

# FITTLEWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2018-2033



**Submission**

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# 1 VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR FITTLEWORTH

## 1.1 Vision

**Fittleworth aspires to be a village which by 2033 will have accommodated some new development to meet the needs of its community but retained its special character as an historic and viable village set within a beautiful landscape which is rich in biodiversity and cultural heritage. It will have responded to the identified need for additional affordable housing to attract and retain a younger generation, while requiring such housing to respect existing development, to lie within the settlement**

**area and within the guidelines laid down by the South Downs National Park.**

## 1.2 Objectives

In order to achieve this vision the Fittleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has the following objectives:

**Objective 1:** To conserve and enhance the local environment, taking opportunities to enhance the local landscape, ecology and heritage and incorporate measures to reduce the risk of flooding, or other damage to the environment.

**Objective 2:** To secure development that enhances the design, character and appearance and landscape

setting of the village; reflects the existing density, scale and use of local materials and incorporates appropriate renewable and low carbon technology.

**Objective 3:** To support existing and new community facilities to meet the needs of the parish including the provision of a local shop, and to protect existing sites currently providing local employment

**Objective 4:** To improve opportunities for young families with limited financial resources and in housing need, to live in the village by encouraging and supporting the provision of affordable/low cost housing, with preference given to those with local connections.

# 2 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**2.1 The Fittleworth Neighbourhood Development Plan has been prepared by Fittleworth Parish Council, which is the 'qualifying body' under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, with the assistance of local residents. It establishes the vision for the long-term sustainability of the village over the next 15 years from 2018-2033. This Plan covers the whole of the Fittleworth Neighbourhood Area as designated by the South**

**Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) on 5 March 2015 under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.**

**2.2** The role of the SDNPA as a Planning Authority is to control and influence the development of land and buildings within its boundaries. To do this effectively the SDNPA has to balance its statutory duties and purposes of the National Park – safeguarding the natural environment and its existing built heritage – with the needs of individuals and the local population and with supporting rural

communities and local businesses. This Plan accords with the strategic aims of the South Downs National Park Authority. Once this Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been made it will be part of the development plan that is the primary consideration when determining planning applications within the Plan area. In cases where decisions are sought not in accordance with the NDP or other parts of the development plan on the basis of other material considerations, applicants and appellants will have to clearly justify why this should be the case.





# 3 THE PURPOSE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**3.1 This Neighbourhood Development Plan relates to the use and development of land within Fittleworth parish. Its primary purpose is to promote sustainable development which meets the needs of the village community and is sympathetic to the natural and built environment, including allocating sites which can be used to provide for these needs. It will be used to assess planning applications that are made in the Plan area.**

**3.2** The purpose of this Neighbourhood Development Plan is to:

- a) Set the landscape, biodiversity and historical context for Fittleworth and record the existing status of the community and its environment;
- b) Set out a framework to guide residents, developers, local authorities and the South Downs National Park Authority on how the community wishes to manage and control future development in the village over the next 15 years; and
- c) Indicate how the success of the NDP will be monitored and reviewed.

**3.3** The information and data which have guided and influenced this Plan has been obtained and collated on a voluntary basis by Fittleworth residents. A Steering Group comprised of local residents and parish councillors was set up in 2014 and the members of this group have worked with assistance from Chichester District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority. The views of local residents have been obtained by two survey questionnaires and public meetings.



*South Downs ridge from Fittleworth*

# 4 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT OF FITTLEWORTH

## Landscape Character Areas

**4.1 The nature of this part of West Sussex has been influenced over centuries by the ownership of substantial tracts of land by major landowning estates. Consequently large scale or piecemeal development has been avoided and the woods, heaths, villages and small towns have retained their individual character.**

**4.2** The South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment divides the National Park into landscape types which are then sub-divided into character areas. Fittleworth parish falls into the following landscape character areas:-

- The northern part of the parish lies mainly within the Blackdown to Petworth Greensand Hills character area (N1). This has prominent hills formed from sandstone with significant woodland cover (including Hammonds Wood,

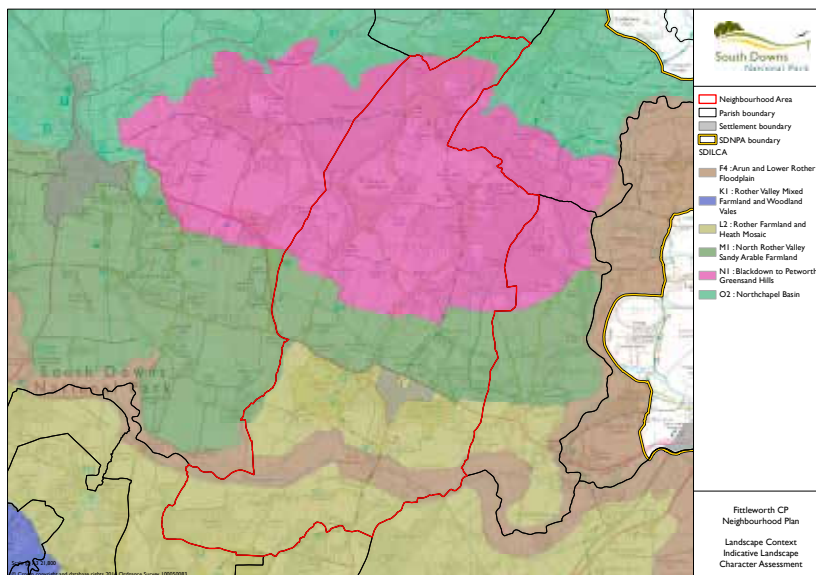
Flexham Park and Fittleworth Wood) as well as the hamlets of Bedham and Little Bognor and Bognor Common.

- The central part of the parish, to the north of the A283, is in the North Rother Valley Sandy Arable Farmland character area (M1). It is characterised by gently undulating lowland sandstone landscape with well-drained, easily eroded sandy soils. Generally, the landscape is low lying and associated with agriculture such as at Douglaslake Farm, Sorrels Farm and Limbourne Farm all now incorporated into larger farms such as Fitzleroi Farm. Mature standard oaks and ancient woodland remnants are key ecological features as are the floodplain habitats associated with the River Rother. Fittleworth House and development around it lies within this character area.
- The southern part of the parish, south of the A283, is within the Rother Farmland and Heath Mosaic (L2) character area. Most of Fittleworth village lies within this character area, as do the settlements of Tripp

Hill, and Coates. The area outside of the settlements is characterised by a well-drained, sandy lowland landscape including Hesworth Common and Fittleworth Common to the north of the River Rother and Coates Common to the south of the river. It has a mosaic of oak and birch woodland, conifer plantations, open sandy heaths and rough grazed pasture. Views are generally limited by dense woodland cover, however there is a significant viewpoint at Hesworth Common (viewpoint 59 in the South Downs National Park: View Characterisation and Analysis report).

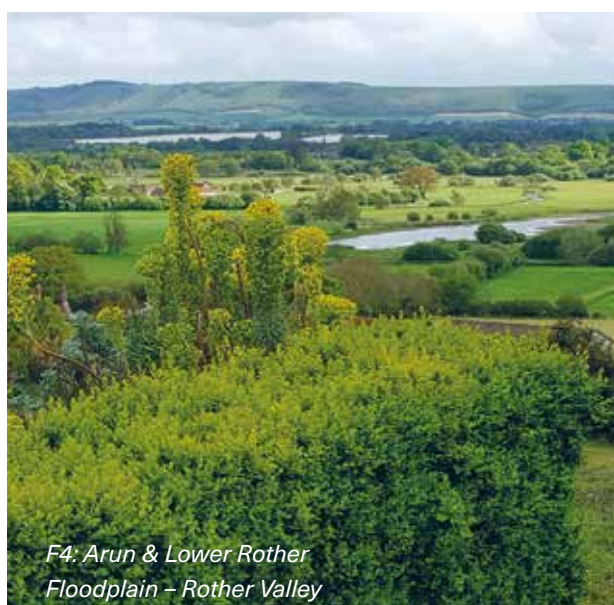
- The Arun and Lower Rother Floodplain (F4) lies within the above character area and follows the course of the River Rother in the parish. The Rother is a tributary of the Arun and has periodically waterlogged silty soils that support permanent pasture within fields reclaimed from the floodplain and supports important ecological flora.

**4.3** The character areas are illustrated by the images on the next page.



*Landscape Character Areas map  
Source: South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment (2011)*







## The River Rother

**4.4** The River Rother flows through the southern part of the parish and to the south of the village of Fittleworth. Its banks are designated for their ecological value. In the winter the river regularly floods over the water meadows which lie mostly to the south of the river. Areas adjacent to the River Rother have been designated as flood zone 3 by the Environment Agency. This means that the land has a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding. Several flooding incidents from the River have occurred over recent years. This has resulted in flooding of nearby houses and on occasion the road bridge on the B2138 was blocked to all but specialist vehicles. There are small areas of standing water throughout the parish.

**4.5** The area to the north of the River Rother has been identified as

a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone due to the risk of nitrates being washed off farmland into the watercourses.

**4.6** The village of Fittleworth regularly experiences surface water flooding. The topography of the area with higher land to the north of the parish running down to the River Rother, combined with the high water table in the northern part of the settlement, contributes to the problems of surface water flooding. In addition the high water table leads to the existence and unpredictable appearance of springs around the village.

**4.7** Parts of Fittleworth Parish are within a groundwater source protection zone. Development in these parts will only be permitted when there is no adverse impact on the quality of the groundwater source.



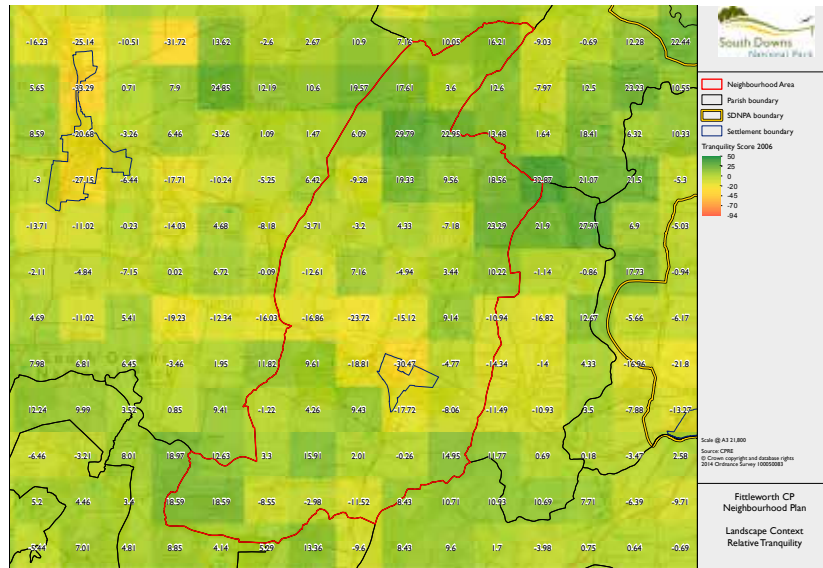
*Flooding to west of bridge in Winter 2013/14*



## Tranquillity

**4.8** According to the South Downs National Park (SDNP) Landscape Context for Relative Tranquillity the north west and south east of the parish are the most tranquil. The A and B roads reduce the levels of tranquillity around Fittleworth village; however, these are still above the lowest range for tranquillity defined in this study.

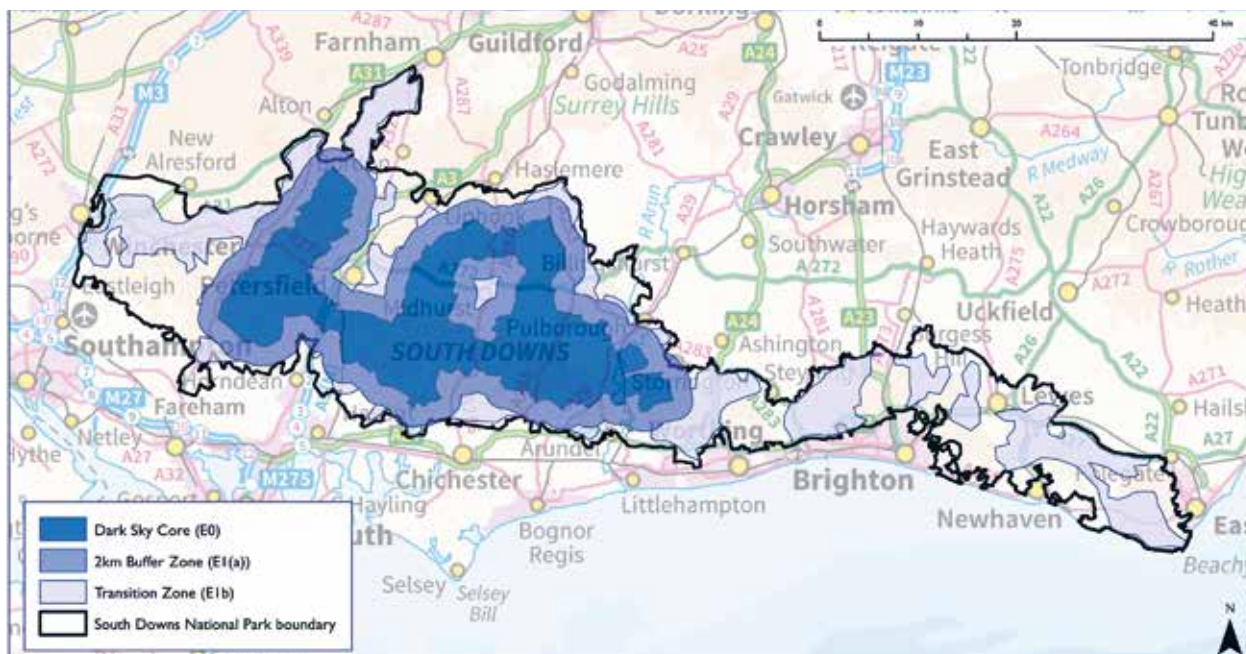
*Tranquillity map*  
Source: CPRE



## Dark Night Skies

**4.9** The South Downs National Park has been defined as an International Dark Sky Reserve by the International Dark Sky Association. In accordance with this designation the National Park Authority will seek to protect the Park from intrusive light pollution and

will encourage the reduction of light pollution in areas where night light levels are higher. In the maps recently published by the Campaign to Protect Rural England the whole of Fittleworth parish is shown as being within the darkest category of night sky.



# 5 ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF FITTLEWORTH

**5.1** The parish of Fittleworth has a high level of biodiversity reflecting the varied habitats and their generally high quality condition. A comprehensive parish-wide Habitat Survey was conducted in the summer of 2015 by a team from the village working under the guidance of rangers from The South Downs National Park Authority. The full survey includes maps covering the entire parish, each outlining habitat types by area. An overview of the findings of this survey are included in Appendix 2 to this Plan.

**5.2** There are several sites with designations for their ecological value throughout the parish, which are summarised below.

## International Designations

**5.3** Part of The Mens is situated in the northern part of the parish and is designated as Special Area for Conservation. This recognises the international importance of this site. It is one of the most extensive examples of Wealden Woodland in West Sussex. The Mens qualifies as a SAC for both habitats and species. The habitat consists of Atlantic acidophilus beech forests with Ilex and Taxus shrub layer. The site also contains Barbastelle bats (a protected species under the Habitats Directive). Ebernoe Common

Special Area of Conservation is located approximately 7km from the parish and is also designated for its colonies of Barbastelle bats, and also Bechstein's bats. Development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area has the potential to affect the Barbastelle foraging areas and flightlines which can extend for several kilometres from the SACs.

**5.4** Development proposals on greenfield sites and sites that support or are in close proximity to suitable commuting and foraging habitat (including mature vegetative linear features such as woodlands, hedgerows, riverine and wetland habitats) within the Neighbourhood Plan area should have due regard to the possibility that Barbastelle and Bechstein bats will be utilising these features to access The Mens Special Area of Conservation and Ebernoe Common Special Area of Conservation and will be required to incorporate necessary surveys and ensure that key features (foraging habitat and commuting routes) are retained, in addition to a suitable buffer to safeguard against disturbance. This will ensure no loss or severance of existing commuting and foraging routes occurs either from direct land take or disturbances from lighting, noise and vibrations both during construction and operational phase of any development.

## National Designations

**5.5** There are four Sites of Special Scientific Interest which is a designation that recognises sites with national ecological importance. The four sites are:

- Coates Castle SSSI
- Lords Piece SSSI
- Bognor Common Quarry SSSI
- The Mens SSSI.

**5.6** In addition, there is a SSSI along the River Arun to the east of the parish boundary in Stopham parish which could be affected by development within Fittleworth.

## Local Designations

**5.7** In addition, there are six sites with local designations known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. These have ecological importance at the county level. The sites are:

- Hammer Moor and Woodland SNCI
- River Rother SNCI
- Coates Sandpit SNCI
- Hesworth Common SNCI
- Flexham Park SNCI
- Old Orchard Meadows SNCI.



# 6 HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF FITTLEWORTH

**6.1** The name Fittleworth has Saxon origins. However there have been numerous local finds of flint axe heads and other knapped flints as evidence of a Mesolithic and possibly Palaeolithic culture. At Coates, LIDAR technology uncovered a group of Bronze Age barrows, and Roman artefacts have also been found.

**6.2** Its original corn watermill, Little Bognor corn watermill, the old clapper bridge over the Rother (now two bridges); and the parish Church of St Mary the Virgin and St Agatha's at Coates, were all probably in place by 1200. 'Tripp Hill' at the south of the village on the far side of the Rother and 'Hesworth Common' (deriving from 'William de Heresworth') were there in the 1300s. Certain farm fields north of Upper Street (A283) retain their medieval field boundaries.

**6.3** 'Two hostleries' – The Swan Inn in lower Fittleworth and The White Horse Inn at the main crossroads (now White Horse Cottages) as well as more cottages, a fulling mill and the main farms existed by the mid-1500s.

**6.4** The woods would have been supplying charcoal, for the iron furnaces for villages in the locality by the 1500s and for the nearby glassmaking furnaces and brickmaking kilns. Wood was important for the many timber-framed village buildings and some homes are built from the sandstone and ironstone quarried in the parish and nearby.

**6.5** By 1841 Fittleworth had a new National School, a selection of shops and a post office, a lock on the river and a number of substantial farms. By 1889 there was a railway station (closed for passenger traffic in 1955) which led to residential development around the Tripp Hill area. By early 1900 there was a Mission Room on the edge of Hesworth Common and the Chapel and Schoolroom of St Michael and all Angels at Bedham.

**6.6** The older parts of Fittleworth village lie within a Conservation Area, being part of Bedham Lane, and most of Lower Street down to the river, and there are two other Conservation Areas in the parish;

namely Coates Conservation area and Little Bognor Conservation Area.

**6.7** The Conservation Areas contain numerous Listed Buildings as well as those outside the conservation areas. Across the parish there are 89 Listed, including two Grade I Listed Buildings; the Church of St Agatha at Coates and the Church of St Mary the Virgin within Fittleworth village. Finally, Fittleworth Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Conservation Areas and ancient monuments are illustrated on the map below.

**6.8** Greatpin Croft, a substantial area of social housing was constructed between the 1930s and 1950s and other developments such as the Gardens, School Close, Wyncombe Close and High Trees have all been constructed between 1950 and the early 2000s. Much of the other development is infill providing a rich diversity of styles and accommodation. Most, but not all of the listed buildings in the village lie in the conservation areas all of which were designated in 1984.



Swan Inn 1911

 Conservation areas       Ancient monument





## Creative Associations

**6.9** The Arts have played an important part in the life of the parish over the ages. A beautifully carved Roman sculpture 'Iphigenia' was discovered in Fittleworth; St Mary the Virgin's, Fittleworth has a fourteenth century font carved from local 'Petworth marble' also known as 'winklestone', and there are some well-preserved sixteenth century wall paintings (now at the Weald and Downland Museum, Singleton), that were uncovered in a house in Fittleworth in the late 1960s.

**6.10** Artists including JMW Turner and John Constable have sketched and painted views of Fittleworth and the surrounding countryside (some now in Tate Britain and the Victoria and Albert Museum) and Charles Sims RA, Rex Vicat Cole and Phillip Padwick lived and painted in the village. The Swan Inn became well known as a haunt of creative people in the late 19th, early 20th century, including Sir Hubert Parry and Rudyard Kipling. Until a few years ago there was a panelled dining room with many of the paintings by artists who dined or stayed in return

for a piece of their artwork. The room has been updated but many of the paintings are still in the Swan.

**6.11** Sir Edward Elgar, composer and conductor, rented a cottage, Brinkwells in Bedham Lane in 1917. He found the quiet woodland inspirational 'wood magic' and it was while living in Bedham, that Elgar wrote the greater part of his 'cello concerto Opus 85 in 1919, as well as the violin sonata opus 82, string quartet opus 83 and the piano quintet opus 84.

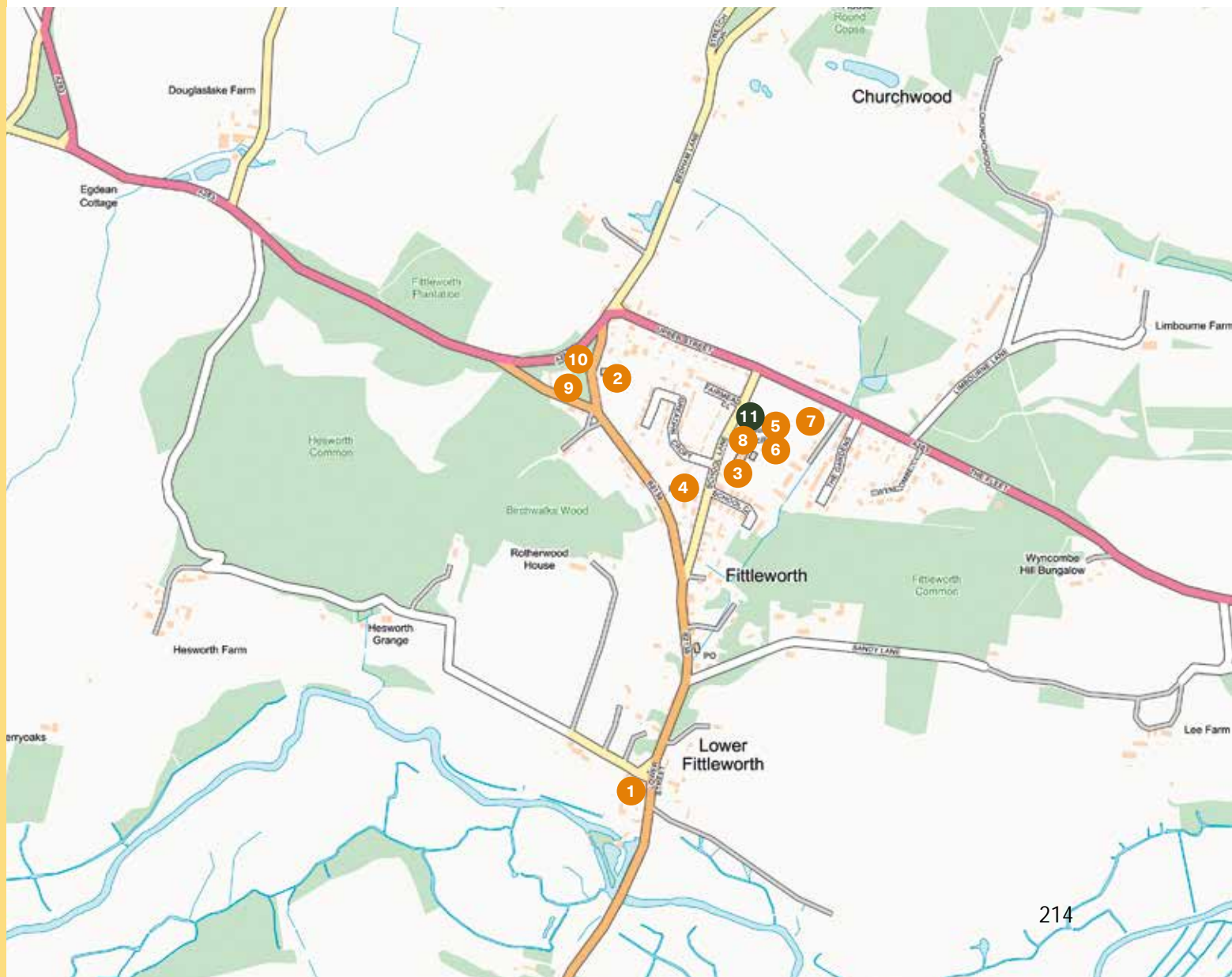


*Brinkwells – Elgar's summer home 1917-1921*

# 7 FITTLEWORTH VILLAGE TODAY

7.1 The village settlement area comprises approximately 450 properties. It also contains The Swan village pub/restaurant, the historic St Mary the Virgin Parish Church, the primary school, free church, antiques shop, social club, village hall, recreation ground with facilities for football, cricket and stoolball, a young children's play area, bowling green and scout/ guide hut. There has been no village shop since 2011, but planning consent has now been granted to add this essential component of village life.

- 1 The Swan Inn
- 2 St Mary the Virgin Parish Church
- 3 Fittleworth C of E Village School
- 4 Free church
- 5 Social club
- 6 Village Hall
- 7 Recreation ground
- 8 Children's play area
- 9 Bowling green
- 10 Scout/guide hut
- 11 New village shop location





**7.2** A comparison between the 2001 and 2011 census data shows that there has been a decrease from 49% to 39% of residents aged between 0 and 44 and an increase from 51% to 61% of residents aged over 45.

**7.3** The census information highlighted that 71% of dwellings were owner-occupied. Fittleworth therefore has a larger proportion of owner-occupied housing and a lower percentage of social rented housing than the average in Chichester District and South East England.

**7.4** In addition, the average purchase price for a property sold in Fittleworth in the year ending March 2017 was £547,050 – well above the price an average working household in Chichester District would be able to afford. The minimum prices paid each year indicate that there are very few properties that would become available which could be afforded by lower income families.

**7.5** The initial survey of residents revealed that the village has a large working population together

with many retirees. There is a certain amount of commuting via Pulborough station and more jobs commuting by car to the local area. There is limited employment directly in the village but it does include the school, Sofas and Stuff, Tripp Hill garage, the antique shop, the Swan Inn, offices in Lower Street, local farms and the self-employed working from home. Maintaining and preserving local employment possibilities will be important.

**7.6** The loss of the local shop and Post Office in 2011 has been a major area of concern for some time. A group under the direction of the Parish Council carried out a local survey and found a great deal of support for a community shop. Sufficient funds were raised and commitments were made to progress the plans to the point where planning permission has been sought and granted; design and major fundraising are progressing. The shop and café will be located on the site currently occupied by the children's play area. The latter is in need of refurbishment and renewal

and will be relocated at the same time to an adjacent site. The siting of the shop fronting School Lane and with the benefit of the adjacent village hall car park in the heart of the settlement area is important. It will be close to the village school, and adjacent to the village hall, sports and social club and recreation ground. It will be in reasonable walking distance of most of the houses within the settlement area reducing the need for car transport.

**7.7** The key sustainability issues for Fittleworth that need to be taken into account in the Neighbourhood Plan are set out in the table overleaf. These are presented as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They have been identified by taking into account the relevant plans and policies that relate to this Parish and also the baseline information. These have also been influenced by sustainability issues identified by the South Downs National Park Authority and the Fittleworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.



# Strengths

- A strong sense of community with a reasonable number of community facilities in comparison to the size of the village and several active community groups.
- A village that has maintained its rural nature and its distinctive character, with much of the Parish being very tranquil.
- A high quality built environment with many heritage assets that are protected through national designations.
- A rich ecology that adds to the rural character of the area and the high quality of the landscape.
- An excellent network of local footpaths and bridleways provides access to the open countryside, as well as to common land and heathland within Fittleworth.
- A high percentage of the population is skilled and many have home based employment.
- A thriving Primary School with over 50% of pupils from the immediate village.

# Opportunities

- Additional allocations for housing identified through the Neighbourhood Plan could address the pressing need for smaller affordable homes with a mix of tenures.
- Additional allocations for housing could stem the movement towards an older population, and would support local community facilities e.g. the primary school, as well as creating a more demographically balanced community.
- Appropriate scale development could provide opportunities to enhance the local landscape/townscape and ecology.
- Appropriate policies in the Neighbourhood Plan would ensure that new development reflects the existing density and scale and use of sympathetic materials.
- New development schemes could incorporate appropriate renewable and low carbon technology as well as measures that increase water efficiency and reduce the risk of flooding.
- Appropriate policies in the Plan could support the enhancement of the special qualities of Fittleworth, including the important ecological, environmental and heritage features.
- Infrastructure contributions from new development could support improved sustainable transport measures such as pavements and cycle paths and traffic speed reduction measures.



# Weaknesses

- Population is not demographically balanced with a larger percentage of the population aged over 65.
- A lack of smaller (1 and 2 bedroomed) affordable properties to allow young people to move into the area and for older residents to downsize.
- A lack of mixed tenure with most properties being owner occupied and expensive compared to local average salaries.
- Over reliance on non-sustainable forms of transport and limited public transport serving the village.
- Issues of highway safety from speeding, and heavy traffic, on the A283 and B2138 through Fittleworth and HGV's using the B2138 deemed unsuitable for heavy vehicles by the Highway Authority.
- Limited employment and services, such as medical facilities, within the parish combined with limited public transport is an issue for those without access to a car.

# Threats

- Potential for the age profile of the area to continue to be dominated by older retired residents.
- Limited local employment opportunities mean most residents commute which could increase with more housing.
- There is a high quality landscape and a number of built heritage designations and these important qualities could be lost to inappropriate development.
- Parts of the area regularly experience fluvial flooding (adjacent to the River Rother) as well as surface water flooding.
- Changes to the climate could increase pluvial and fluvial flooding and have a negative impact on the landscape and ecology.

## 8 POLICIES

**8.1** All development within Fittleworth is required to be in accordance with the purposes of the National Park which are to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and
- Promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of

the National Park's special qualities by the public.

**8.2** The National Park Authority also has the duty to

- Seek to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities within the National Park.

## The Environment

*Objective 1: To conserve and enhance the local environment, taking opportunities to enhance the local landscape, ecology and heritage and incorporate measures to reduce the risk of flooding, or other damage to the environment.*

## Landscape

**8.3** The landscape of Fittleworth parish is described in more detail in section 4 of this Plan and is a major attraction of the village.

### POLICY FITT1 LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Development proposals which conserve and enhance the landscape character of Fittleworth parish and comply with all other relevant policies will be permitted. It should be clearly demonstrated that development proposals have had regard to:

- The key characteristics, sensitivities and development and management considerations for the landscape character area in which the development is located as set out in the South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment;
- The retention and reinforcement where appropriate of natural, cultural and historic landscape features on the site such as trees, hedgerows, heathland and topography;
- Safeguarding important local views such as those from Hesworth Common and from publicly accessible areas and public rights of way; and
- Conserving and enhancing the tranquillity of Fittleworth, particularly in the north west and south east of the parish

**8.4** The area also offers an interesting range of habitats for wildlife. This includes an internationally recognised Special Area of Conservation at the Mens to the north of the parish; several nationally designated Sites of

Special Scientific Interest; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Interest. Further details are included in section 4 of this Plan and the survey undertaken in 2015 which is Appendix 2 of this Plan.

**8.5** The darkest areas and most tranquil parts of the Parish are identified in maps contained within the South Downs Local Plan.

## POLICY FITT2 BIODIVERSITY

Development proposals which conserve and enhance the biodiversity of Fittleworth and comply with all other relevant policies will be permitted. It should be clearly demonstrated that development proposals have had regard to:

- a) The requirements of the Habitats Regulations, in particular the need to carry out an 'Appropriate Assessment' where development is likely to have a significant effect on the integrity of The Mens Special Area of Conservation and Ebernoe Common Special Area of Conservation;
- b) The requirement to carry out an Ecological Impact Assessment if the proposal affects a SSSI or a SNCI; and
- c) The need to protect and take opportunities to enhance the biodiversity of Fittleworth including existing habitat networks and wildlife corridors.

Development proposals which could support or are in close proximity to protected species will be required to incorporate necessary surveys and ensure that National and SDNPA guidelines are followed in full. An explanation of the importance of the bats in The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC, and the reasons for giving the area particular consideration, is provided in section 5.

## Management of the water environment and utility infrastructure

**8.6** To the south of the village the extensive flood-plain of the river Rother is accessible to the public by footpaths. Access in winter is often restricted by flooding and

at such times the area attracts a wide assortment of wildfowl. The maintenance of verges, ditches and culverts is integral to the general upkeep of the village.

**8.7** The wider aspects of drainage and the effect it may have on downstream ditches, culverts and streams must be at the forefront of any considerations for additional development. The floodplain along the river Rother valley is an important storage and drainage resource

which must not be constrained. Generally, the system works well in heavy rainfall with local residents ensuring that ditches are cleared of debris. However serious floods over the road by the bridges occurred in 2000 caused by blocked drains, and again in 2013/14 demonstrating that high levels of rainfall over a short period can result in flooding of roads and properties. Moreover, extensive development upstream could exacerbate future flooding.

## POLICY FITT3 WATER AND UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT

All new developments will need to demonstrate that there is a surface water management plan that shows that the risk of flooding both on and off site is minimised and managed. Proposals which seek to manage and improve the drainage function, water quality and biodiversity of the River Rother, the River Arun, the Fleet Stream and other local watercourses will be supported. New and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community, subject to other policies in the Plan.

Part of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within a Ground Water Protection Zone (see map overleaf), therefore new development should ensure that it does not negatively impact on this zone and hence affect water quality.

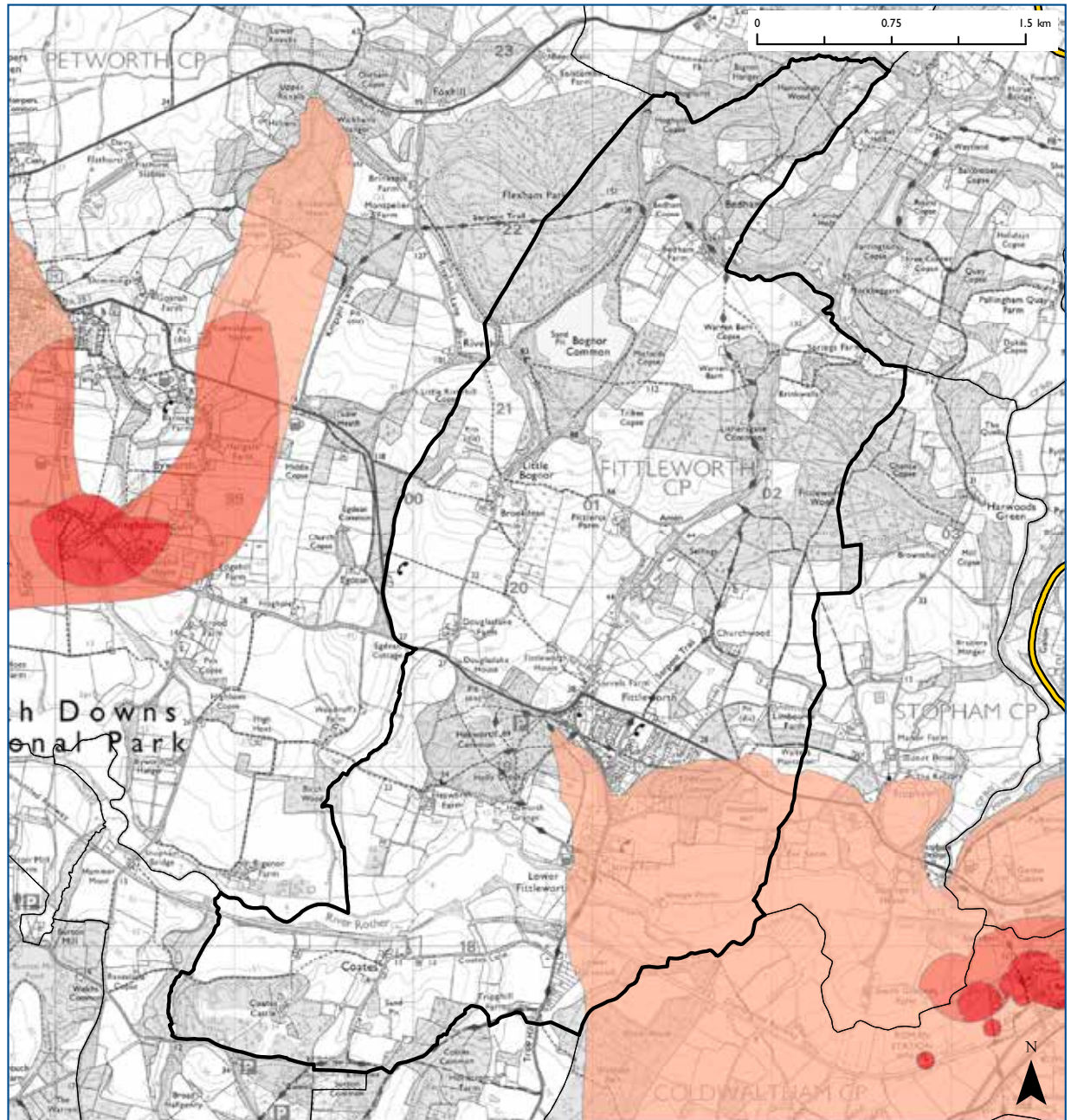


**SOUTH DOWNS  
NATIONAL PARK**

# Fittleworth CP Neighbourhood Development Plan



## Source Protection Zones



- |  |                    |  |                        |
|--|--------------------|--|------------------------|
|  | Neighbourhood Area |  | Source Protection Zone |
|  | Parish boundary    |  | 1                      |
|  | SDNPA boundary     |  | 2                      |
|  |                    |  | 3                      |

Scale at A4 1:30,600

Contains Environment Agency information ©  
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Ordnance Survey 100050083



## Heritage

**8.8** Parts of Fittleworth village lie within a Conservation Area and there are two other Conservation Areas in the parish; namely Coates Conservation area and Little Bognor Conservation Area. The Conservation Areas in particular but not exclusively, contain numerous Listed Buildings. Across the parish there are 89 Listed, including two Grade I Listed Buildings; the Church of St Agatha at Coates and the Church of St Mary within Fittleworth village. Finally, Fittleworth Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

**8.9** These heritage assets are highly valued by the community, and their long term conservation may require restoration, repair or re-use. Policy FITT4 seeks to support this where the intrinsic character and historic value of the building is conserved and enhanced.



### POLICY FITT4 BUILT HERITAGE

The sustainable re-use, maintenance and repair of listed buildings and other heritage assets will be supported where the intrinsic character and historic value of the asset and of the wider historic environment is conserved and enhanced. The South Downs National Park is committed to the preparation of character appraisals and management plans for the conservation areas but admits it will take many years to achieve comprehensive coverage. The one Grade II listed building at risk has been fully restored in the last year.



## Design and Character

*Objective 2: To secure development that enhances the design, character and appearance and landscape setting of the village; reflects the existing density, scale and use of local materials and incorporates appropriate renewable and low carbon technology.*

**8.10** The key quality which gives Fittleworth its physical identity is diversity. The range of building materials employed has long been extensive, ranging from the original timber-framing with wattle and daub infill to local sandstones and, most commonly, brick. Clay tiling both for roofing and for tile cladding is the norm, but slate and composite materials will be found, and even a little thatch and Horsham slate. Very many houses, particularly the older ones, are a mix of a number of these materials. Crowsole and Fittleworth Mills and a sprinkling of farm barns, now mainly converted, are the only extant formerly industrial buildings.

**8.11** For all their diversity, most developments over the centuries have been sensitive to their

immediate surroundings, and the Fittleworth of today is a reasonably comfortable mix of materials and styles. The greatest threats to that comfortable mix posed by development are standardisation and anonymity. A further threat is a failure to respect scale with particular reference to height. Diversity and domesticity of scale must, therefore, be sustained by approaches such as the widest possible use of local materials, encouragement of interesting but appropriate design, extending to such seeming details as roof lines, and a general presumption against developments of more than two storeys including dormers. Developments must nevertheless meet the internal space standards likely to be required in at least

the medium term. In addition, all development should be compatible both with the immediate landscape and with adjacent buildings. The corollary is that it should similarly respect the housing density of the near locality. The provision of private and secure garden space for each dwelling is deemed important; large enough to provide a safe play area for younger children.

**8.12** Fittleworth's physical diversity also has a social dimension. Big houses and small cottages have traditionally been built side by side, which has fostered interdependence and neighbourliness. It is the reverse of the increasingly fashionable 'gated development' approach. It is as important to sustain this social diversity as it is to sustain physical diversity.



*Fittleworth's varied architecture*



## POLICY FITT5 DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals will contribute to the high quality built and natural environment of Fittleworth parish by having regard to the form, layout, architectural style and materials of the parish's vernacular architecture. Careful innovation in design and modern reinterpretations of historic designs are supported. Design principles for new development and alterations to existing buildings will demonstrate:

- That the scale of development is suitable for its location;
- That the density is in keeping with the surrounding development and reflects the need for smaller units of accommodation to meet local needs;
- That adequate circulation and parking spaces together with private and secure gardens for each unit are incorporated within the development to enable ease of movement benefit existing and future residents and provide safe play areas for children without undue supervision;
- That connectivity exists or is improved, particularly by foot and/or public transport from the development to nearby facilities;
- That the boundary treatment around individual plots clearly defines public and private spaces, is appropriate to Fittleworth, and is not suburban in character;
- That traditional materials will be incorporated such as locally sourced or second-hand sandstone, brick, wood and clay tiles;
- That sustainable construction methods will be used that minimise the use of resources during construction and the lifetime of the building;
- That the development will contribute to and be compatible with local fibre or internet connectivity;
- That the development incorporates where appropriate renewable and low carbon technology. Such technology should not detract from the from the high quality landscape and built environment of the parish;
- Where appropriate development should employ Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems; and
- That appropriate landscaping and screening will be required on the boundaries of each site



## Community Facilities

*Objective 3: To support existing and new community facilities to meet the needs of the parish including the provision of a local shop, and to protect existing sites currently providing local employment*

### POLICY FITT6 NEW COMMUNITY SHOP

A site adjacent to the Fittleworth Village Hall, as shown on the Policies Map, is allocated for a new community shop, subject to the development principles outlined below:

- a) The existing play area will be replaced by one of equivalent or better size and quality elsewhere on the recreation ground;
- b) Customers will be able to use the Village Hall car park but it is hoped that being in the centre of the settlement area shop users will walk to the shop; and
- c) The design should be congruent with the principles laid out in Objective 2.

**8.13** Further detail about the plan for a new community shop is given in section 7.



# Housing

*Objective 4: To improve opportunities for young families with limited financial resources and in housing need to live in the village by encouraging and supporting the provision of affordable/low cost housing, with preference given to those in local employment or with family connections in the parish.*

**8.14** The Housing Survey (Appendix 1) identified an estimated housing need of 7-31 units, of which:

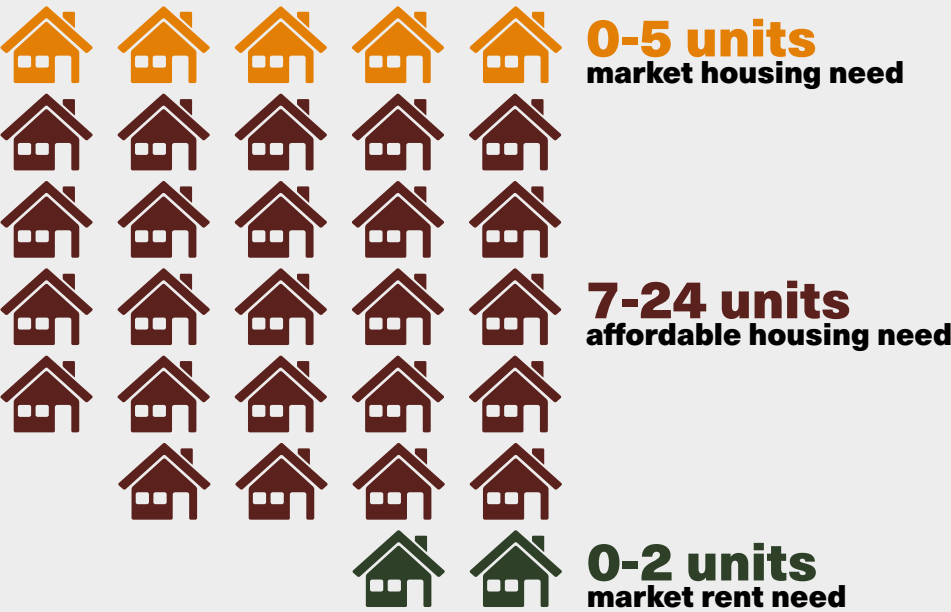
- 0-5 units are market housing need
- 7-24 units are affordable housing need
- 0-2 units are market rent need

**8.15** The Survey also identified the main housing issues as:

- An aging population who require smaller accommodation for downsizing, both market and affordable tenure:- Bungalows (1, 2 & 3 bedrooms) – Age restricted (1 & 2 bedrooms)
- Younger household needs for affordable rented tenure:- 1

bedroom flats – 2 bedroom houses: for first time buyer accommodation – Mainly 2 bedroom houses.

**8.16** There is a concern that smaller properties are being extended into larger ones, thereby reducing further the provision of small properties to meet the identified need. Policy FITT7 seeks to address this issue.



## POLICY FITT7 EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING DWELLINGS

The extension of existing dwellings beyond what is allowed by permitted development rights will be permitted provided that:

- a) It complies with other relevant policies;
- b) It does not result in the loss of a small dwelling (defined as under 100 square metres); and
- c) It does not increase the floorspace of the dwelling by more than 30%.



## Location of Housing Sites

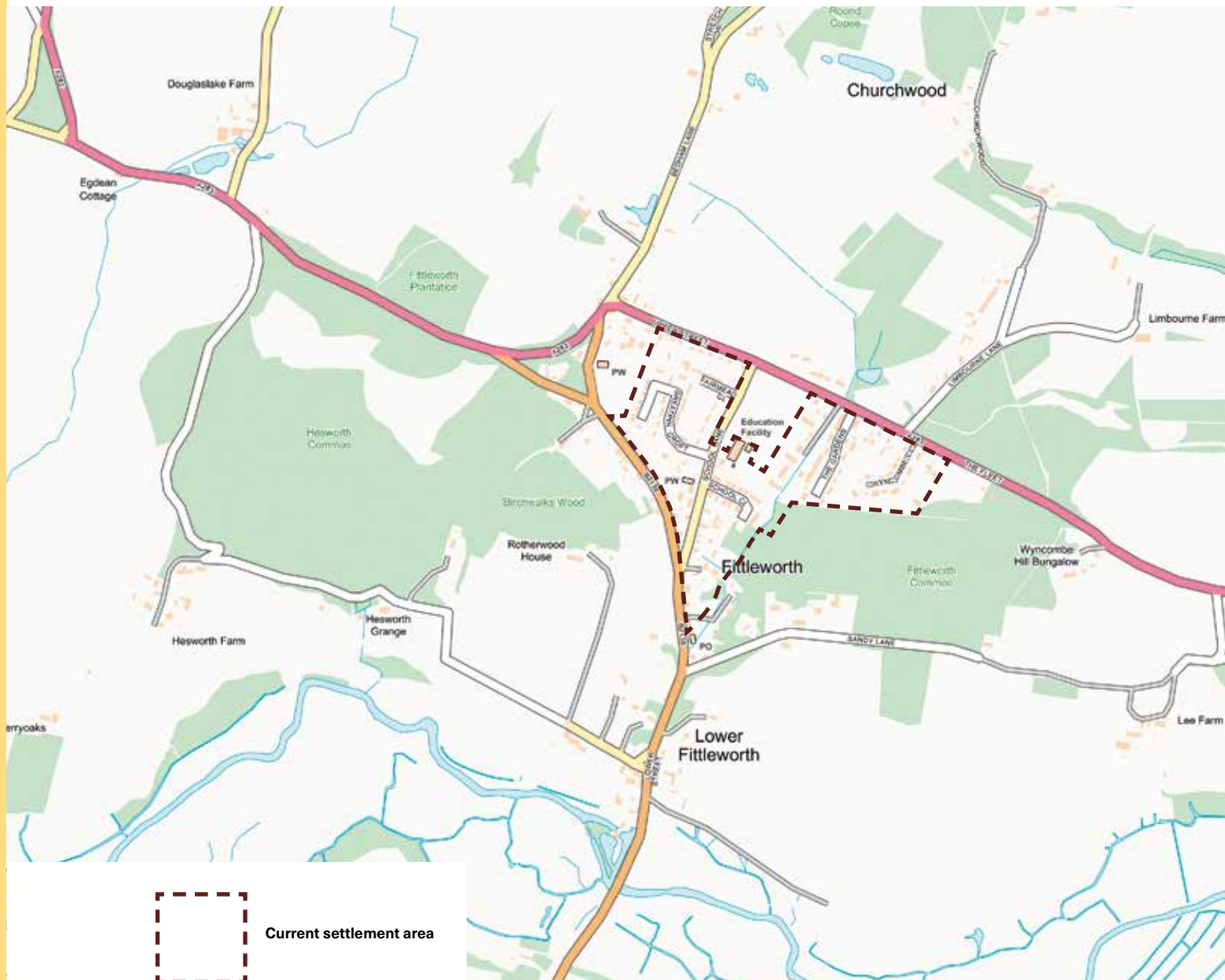
**8.17** Whilst this neighbourhood development plan seeks to allocate additional housing sites, it is accepted that some other sites may come forward during the plan period. Policy FITT8 provides criteria to assess such applications and ensure that any development is sustainable.

**8.18** In the context of Fittleworth 'sustainable' means:

- A range of homes that respond to people's needs both now and in the future.
- Development which imposes the minimum environmental burden on the area and its resources, both during its construction and throughout its lifespan.
- Development which both connects to the past and includes

current features which provide enhancement to the area particularly in respect of energy usage and environmental factors.

- Development which is in locations which are within the settlement area as expanded by this Plan or specifically allocated in this neighbourhood development plan and within walking distance of the facilities thereby contributing to the long-term sustainability of the village.



**8.19** Fittleworth is located 2 miles from Pulborough where there is a railway station providing access direct to London (via Horsham) to Crawley and Gatwick Airport and to the south coast. A bus service runs along the A283 providing services to Worthing and Midhurst via

Pulborough and Petworth.

**8.20** All new homes will have easy access to public transport and pedestrian access to and within the settlement area.

**8.21** Where development takes place proper consideration must be given to the wider issues of traffic in the

area. This particularly applies to development along the A283 and B2138. Reduced speed limits or mini roundabouts can facilitate improved traffic flows and improve safety, or other speed reduction measures could be incorporated as necessary and appropriate.

## POLICY FITT8 NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

New housing development within the settlement boundary of Fittleworth that complies with all other relevant policies will be supported provided that:

- a) The development is located where there is easy access to public transport and pedestrian access to and within the settlement area;
- b) Opportunities should be taken where appropriate to mitigate the impact of the development on the local transport network, and provide a safe access point onto the highway;
- c) The development includes a range of homes that respond to peoples' needs both now and in the future including a percentage and tenure of affordable homes that complies with the relevant development plan policies. This policy will be applied to new build and resale on the sites within the plan.

New housing development outside of the settlement boundary of Fittleworth will not normally be permitted unless it is demonstrated that it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture, horticulture, forestry or another use that requires a rural location.

## Sites to be allocated for housing development

**8.22** A number of potential sites had been identified by local residents, the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group and the South Downs National Park Authority.

**8.23** A public consultation event was held on 30th/31st October 2015. An exhibition provided results of the survey together with plans of

the proposed sites. Attendees were invited to complete a questionnaire which gave them the opportunity to indicate their preferences with regard to the proposed sites. 93 questionnaires were completed the majority of which were from households rather than from individuals. This represents approximately 25% of households

**8.24** The proposed sites were all assessed against criteria reflecting the objectives of the Plan and normal planning considerations. This site appraisal is provided at Appendix 3. Policy FITT9 identifies those sites to be allocated and provides

development principles to guide future applicants and decision-makers for planning applications. The boundaries of the sites are shown on the Policies Map.

**8.25** One of the sites considered was the proposal for 9 dwellings at the old Coal Yard, School Close. This has since been granted planning permission subject to an S106 agreement. Whilst these 9 dwellings count towards meeting the housing need of the parish, the site does not need to be allocated in this Plan as it is within the existing settlement boundary and is already a commitment.

## POLICY FITT9

### SITES ALLOCATED FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The following sites are allocated for housing development, as shown on the Policies Map, subject to the development principles outlined below (rejected sites are discussed at Appendix 9):

- a) Fleet Cottage (CH032) is allocated for about 6 homes provided that:
  - i) The settlement area to which this site abuts is extended to incorporate this site;
  - ii) Appropriate contributions are secured towards the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the village in accordance with Development Plan policies;
  - iii) The type and tenure of the housing reflects local need, in particular for one and two bedroom dwellings;
  - iv) Development is predominantly arranged to allow only one entry and exit point for cars onto the A283 and the development is small in scale and situated along the road frontage whilst a buffer area of land is used to reduce the visual impact on Fittleworth Common and the impact on adjacent properties to the east and west is adequately mitigated;
  - v) Appropriate measures are taken to manage the speed of traffic entering the village on the A283 from the east, including widening and improving the footway on the southern side of the road linking the site to village facilities;
  - vi) Each unit incorporates a private and secure garden area;
  - vii) Appropriate design and mitigation should be put in place with regard to impacts on bats, including retaining key features used by bats, avoiding installation of lighting, and limiting light spill to no greater than 0.5 lux outside of the boundaries of the development site; and
  - viii) A survey by a suitably qualified ecologist should be undertaken to support a planning application to assess the existing and likely barbastelle bat habitat.

The justification for the inclusion of this site is that it stands within existing housing development, it is potentially available, it will be within the settlement area with pedestrian access to the village community facilities, and with immediate access to public transport.

- b) Land at corner of Limbourne Lane/The Fleet (CH033) is allocated for about 12 homes provided that:
  - i) At least 40% of the units (i.e. homes) are affordable housing and secured as such in perpetuity;
  - ii) The type and tenure of the housing reflects local need, in particular for family dwellings;
  - iii) The development is designed to retain trees and other vegetation on the site with amenity value and ensure there is no hard urban edge within this sensitive street scene;
  - iv) Due to the water logging issues on site a Flood Risk Assessment and Strategy must be produced to ensure that surface water and ground water on the site can be adequately managed and will not cause flooding further down the Fleet Stream;
  - v) Appropriate measures are taken to manage the speed of traffic entering the village on the A283;
  - vi) Each unit incorporate a private and secure garden area;
  - vii) Safe vehicle access to the A283 and pedestrian access to the bus stop and village facilities must be provided;
  - viii) Appropriate design and mitigation should be put in place with regard to impacts on bats, including retaining key features used by bats, avoiding installation of lighting, and limiting light spill to no greater than 0.5 lux outside of the boundaries of the development site.;
  - ix) An Ecological Assessment should be carried out to establish if any priority species are



present and to identify suitable mitigation; and

- ixi) A survey by a suitably qualified ecologist should be undertaken to support a planning application to assess the existing and likely barbastelle bat habitat.

The justification of inclusion of this site are that it is potentially available, will be incorporated within the settlement area, is on a public transport route, and is in close proximity to village community facilities.

A number of sites were proposed by the Housing Surveys or by the SDNP but only those that can support 6 or more units have been incorporated as smaller sites are considered as windfall sites. These, if brought forward for development will face the same requirements as set out in this NDP. One of these sites which merits mention is:

Greatpin Croft (site CH031) was an area developed for social housing between the 1930s and 1950s. A number of units have been sold under the "right to buy" legislation, but much of the area is still owned by Hyde Housing Association. While no sites are currently available for the development of 6 or more units we anticipate that windfall sites will become available. If sites do become available the following rules should apply:

- i) All the dwellings are affordable housing and secured for occupation in perpetuity by people with a local connection to Fittleworth;
- ii) The type and tenure of the housing reflects local need, in particular for one and two bedroom dwellings; and
- iii) A survey by a suitably qualified ecologist should be undertaken to support a planning application to assess the existing and likely barbastelle bat habitat.

The justification for the inclusion of this site is that the area was originally designated for social housing and should not be released for private non affordable housing. The area is well within the settlement area with good access to the village school, hall, proposed shop, recreation ground and churches.



## Community aim – Traffic

**8.26** While outside the scope of the NDP, traffic is a major concern to the residents and threatens the quiet enjoyment and tranquillity of the village. Heavy traffic flows particularly of heavy and articulated lorries around peak hours are a major safety concern with regular accidents on the B2138 and at times on the A283. Some reduction in traffic movements, and traffic management and calming measures are called for in the short term.



*Above and below: Traffic on the B2138 – signed as unsuitable for HGVs*



## 9 MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**9.1** The Parish Council's monitoring of the operation of the Plan will principally be through its normal role of reviewing planning applications. This will enable us to keep track of the provision of affordable housing, and any changes which affect the numbers of one and two bedroomed dwellings in the parish.

# 10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**10.1** During the production of this Plan we had a great deal of assistance from a number of individuals and organisations.

**10.2** Particular thanks are due to Chris Paterson and Sarah Nelson of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), who have given us help and encouragement in many areas. SDNPA also arranged for the assistance of Claire Tester and Helen Peacock, who both made major contributions.

**10.3** We are also very grateful to Holly Nicol of Chichester District

Council, who produced the Rural Housing Survey (Appendix 1).

**10.4** The Habitat Survey (Appendix 2) was produced by a local team led by David Connell and advised by Alison Pitt of the SDNPA. The team carrying out the fieldwork for the survey comprised Viv Benham, Bridget Connell, Pauline Gilpin, Christine Parker, Judy Seal and Arthur Ellcome.

**10.5** Many other local residents have helped us by delivering and collecting survey forms, and by contributing ideas to the Plan at the consultation meeting.

**10.6** Thanks to Margaret Welfare for providing nearly all the photographic images used, and much of the material on the history of the village. We are grateful to the Smith Collection for permission to use the image of the Swan on page 11.

**10.7** The Steering Group responsible for the production of the Plan consisted of local residents Adrian Webb and Charles Clark plus parish councillors Mike Allin, Shelagh Morgan and Chris Welfare.

# 11 APPENDICES

- 1 Housing Survey Report
- 2 Habitat Survey 2015
- 3 Scoping report for Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA)
- 4 Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating SEA)
- 5 Habitat Regulations Assessment
- 6 Response to draft Neighbourhood Plan following public consultation meeting (October 2015)
- 7 Settlement area
- 8 Conservation Areas
- 9 Site Assessment for Fittleworth NDP



FITTLEWORTH  
NEIGHBOURHOOD  
DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2018-2033

**Design: Eyelevel Design**