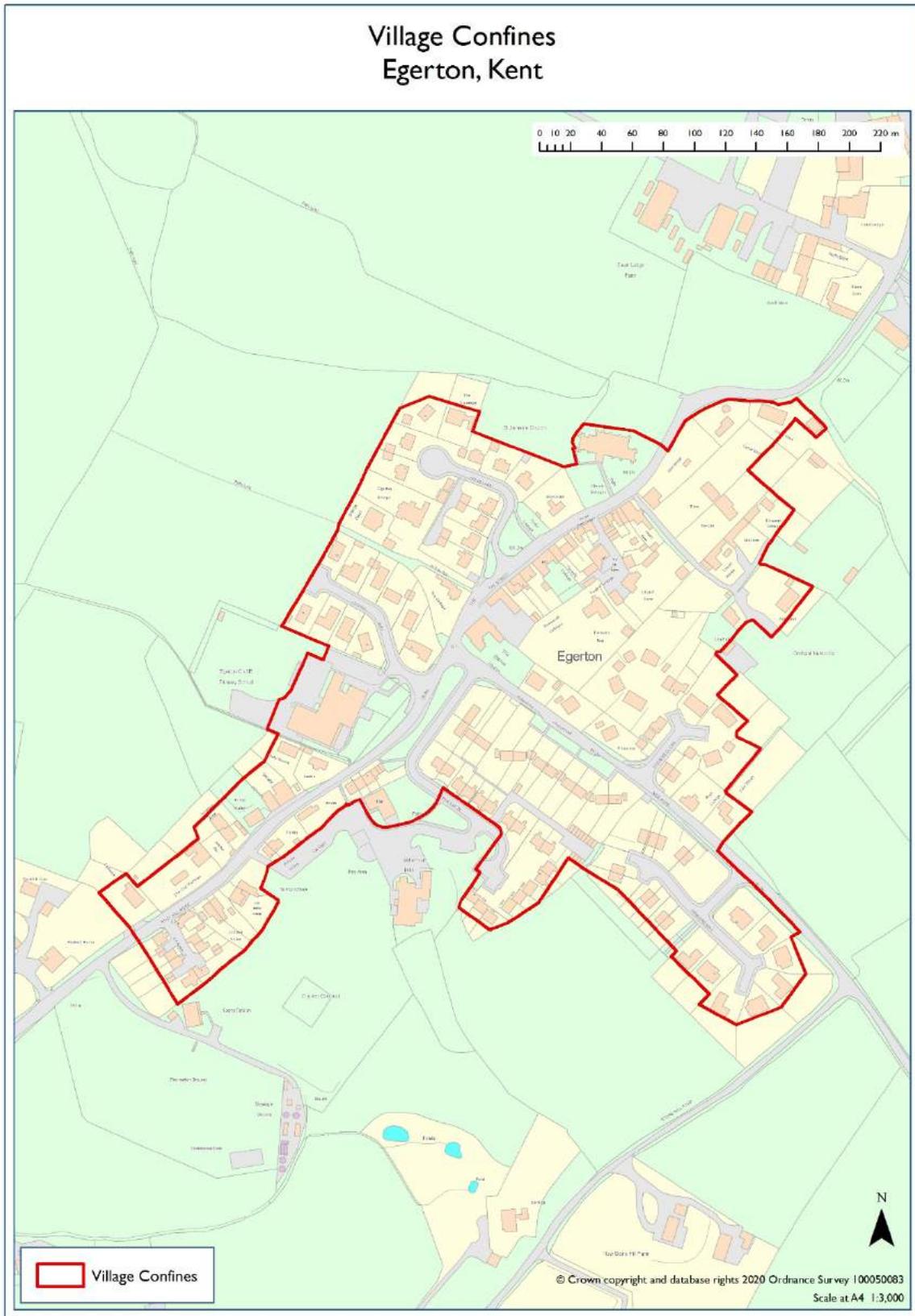
Local Wildlife Sites



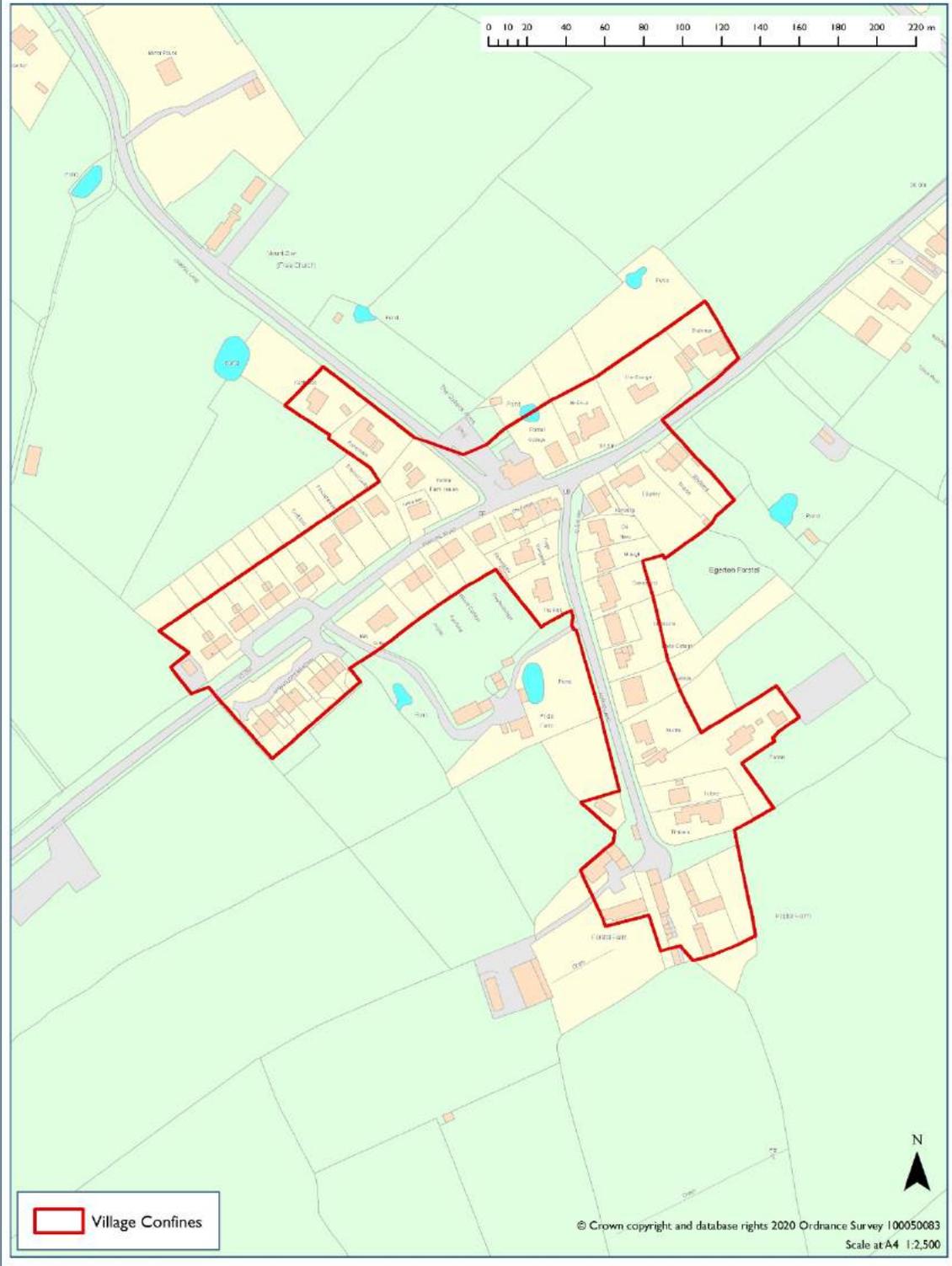
Tree Protection Orders and Ancient Tree Inventory



Village Confines



Village Confines Egerton Forstal, Kent



Key Views



Court Lodge Farm to
Charing/ North Downs



New Road to Greenhill/
The Weald



New Road to the North
Downs



Mundy Bois Road to the
village/Church



Bedlam Lane to the
Greensand Ridge



Egerton House over the
Weald



Link Hill to Pembles
Cross/ the Weald



Elm Close and the
Recreation Ground to the
Weald

Appendix 1

Wide grass verges

Pembles Cross/ Barhams Mill Road – wide verge outside Orchard House

Pembles Cross/Egerton House Road - verge with post box - outside Fairview

Barhams Mill Road wide verges towards the track to Coldharbour Farm

Egerton House Road – wide verge opposite Willowdene

Coach Road – wide verge either side of entrance to Burscombe Farm

Stonebridge Green Road - verge outside Willow Farm, verge outside the Old Dairy

Rock Hill Road: outside the School, with Kentish Ragstone wall; outside Rock Hill house and Rock Hill bungalow; around the track leading to Rockdale; either side of Rock Hill Road near junction with Mundy Bois Road

Mundy Bois Road/junction with Newland Green Lane, grass verge with old iron signpost, deep ditch

Newland Green Lane- wide verge from Groom farm onwards and opposite Tresmond

Mundy Bois Road – wide verges and ditches from The Homestead over the stream bridge to Greenhill lane

Greenhill Lane – wide verges from the crossroads to Mundy Bois cottages

Stonehill – wide verge outside Barlings

Crockenhill along the hillside – a steep bank of grass and flowers, some cultivated

Crockenhill Road/ Forstal Road – wide verges opposite and around the road sign

Crockenhill Road/Link Hill Lane at the Old Harrow– wide grass verges and private pond at edge of road.

Chapel Lane wide grass verges (some mown) and ditches most of its length. Ponds in fields near the road.

Forstal Road - wide verges and ditches towards Brookgate at double-bend on Bedlam Lane – several stretches of wide verges and ditches – near Wanden lane, Goodwin house.

Appendix 2

Non-designated Heritage Assets

Cast iron signposts

Wooden signpost in village

2 red post boxes (VR and GR)

W H Buckle & Son sign in The Street

Oliver's Garage signage on Rock Hill Road

War Memorial in churchyard

Stone pathway from Egerton House to the Church

Sunken Bridleway up from Hazeldene Farm

Egerton Free Church

The Millennium Hall

Parish boundary stones/markers

Cobblestone pavement outside The Old Vicarage on Rock Hill

Browns Kitchen

Newland Green Farm

Pembles Cross

Stonebridge Green

Newland Green