

SANDLEHEATH PARISH COUNCIL

SANDLEHEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2024 - 2044

FINAL VERSION: SEPTEMBER 2026

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FOREWORD

As you may know a Neighbourhood Plan provides a village with a degree of protection from unwanted or overzealous development. It also provides the Parish with an increase in the Community Infrastructure Levy¹ (CIL) money from 15% to 25%.

You will all be aware of the Government's commitment to new housing which means there is a lot of pressure on all County Councils to deliver. NFDC is in a very difficult position as the area is mainly New Forest and is bordered by areas of outstanding natural beauty and the sea. This puts Fordingbridge and Sandleheath in a very vulnerable position. We are prime targets for development.

Given the amount of building in Fordingbridge and the recent attempts to build 1700 houses in Alderholt, the Parish Council felt a Neighbourhood Plan was crucial to provide some protection.

Many of you will not want to see any changes at all, or at least any new builds kept to a minimum and we understand that. Given the size of our village the generally accepted growth is 4.5 house a year, so over 20 years that is 90 new houses.

At the public meeting to review sites, the two most favoured were Land South of the Main Road (originally known as site 2) and Land to the North of the Main Road (originally known as site 5) so we focused our attention on these and have met with both site owners. The Land to the North of the Main Road has proposed 40 low density houses and is offering to gift to the village a parcel of land to the west of the development site. This area would provide an attractive green community space between Kerry Gardens and Sandle Manor that could not be built on. The site will also provide a car park for the village hall and a public open space with room for possibilities like a small football pitch, picnic area or similar whilst leaving plenty of space for families to enjoy it. There will also be a path provided to allow walkers to walk alongside the currently restricted Ladywalk path, past the large pond which will be fenced off, but can be viewed and enjoyed then on to join a path in the new estate which leads back to the main road.

Site 2 is across the road from the village hall and is proposing 57 low density homes. As part of the package, the site will gift two green spaces to the village for recreation alongside a small wooden building for general use and a further car park. The remaining green spaces which wrap around the site will be designated as recreational green spaces meaning no further development could occur and we have a beautiful area to walk in, plus it provides a protected corridor for wildlife. Due to the lay of the land and the style of homes proposed, this site will be barely visible from the main road.

These two sites meet our original target and they are both limiting the build to match Sandleheath style and look. Both sites are protecting the trees and hedgerows on the sites and offering to plant a lot more.

In addition, both sites will provide low cost/affordable housing which does not exist in the village. This will help first time buyers and young families to stay in the village and also give opportunities for those that wish to downsize in the future. The plan also extends the green space to the north of the village to try and prevent the village merging with Fordingbridge in the future.

We would like you to consider this draft plan carefully and bear in mind the fact that we do not want developments imposed on us, we want to negotiate the best deal for the village. The increase in CIL money will ensure the PC is able to consider local projects which would currently be unaffordable, so we can all benefit.

Thank you,

Sandleheath Steering Group

¹ <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/3991/Town-and-Parish-CIL>

2. BACKGROUND

History

2.1 Sandleheath is a civil parish in the New Forest District of Hampshire. It lies about 1.8 miles west of Fordingbridge. It is immediately north-east of the traditional tripoint between Hampshire, Dorset and Wiltshire. It covers an area of 1.89 sq/km. As an immediate neighbour to the Parish, the landscape of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, along with the nearby New Forest National Park, provide a tranquil rural backdrop to the village. Rockbourne Roman Villa is located two miles to the north of the parish.

2.2 Until the latter part of the 19th century the area known then as Sandhill Heath was a dispersed settlement of farms with a small ribbon of development along the road from the Elizabethan Sand Hill Manor (now Forres Sandle Manor School) in the east of the parish around the Georgian Sandle Lodge. Sandhill Heath was a very small hamlet that is situated on the London Clay deposits and as a result of this, a series of brickworks started up. In 1870 it is recorded that there were less than 20 dwellings in Sandhill Heath, in 1891, 32 with a total of 139 inhabitants including children. By 1909 the number of dwellings had almost doubled. Altogether there were five brickworks, Fordingbridge, West Park Estate, Billet's, Read's and Tanners. It is believed that about ten local houses were built using bricks produced in Sandleheath. A map from 1889 names the village as Sandhill Heath but by the 1901 census it had changed to Sandleheath. The Methodist chapel was built in 1884 on a site previously occupied by a brick kiln. The Anglican Church, St Aldhelms, was built in 1906 by a local builder using local bricks.

2.3 By the early 1960's all of the brickworks had closed due to competition from the more efficient larger companies. The current industrial estate is located on the site of a former brickworks. During the life of the growing village, there have been two shops, a Post Office, a bakery, an Off-Licence, and many years ago, a Public House. Today only one shop survives in the village, a highly valued, family owned convenience store.

Profile

2.4 Sandleheath has a population of just over 600 people. Its age profile (based on Census 2021 data) shows that it has more persons over the age of 60 than the national average, with the highest concentration on the 70 – 74 age profile which is double the national average at 11.1% (national average 5.5%). Those in the age profile 20 – 40 represent half the national average, although the second largest age profile for the parish in 2021 was in the 10- 14 age group.

2.5 Around half the population is defined as economically active which is around 10% lower than the national average and consistent with the age profile. It has more 2 person households than the average, but fewer 1 and 3 person households. A much higher number of its households have 2 or more vehicles than average.

2.6 It has many more houses and far fewer flats than average, with many more 3 and 4+ bedroom homes and far fewer 1- and 2-bedroom homes, meaning there is significant underoccupancy of households given nearly half comprise of 2 persons. The community has slightly above the national average of people working from home and far higher number travelling between 10km – 30 km to work than average. A much lower number of. People than average work within 10km of home.

Sandleheath

Area map



Population

610

people

56,490,000 people in England

Rounded to the nearest 10 people

Number of households

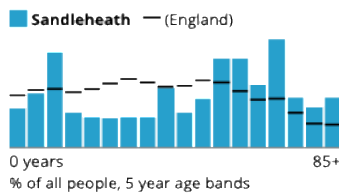
240

households

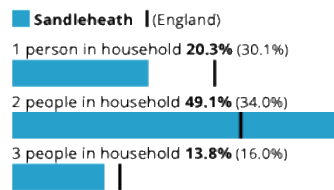
23,436,100 households in England

Rounded to the nearest 10 households

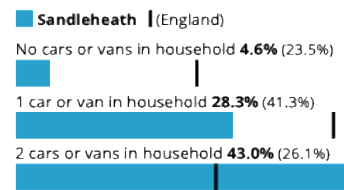
Age profile



Household size



Number of cars or vans



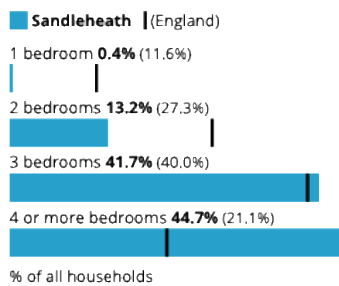
4 or more people in household
16.8% (19.9%)

% of all households

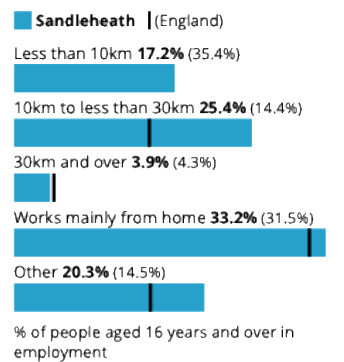
3 or more cars or vans in household
24.1% (9.1%)

% of all households

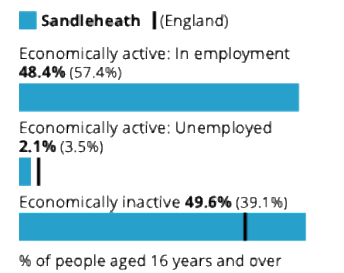
Number of bedrooms



Distance travelled to work



Economic activity status



Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021

Figure 2 Sandleheath Census Profile 2021 – Source: Office for National Statistics - Census 2021 Crown Copyright used under open government licence OGL.

Strategic Planning Policy

2.6 The SNP has been prepared to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the New Forest District Council Core Strategy (2009) [New Forest District Council Local Plan Part 2 adopted 2014](#) and [New Forest District Council Local Plan Part 1 \(2016 – 2036\)](#) adopted July 2020. The Local Plan and Core Strategy policies will eventually be replaced by an updated Local Plan, which currently has no proposed adoption date but will be undertaking Regulation 18 consultation at the end of 2025.

2.7 A fuller explanation will be set out in the Basic Conditions Statement as part of the submission but the key policies affecting Sandleheath are:

[The New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration 2005](#)

- Policy DW-E12 Protection of landscape features - Development will not be permitted which would cause the loss of, or irreparable damage to, open areas or other landscape features, including those identified on the proposals maps, which:
A contribute to the character or setting of a defined built-up area or defined New Forest village by reason of visual amenity; and/ or
B screen development which would otherwise have an unacceptable visual impact.

New Forest District Council Core Strategy (2009):

- Policy CS21 Rural economy – setting out a strategy for the rural economy applying to Sandleheath as a rural neighbourhood area that does not lie within the NFNPA area.

[New Forest District Council Local Plan Part 2 adopted 2014:](#)

- Policy DM1 Heritage and Conservation – *conserving and enhancing the historic environment, including listed buildings, and other heritage assets in the designated neighbourhood area.*
- Policies DM2 Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity and DM3 Mitigation of impacts on European nature conservation sites *within the designated neighbourhood area.*
- Policy DM9 Green Infrastructure linkages – *protecting and seeking improve connections between green infrastructure assets including those in the designated neighbourhood area.*
- Policies DM20 – DM25 on Countryside policies – *setting out the approach to development applying to the designated neighbourhood area*

[New Forest District Council Local Plan Part 1 \(2016 – 2036\)](#) adopted 2020

- Policies STR1 – STR3 on spatial strategy – *directing development to the most accessible locations within the district and protecting the countryside, and the adjoining National Park setting.*
- Policy STR4 Settlement hierarchy – *setting out the nature and scale of development with Sandleheath classified as a ‘main village’ suitable for small to medium sized growth*
Policy STR5 - *At least 800 homes on sites of 10 or more homes to be identified within or adjoining the defined towns and large villages and allocated in the Local Plan Part Two or in Neighbourhood Plans,*
- Policy STR7 Strategic transport priorities – *supporting and encouraging proposals resulting in improvements to accessibility of sustainable travel.*

- Policy STR8 Community services, infrastructure and facilities – *protecting existing and ensuring adequate provision of new infrastructure.*
- Policies ENV1 – ENV4 *on protecting the special environment of the district including the designated neighbourhood area.*
- Policies HOU1 – HOU5 *on the type, size and mix of new housing in the district including the designated neighbourhood area.*
- Policies CCC1 – CCC2 *on community safety and climate change for the district including the designated neighbourhood area.*

2.8 NFDC is bringing forward a new Local Plan to cover the period to 2042 but this is at a very early stage in its process. If more is published by NFDC before the SNP is submitted, an explanation of how reasoning and evidence of the emerging Local Plan ties in with the SNP will also be included in the Basic Conditions Statement.

2.9 The Hampshire Local Transport Plan LTP4 ([link](#)), adopted in February 2024, includes a number of policies that are relevant to this Neighbourhood Plan. Of particular relevance are the following:

- Policy HP1 – Deliver the infrastructure required to support a large-scale shift towards walking and cycling for everyday trips
- Policy HP2 – Enable healthy neighbourhoods and high streets in partnership with communities
- Policy RT1 – Maintaining accessibility in rural areas, and providing viable alternatives to the private car
- Policy RT2 – Sustainable access to the countryside
- Policy DM2 - Support proactive masterplanning of new development sites for high quality neighbourhoods.

National Planning Policy

2.10 The SNP has also has regard for national planning policy and guidance as set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#). The Basic Conditions Statement contains further details but the key policies are:

- §30 - neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area, which can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions
- §61- meeting the identified housing need, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
- §74- giving consideration to allocating small and medium sized sites suitable for housing in the area.
- §83 – promoting sustainable development in rural areas.
- §98a – planning should provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship)
- §98c/d – planning should also guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs and should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community
- §105 – protect and enhance public rights of way, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities by adding links to existing rights of way networks.

- §109e- identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.
- §176 - plans should apply a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development so as to avoid, where possible, flood risk to people and property

2.11 The SNP must demonstrate how its policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and how they will not cause any harm to important ecological areas (in respect of the Habitats Regulations). A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment have been prepared to accompany the SNP. These matters are also addressed in the Basic Conditions Statement.

Project Progress

2.12 Having set up the project in later summer 2024, SPC was keen to understand from the local community what it saw as the main planning and development issues in Sandleheath. A Steering Group comprising both SPC Councillors and representatives of the local community was set up to scope the plan and undertaken initial evidence gathering and research. The Steering Group had, through previous community work and recent planning application experience, identified a number of key areas which it felt were of concern to the community; these included where new development may go, ensuring that there remained a distinctiveness to Sandleheath and it did not just become an extension of neighbouring Fordingbridge and maintaining the look and feel of the parish in terms of its setting, design of new house, responding to climate change, green infrastructure and dark skies.

2.13 The Steering Group carried out a Call for Sites in November 2024 and undertook its own Housing Needs Survey, also in November 2024. Letters were delivered to every household. A first informal engagement exercise was carried out in December 2024 on emerging policy ideas (excluding potential site allocations)

2.14 A further informal engagement exercise took place in February 2025 focused exclusively on potential site allocations. The results of both engagement exercises can be found on the website and in the Consultation Statement which SPC will publish as part of the submission documents that will summarise the nature and outcome of the informal engagement and statutory consultation activities and how they have informed the SNP.

2.15 Subsequent to this further informal engagement the Steering Group continued to work on developing the plan, meeting with the landowners of preferred sites, writing to landowners of potential local non-designated heritage assets as well as developing the policy areas. The Pre-submission Plan was approved by the Parish Council in early June for the Regulation 14 Consultation which ran from 25th June to the 19th August, with the Submission version tabled for approval by the Parish Council in early October.

3. VISION, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

3.1 Our vision of Sandleheath is:

A unique village whose individual identity and way of life is protected and enhanced by ensuring its future is both sustainable and community led, and that development decisions are sympathetic to the local environment, maintaining its rural character, separation and distinctiveness.

3.2 The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan, are:

1. Enhance existing community facilities, widen their accessibility and create new facilities where appropriate.
2. Prevent the loss of the local village shop.
3. Bring forward an appropriate level of new residential development to address local housing need.
4. Ensure new development responds to the discrete setting of the village and respects the current layout, form and style of existing buildings.
5. Protect and enhance the local environment for the enjoyment of both local residents and wildlife.
6. Promote opportunities for improved active travel for wellbeing and recreational purposes.
7. Promote a healthy and resilient community by supporting mental wellbeing, social connection, access to nature, and inclusive services that meet the needs of all age groups.

3.3 The Neighbourhood Plan contains twelve policies, each of which is intended to contribute to one or more of these objectives. Each policy has a code number and title and the policy wording is in **Bold** text. Below each policy is some supporting text to explain the intent of the policy and how it should be understood by applicants and applied by NFDC to planning applications. The justification of each policy will be contained in the Basic Conditions Statement. Where a policy applies to specific land or sites in Sandleheath this is shown on the Policies Map.

Policy SAN1: SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Neighbourhood Plan defines the settlement boundary at Sandleheath, as shown on the Policies Map.

- A) Development proposals within the defined settlement boundary will be supported, provided they accord with policies of the Development Plan, including this Neighbourhood Plan.
- B) Development proposals outside of the defined settlement boundary will only be supported where they respond positively to national and local policies for the countryside and are appropriate to a countryside setting. In the context of the character of the neighbourhood area, this will include proposals that will:
 - (i) encourage agricultural, horticultural and forestry enterprises and farm diversification projects where this would be consistent with maintaining and enhancing the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;
 - (ii) retain existing employment sites, and encourage improvements and redevelopments that will help maintain and enhance the environment, and contribute to local distinctiveness;
 - (iii) support local business development through the conversion of existing buildings, with particular encouragement of enterprises that have little adverse environmental impacts (e.g. design/research activities);
 - (iv) support the local delivery of services;
- C) Proposals for development outside the National Landscape of Cranborne Chase and the New Forest National Park that are sufficiently prominent (in terms of its siting or scale) to have an impact on the special qualities of either of these areas will need to demonstrate that it would not adversely affect their setting.

3.4 This policy defines where and how proposals in both the main settlement and the wider countryside locations of the parish will be judged. Sandleheath is defined in the settlement hierarchy (Local Plan Policy STR4) as a “main village” and as such, being an appropriate location for small and medium (1 – 49 dwellings) developments that sustain its current village role in a manner that is cumulatively proportionate.

3.5 However, as a “Main Village” Sandleheath has limited social infrastructure with no schools, no public transport network and no healthcare facilities. Whilst most facilities can be found in Fordingbridge, this is a 30-minute walk (2.5km) from the middle of the village, with poor connectivity, no cycle ways and narrow footways are narrow unsuitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs, with no safe crossing points to connect them.

3.6 There is an existing settlement boundary (SPB) for Sandleheath, but this policy has redefined it to accommodate proposed new development site allocation(s) adjacent to it. (see Policy SAN5) Part of the defined settlement boundary for the adjacent settlement Ashford is also included within the SNP boundary.

3.7 The policy is in accord with saved policy CS21 [Local Plan Part 1 2009](#) which details permitted countryside development. It is noted that since the policy was introduced there has been a change to extend the permitted development rights pertaining to farms, so this element of the Local Plan policy has been omitted as it is not consistent with national policy.

Policy SAN2: LOCAL GAP

The Neighbourhood Plan defines a Local Gap between Sandleheath and Fordingbridge as shown on the Proposals Map for the purpose of preventing the coalescence of the settlements. The siting, scale, massing and height of development proposals for built development in the Local Gap should maintain the separate identities of Sandleheath and Fordingbridge and their physical separation one from the other.

3.8 The SNP vision seeks to retain the individuality of Sandleheath as a distinct community.

3.9 Over time the distance between the settlements of Sandleheath and Ashford/Fordingbridge has diminished. The policy has evolved from the desire to maintain a degree of separation between these settlements to reinforce the character and identity of Sandleheath to prevent settlement coalescence between the two by maintaining a clear visual and physical break in the built environment. The New Forest District Landscape Character Assessment (2000) states that the strategic gap between Sandleheath and Ashford is important in retaining these locations as distinct settlements. It further states that *any new development around existing settlements should be accompanied by significant tree and hedgerow planting to integrate buildings into the surrounding landscape pattern.*

3.10 Policy SAN2 reinstates the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration 2005 Local Gaps Policy DW-E33 which identified the land between Ashford and Sandleheath. It states:

Policy G3 of the Hampshire County Structure Plan Review enables the definition of Local Gaps in order to preserve the identity of settlements. The small areas of countryside between Fordingbridge and Ashford, and between Ashford and Sandleheath, are essential to the maintenance of the character, identity and setting of these settlements, and are therefore designated as Local Gaps.

3.11 Whilst this iteration of the Local Plan is no longer current, it demonstrates a longstanding acknowledgment through planning policy to maintaining this gap, albeit, it is noted that the adopted Local Plan does not contain a Local Gap policy.

3.12 This proposed Local Gap has been logically presented to balance the need for new housing with the need to avoid both spatial and visual coalescence between Sandleheath and Ashford and to reinforce the village settlement edges.

3.13 The main evidence base to support the Local Gap comes from the NFDC Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study (2016) and the NFDC Landscape Character Assessment (2000). It also responds to the strategic allocation in the NFDC Local Plan located within Fordingbridge where it abuts Sandleheath as well as the discrete setting of Sandleheath parish in the wider landscape.

3.14 At informal engagement respondents felt there was a logic in locating new development along the Main Road to minimise additional traffic through the village, as the majority of vehicle access is from the east. There was also a view that it would provide closer connections for walking and cycling into nearby schools, shops and services within Fordingbridge to make the village more sustainable. Others felt the gap was very important to prevent merging with Fordingbridge. To balance these competing objectives the gap has been drawn to maintain both spatial and visual separation, reinforcing the landscape buffer between Sandleheath and Ashford. The risk of coalescence from the north, around Sandle Manor School adjacent to the strategic site allocation at Fordingbridge which adjoins the Sandleheath Parish boundary was also felt to be equally important.

3.15 The policy should not prevent development that may otherwise be suited to a countryside setting or supports the rural economy (as set out in SAN1) within the gap, but ensures that the siting, scale, massing and height of any such proposals do not result in the integrity of the gap being undermined, maintaining the defining features of Sandleheath wooded farmland which include woodlands, hedgerows and hedgerow trees creating a strong sense of enclosure, with diverse habitats including streams, water meadows, commons and some ancient field systems.

Policy SAN3: DESIGN GUIDANCE AND CODES

Development proposals should be well-designed and respond positively to the character of the local area. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should have full regard to the design strategy and coding as set out in the Sandleheath Design Guidance and Codes (Appendix A). The design, scale and appearance of development proposals should be relevant to their location and respond positively to the setting and significance of designated and local heritage assets, locally important views and respect the rural character and discrete setting of the parish.

3.16 This policy idea is borne from the strong sense of 'place' which came through in the initial sessions with the Steering Group and the village walkabout, with residents wishing to see the look and feel of the existing village retained and ensure that any future development respects this in terms of design and layout. The policy idea also responds to a desire for development in the parish to be sustainable, emphasising the use more modern materials, techniques and styles which help homes to be more climate resilient, reduce energy consumption and promote a healthy community, in line with the Government's [Building for a Healthy Life Principles](#).

3.17 There are distinctive features of Sandleheath that shapes its character. These features are set out in the Sandleheath Design Guidance and Codes attached at Appendix A. The Code is an integral part of the policy but is extensive and the document is therefore attached as an Appendix for representational purposes only. It therefore carries the full weight of the development plan in decision making and is not subordinate or supplementary guidance carrying lesser weight.

3.18 The policy requires that applicants should demonstrate that they have full regard to the design principles and guidance the Code contains as relevant to the location of their proposals. The policy does not advocate pastiche or historic solutions; however, it is important that any new development demonstrates a connection with local character and place making. Where a proposal does not follow the requirements of the Code then the applicant will be obliged to justify why an exception should be made.

3.19 The Design Guidance and Codes also draws attention to a number of important local views, taken from places that are publicly accessible, well-used and regularly frequented by the local community and contain significant buildings and landscapes that help to define and enhance the character of the parish. Development proposals should pay particular attention to how the character and identity of Sandleheath is viewed through the landscape lens, to ensure that development proposals preserve or enhance the local character of the landscape or views of significant buildings in their design, demonstrating how they respond positively to the views and vista around the parish which the community value to help maintain the local distinctiveness of the parish and preventing development that will undermine the visual integrity of a number of key views that contribute to defining the tranquil and secluded character of Sandleheath.

Policy SAN4: HOUSING MIX, TYPE AND TENURE

- A) Wherever practicable and commercially viable, proposals for residential development should provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes to address the nature of local needs and contribute to the objective of creating a mixed and balanced community. To achieve this objective, provision should be made for smaller dwellings (1 bedroom - 3 bedroom) which should comprise 50% or more of the total in new residential development schemes of five or more dwellings. The tenure mix should also be suitable for first time buyers, those looking to rent a home and those looking to downsize.

- B) Wherever practicable and commercially viable, development proposals should be delivered as accessible and adaptable dwellings in accordance with Building Regulations M4(2) and/or M4(3).**

3.20 The Parish Council carried out a [Housing Needs Survey](#) in November 2024.

3.21 NFDC Planning Policy Team also supplied information in respect of the need for affordable housing. This showed the number of applications for housing support (on the housing register) within the local area and includes the wider catchment area of Fordingbridge. (Preferences are not recorded to individual parish level). In total there are 170 people on the [list](#). The Local Plan Strategic site 16: Land North of Station Road (Knightwood Chase development) which is under construction will provide 42 affordable homes (development of 198) just outside Sandleheath. There are two further strategic sites in Fordingbridge yet to be constructed in full or phased, which will also provide further affordable dwellings as part of the developments.

3.22 Sandleheath is dominated by 4+ bedroom housing stock (45%) with 3-bedroom properties making up a further 42% of the housing stock. Census data indicates that there is only a single one-bedroom property within the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The results of the Housing Needs Survey recorded no indication of 1 bed properties, just under 12% living in a 2-bed property 38% in a 3-bed with the remainder in 4+ bedroom properties.

3.23 Around 11% of those responding to the Housing Needs Survey said they would like to move in the next 5 years, citing mainly a wish to downsize, ideally within the parish. Other comments reflected a desire for new homes to be lower cost, appropriately sized and attractive for younger people and older residents.

3.24 There is currently no social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing stock in Sandleheath.

3.25 Clause B recognises This policy recognises that with an ageing population, whilst encouraging all residential development to include a greater contribution of the types of homes that will support the needs of younger people and families, the policy should address the need to provide accessible and adaptable dwellings to reduce the need for age restricted housing. By encouraging developers to build to at least M4(2) standard this ensures new builds provide options for buyers to remain in their home in later years, rather than moving out into care facilities, helping to maintain a balanced mix of demographics within any given neighbourhood.

3.26 Whilst M4(2) and M4(3) are not mandatory as building regulations, it has been adopted through planning policy in a number of locations, including the London Plan, where M4(2) is a required standard.

3.27 The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) published the report 'A Home for the Ages: Planning for the Future with Age-Friendly Design' in July 2019 which makes the case for how policymakers focusing on increasingly age-friendly housing provision could play an important role in tackling the extensive issues in both housing and social care. It is with this in mind that the Neighbourhood Plan includes this policy provision which will improve accessibility and assist in allowing people to remain in their own home throughout their life, adapting as necessary, a situation which also help maintain long term connections to a community.

3.28 The government consulted on extending M4(2) to all new homes in July 2022 and the impact assessment and other background documents for this consultation provide additional support for this policy. This policy is explicitly supported by Hampshire County Council in its role as public health provider who have stated "*when looking at evidence around the local needs of an ageing population and the needs for those with changing lifetime circumstances these standards are of vital importance to local communities.*"

Policy SAN5: SITE ALLOCATIONS

1. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates 1.8 hectares of land to the north of Station Road, for a high-quality mixed use, residential led development of up to 40 dwellings, as shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals should incorporate the following site specific requirements:
 - i) The housing scheme will be located on parcel A in an area of approximately 1.25 hectares within the settlement boundary as defined in SAN1. Parcel B, an area of approximately 0.32 hectares, will be designated as F2 Community Use land, transferred to the Parish Council for the purpose of the creation of a car park for up to 25 cars to serve the Village Hall and the provision of public open space for community use.
 - ii) The housing scheme shall comprise a tenure mix to include affordable housing, in conformity with the requirements of the local development plan. In accordance with SAN4, there should be an emphasis on smaller houses suitable as starter homes and for those wishing to downsize. As such, the scheme shall include a minimum of 12.5% First Homes² within the affordable home tenure mix.
 - iii) The scheme is accessed from Station Road using a single access point in a suitable location to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority and creates a distinctive “gateway” to the village to mark a clear limit of settlement in support of the Sandleheath Traffic Management Plan (See Appendix B)
 - iv) The layout shall provide a pedestrian link from the development to provide a safe connection into the existing footway on the northern side of Station Road.
 - v) The scheme delivers the appropriate financial contribution in compliance with the NFDC Recreational Mitigation Strategy.
 - vi) The layout shall provide pedestrian links from the development to facilitate the creation of a circular walking route for the village as identified in SAN8.
 - vii) The layout and landscape scheme delivers defensible boundaries between the site and the adjacent countryside at its eastern and northern boundaries to create a definitive settlement edge including a landscape buffer to strengthen the Local Gap as defined in SAN2
 - viii) All mature trees and hedgerows within the site are retained unless their removal is essential, and the minimum required to facilitate an efficient development layout. The existing tree belt along the boundaries shall be retained and reinforced.
 - ix) The scheme maximises opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site.
 - x) The scheme ensures that adjacent watercourse and ponds and their catchments are protected and enhanced.
2. The Neighbourhood Plan allocates approximately 3.3 hectares of land to the south of Main Road, for a high-quality residential development of up to 57 dwellings, as shown on the Policies Map. Development proposals should incorporate the following site-specific requirements ;
 - i) The northern parcel, an area approximately 1 ha, shall comprise of up to 23 dwellings, a car park to serve the Alternative Natural Green Space and the village hall (for up to 30 cars,) two areas of public open space and community facilities.
 - ii) The southern parcel, an area of approximately 2.3ha, shall comprise of up to 34 dwellings, surrounded to the east, south and west by an area of Alternative Natural Recreational Green Space (ARNG), minimum 1ha. The land will be transferred to a suitable body with a required long term management plan in line with the NFDC Recreational Mitigation Strategy (paragraphs 4.41 – 4.43).

² As defined and set out in the NFDC First Homes Advice Note https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2774/First-homes-advice-note/pdf/First_Homes_Advice_Note_FINAL_July_2022_1vejua1xyui7j.pdf?m=1658156139730

- iii) The housing scheme shall comprise a tenure mix to include affordable housing, in conformity with the requirements of the local development plan. In accordance with SAN4, there should be an emphasis on smaller houses suitable as starter homes and for those wishing to downsize. As such, the scheme shall include a minimum of 12.5% First Homes³ within the affordable home tenure mix.
- iv) The scheme is accessed from Main Road using a single access point in a suitable location to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority.
- v) The two areas designated as public open space on the northern parcel shall be secured by legal agreement for transfer to Sandleheath Parish Council.) The first parcel shall be located alongside the Main Road to the west of the site entrance and include the provision of a multiuse games area and single storey timber framed pavilion. The second, located on the eastern side of the site beyond the entrance, shall include a play area and visitor car park for up to 30 cars.
- vi) The layout shall provide a pedestrian crossing point from the development to provide a safe connection into the existing footway on the northern side of Main Road to enable pedestrian access to the village hall and beyond to local amenities.
- vii) The layout shall provide pedestrian links from the development to Main Road.
- viii) The layout and landscape scheme delivers strong defensible boundaries between the site and the adjacent countryside at its southern and western boundaries to create a definitive settlement edge.
- ix) The development should respond to the locally important view from the village hall to the south across the site, as set out in the Design Code analysis.
- x) All mature trees and hedgerows within the site are retained unless their removal is essential, and the minimum required to facilitate an efficient development layout. The existing tree belts along the boundaries shall be retained and reinforced.
- xi) A sustainable drainage strategy is prepared for approval by the local planning authority to address the effects of surface water run-off within and adjoining the land;
- xii) The scheme maximises opportunities to produce and use renewable energy on-site.
- xiii) The developable area shall exclude existing priority habitats identified within the site, unless alternative mitigation sites for floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland can be identified to the satisfaction of the local planning authority.

3.29 The SNP allocates two development sites within this policy; Land south of Main Road and land north of Main Road being included, a total of up to 97 homes.

³ As defined and set out in the NFDC First Homes Advice Note https://www.newforest.gov.uk/media/2774/First-homes-advice-note/pdf/First_Homes_Advice_Note_FINAL_July_2022_1vejua1xyui7j.pdf?m=1658156139730



Figure 4 Land South of Main Road

3.30 SPC has been mindful of the intention of the local planning authority, New Forest District Council (NFDC) to review its adopted Local Plan. The timescales for the emerging Local Plan over the coming two-three years enables the SNP to take responsibility for planning to meet local housing need in the Parish for the plan period rather than that being left to the new Local Plan.

3.31 Whilst NPPF paragraph §70 requires the Local Planning Authority to provide an indicative figure for housing requirement over the proposed plan period, this is not currently available and NFDC officers confirmed in April that any indicative figure would be unlikely in 2025 until the emerging Local Plan has progressed further. The Neighbourhood Planning Practice Guidance (§105 ID: 41-105-20190509) notes that if this is the case the then the neighbourhood planning body may determine a housing requirement figure themselves, taking account of relevant policies, the existing and emerging spatial strategy, and characteristics of the neighbourhood area. As such, using the December 2024 PPG methodology, an indicative minimum requirement for Sandeath is calculated as 85 dwellings over a 20-year plan period (equating to 4.23 dwellings per annum). This figure takes account of the position of the parish in the settlement hierarchy (Local Plan Policy STR4), the quantum of housing to come forward through Neighbourhood Plans (Local Plan Policy STR5) and the desire to bring forward community benefits and affordable housing. The figure does not take into account any recent completions/planning permissions to date which may be included as there are no outstanding permissions.

3.32 Full details supporting the inclusion of these sites can be found in the Site Assessment report accompanying the plan. In summary, following a local Call for Sites in late 2024, initial screening and community engagement and an initial consideration of reasonable alternatives for the SEA, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) Future development of the parish should follow the existing spatial pattern, i.e directly accessed from the Main (Station) Road, rather than side roads.
- 2) It is important to keep a measure of separation from Ashford and Fordingbridge and so a Local Gap should be maintained wherever possible.
- 3) The one site within the existing settlement boundary should be discounted as by definition it is deemed acceptable and in total would likely only bring forward around 5 dwellings. It would therefore be counted as windfall, as given its size it would be unlikely to provide the community benefits sought.
- 4) With no indicative housing number offered by NFDC, the Steering Group wished to seek a growth option for the community which respects the position of Sandleheath in the settlement hierarchy but brings forward sufficient growth to ensure the sustainability of the parish to at least 2050.
- 5) In addition, with no housing number tabled, the Steering Group wished to demonstrate that the Neighbourhood Plan could achieve a suitable and sustainable level of growth for the parish. As such it has used the PPG standard method calculation as a starting point to enable the community, through the SNP to control the future growth of the parish and not defer to the Local Plan process which has no firm adoption date. The NP process also provides an ability for the parish to use policy levers to impose the requirement for the very specific community benefits sought through development at a local level, unlikely to be achieved through a Local Plan allocation.

3.33 It is noted that NFDC carried out two Call for Sites between October and December 2024 and February to April 2025. It was confirmed that no other potential sites for Sandleheath came forward as a result of this process, enabling the Neighbourhood Plan to have a complete picture of planned growth options for the parish.

3.34 Using points 1 – 5 above, three plausible growth options were considered, 1) growth to the south of the Main Road, 2) growth to the north of Main Road and 3) growth both south and north of the Main Road.

3.35 Initial engagement was carried out with the landowners of the sites which ranked 1 (site 2 – south of Main Road) and 2 (site 5 – north of Main Road) in the community survey to discuss the potential opportunities and constraints of their respective locations. These sites were originally believed to have delivered up to 108 dwellings, however, due to flood risk constraints on land to the north of the Main Road, the number has now been reduced to 97 dwellings. This is felt to be the upper limit to ensure that the overall growth in the village is not considered excessive and still considered in keeping with its status in the settlement hierarchy and provides the maximum community benefits to safeguard the future sustainability of the community and provide opportunities to improve local active travel options and social infrastructure. The Steering Group recognises that the neighbourhood plan is having to make hard decisions around the development of the parish over the coming years but on balance feel it is better to control their own destiny where they can, rather than putting the policy decisions about future growth of the parish to the District Council or, an as yet unknown unitary authority or leaving the parish open to speculative development. In setting out clearly the future of the parish through the SNP and meeting its identified need (defined as the standard method calculation with no alternative figure put forward) the community are taking a proactive and pragmatic approach to plan for and shape their own future. This policy enables the SNP to fill the policy void and engage §14 of the NPPF to enable the parish defend applications for unplanned development, particularly in view of the lack of five-year land supply in the New Forest and the position of the Local Plan which is considered out of date in July 2025.

3.36 The Steering Group have worked positively and collaboratively to negotiate the community benefits set out in the policy and brings forward development which respects the countryside setting of the parish and its historic core but provides better public access to open spaces, improved access to leisure and functional walking routes, community facilities in the form of car parking for the village hall and flexible use leisure facilities. The two sites will each provide opportunities for affordable homes, starter homes and appropriately sized

homes for downsizers and are both located in the eastern side of the village, towards Fordingbridge, which is considered the more sustainable part of the parish.

3.37 Land north of Station Road - With site 5 and site 8 (which ranked 4th) being in the same ownership, the Steering Group asked the landowner if they would be willing to include site 8 within the site 5 proposal, designated as a community use site (with no residential development). This was agreed with a written offer to transfer a parcel of land on site 8 to the parish for community use as part of any development of site 5, with the other half of the site remaining a green field site with a pond. This transfer would enable a car park for the village hall to be created less than 100m away on the same side of the road and provide much needed space for recreational and community uses. For the purposes of clarity these two sites are now consolidated into a single site, referred to in the policy and on the policies map as Land north of Station Road. Proposals on the site should deliver the appropriate financial contribution in compliance with the NFDC Recreational Mitigation Strategy.

3.38 Land South of Main Road. (Site 2) – At this location, the Parish Council discussed with the landowner the desire to secure open space to serve a number of purposes. The ARNG will not only serve as recreational space to wrap around the southern end of the site and create dog walking and exercise opportunities but will ensure a strong defensible boundary between the site and the open countryside beyond and minimal impact when viewed from the Cranborne Chase National Landscape to the southwest of the site. The second areas of open space are two parcels at the northern end of the site near the entrance, which will provide extended facilities for both the village hall and wider community in the form of recreational space, including a timber framed “pavilion” an open fronted structure which would provide seating and shade for those enjoying the open space, provide a covered area for local pop up events or for use as an outdoor classroom/meeting space. The provision of these spaces at the entrance to the site ensures the development reflects the overall layout of the village, which is discretely set back from the Main Road with pockets of green space fronting the road, as seen along the common by the village shop and to the front of Elm Close. In addition it is noted that the site overlays the existing Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh PHI and overlaps the existing Deciduous woodland PHI boundary of Brixey's Copse but these areas are not included as part of the developable space. The second part of Policy SAN5 comments about the need for strong defensible boundaries between the site and the adjacent countryside at its southern and western boundaries and the safeguarding of existing trees and hedges. In this context development proposals should be accompanied by proportionate Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and ecological survey, and an arboricultural survey to BS3837 standards. This part of the policy also identifies two areas designated as public open space on the northern parcel which shall be secured by legal agreement for transfer to Sandleheath parish Council. This should be achieved by way of a nominal consideration (£1.00).

3.39 Given their size, each site is also above the threshold for the provision of affordable housing. To date there is not a single affordable house in the village for either social or affordable rent or ownership options, so these sites provide the opportunity for local people to have a wider choice of housing options and enabling those who wish to move to Sandleheath, including families where children have previously moved away due to the cost of housing within the parish, to have the opportunity to come back. This includes the provision of a small number of First Homes, which whilst no longer mandatory requirement, will add to the affordable home ownership options available.

3.40 Located on the Main Road to the western side of the parish, whilst there is currently no bus service into Fordingbridge (which it is hoped can be addressed through additional demand and funding opportunities from CIL) , the school bus to Burgates does stop close to both sites.

3.41 NHS Hampshire Isle of Wight Integrated Care Board (ICB) have confirmed that at present, Fordingbridge Surgery has sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional population growth arising from the planned dwellings in the SNP. This conclusion is based on current list sizes, existing premises capacity, and clinical staffing levels. Should any future major planning applications be submitted within the catchment area

of Fordingbridge Surgery, either within Sandleheath or in neighbouring settlements, the cumulative impact could alter the surgery's ability to meet demand. In such circumstances, additional investment in primary care infrastructure or service provision may be required from new development within Sandleheath.

3.42 South-West Water have also confirmed sufficient capacity within the existing water supply network and infrastructure to accommodate the proposed development within the Neighbourhood Plan. As the allocations progress, if it is determined that any network reinforcements are required, this would be funded through the Infrastructure Charge that SWWL imposes on developers.

3.43 The SEA process was informed of the on-going work and the development of the pre-submission plan to enable a further assessment of the preferred growth strategy, which has developed as option 3. This represents an overall higher growth strategy for the parish but takes into account environment constraints, community opinion and a level of growth considered to be sustainable for a parish which currently has limited social and active travel infrastructure (which is sought to be improve through the inclusion of these sites) and in keeping with the settlement hierarchy designation of the parish. It is noted that whilst site 2 is promoting a quantum slightly in excess of the number defined as suitable in the Local Plan (i.e medium up to 49 homes per site) the overall scale, design and location are not out of keeping with the village setting.

Policy SAN6: LOCAL BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies 4 sites in established employment use as shown on the Policies Map, that are of economic value to the parish and are fundamental to the ongoing provision of local employment opportunities in the Plan period.

1. Sandleheath Village Shop
2. Sandleheath Industrial Estate
3. Forres Sandle Manor School & FSM Nursery
4. Rockbourne Road (Dean & Tranter)

A. Proposals for the intensification or diversification of employment uses on these identified sites will be supported, where they incorporate uses which will respond positively to the existing uses in adjacent land and where appropriate, protect the setting of any heritage assets or landscape designations in close proximity to the site.

B. Proposals for the change of use of land or premises which result in the loss of local employment will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- the employment use will be relocated elsewhere within the parish; or
- the premises are no longer viable to refurbish; or
- the site is redeveloped for an alternative employment use.

C. Proposals for adaptations and modifications to the Village Shop will be supported, particularly where they would enhance the social cohesion or self-sufficiency of the village.

3.44 Villages play an important role in the provision of economic opportunities:

"Individual towns and villages is spread throughout the District which in their own right play a significant part in shaping the local economy through business activity and creation of jobs" (NFDC Economic Development Strategy 2018 – 2023). The local community are very protective of the employment opportunities presented by the village. For a small community, the well sized industrial estate in particular provides local employment opportunities as well as providing additional footfall to the village shop, which is at the heart of the village. The NFDC Business Needs and Commercial Property Market Assessment (2017) stated the industrial estate was "a good standard of accommodation and with room to

expand". The assessment further states: "The majority of employment sites and premises [in the NFDC area] provide valuable local employment opportunities and accommodation for local businesses in the Plan Area, which should be retained wherever possible.

3.45 The school is the largest single employer providing a wide range of employment opportunities across a number of skill sets from teaching to grounds workers, administrative staff to cleaners.

3.46 This policy seeks to safeguard identified established employment locations in the village, which help support the local economy and provide employment opportunities as well as access to local facilities, goods and services. The policy would seek to protect them from a change of use to non-employment uses where planning permission is required, through evidencing their importance. (Local Plan ECON2 protects employment uses but are not site specific.) The resistance to the loss of employment opportunities is to try and safeguard a fundamental part of maintaining a well-balanced community; once employment land is lost, it is usually lost forever. Part A of the policy offers support for proposals that would result in the intensification or diversification of employment uses. In these circumstances proposals should be underpinned by a transport assessment in accordance with the development plan to manage satisfactorily its traffic effects on the road network and to encourage and enable improvements to sustainable transport methods. Part B of the policy sets out the limited circumstances in which proposals that would result in the loss of an existing employment use would be supported. In relation to the viability issue, proposals should demonstrate that the site has been actively marketed for employment uses for a minimum of six consecutive months at a realistic price and without generating commercial interest.

3.47 It is recognised that some changes of use do not now require planning permission and new permitted development rights have enabled future changes of some uses from what are now Class E uses to residential uses, with such proposals requiring Prior Approval. However, the only employment listed here within Class E is the village shop. The village shop is a very important element of the social well-being of the neighbourhood area. Proposals for change of use of the Village Shop (Class E) should demonstrate that alternative community uses have been considered and assessed. In addition, any proposals should address the financial viability of the current facility. Planning application should also address the impact of the loss of the facility on the social cohesion or self-sufficiency of the village. Where there is no reasonable prospect of the continuing use or being taken on by another operator or community body the Parish Council will consider registering the shop as an Asset of Community Value to retain a right to secure its retention for the community under the Localism Act as amended by the Community Empowerment and Development Act 2026.

3.48 These employment uses play an important part of the distinct function and character of the village, providing local employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy as part of a well-balanced community. Whilst the community have indicated that there is no requirement for the provision of any further locations in the future, there would be a detriment to the village if these existing business locations were lost. The village shop in particular, located at the centre of the village, provides not just local employment but plays a vital role in meeting the day-to-day needs of residents, particularly those without access to private transport. As there are no other shops within the parish, it is essential that this local facility is protected from unnecessary loss and encouraged to thrive. Respondents to early engagement put the preservation of the village shop at the top of their list, with a number of comments seeking to either provide a separate café or include one within the shop.

3.49 The use of the word "compatible" refers not only to the use class of land but how the land is used in practice and should therefore include consideration of noise, smell and working hours.

Policy SAN7: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Plan designates the Sandleheath Green Infrastructure Network, as shown on the Policies Map.

A. Proposals for new development requiring the provision of on-site open space will be supported where the design of open space is integral to the scheme and is effectively connected to any adjoining part of the green infrastructure network. Proposals for smaller infill schemes should also seek to realise any opportunities to connect their landscape schemes with adjoining green infrastructure assets. Where appropriate, developers should enter into a planning obligation to secure satisfactory arrangements for the long-term management of new open space.

B. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should retain trees and hedgerows and to secure opportunities to create connected habitats suitable for species adaption to climate change. Where trees and hedgerows are unavoidably lost, replacement trees and hedgerows using native species should be planted. In addition, development proposals ensure that any potential impacts upon rare and threatened species and habitats are fully assessed, and that, where necessary, mitigation measures are incorporated to safeguard and protect those species and habitats.

C. Development proposals that lie within or adjoining the Network should have full regard to maintaining and improving the functionality of the Network in the design of their layouts, landscaping schemes and public open space provisions. Proposals that will harm the functionality or connectivity of the Network, will not be supported unless they incorporate proportionate mitigation and/or appropriate biodiversity net gain measures.

3.50 Green Infrastructure is a term that covers a wide range of natural, ecological and recreational features, including parks, woodlands, water bodies, hedgerows, mature trees, lines of street trees, allotments etc that combine to create important habitat networks.

3.51 All those features have been mapped to show not just where they are but also to point to where the network may be improved to be better connected if land is developed or redeveloped.

3.52 The policy protects the existing green and blue infrastructure in Sandleheath from harmful development and to encourage its improvement and better connectivity when future development does take place. This includes ensuring a strong green infrastructure buffer to any development situated adjacent to the proposed Local Gap.

3.53 The purpose of this policy is to promote ecological connectivity, outdoor recreation and sustainable movement through the village and into its surrounding countryside and of helping mitigate and adapt to climate change. In most cases assets have multi-functional, nature conservation and recreational and amenity value. The existing green infrastructure network is intrinsic in the development of Sandleheath as a settlement, with the common, highly valued as a social community space as well as a green space, located at its centre. The discrete setting of Sandleheath in the landscape, and the verdant array of trees and hedgerows which both surround it and run through it, enable the village to sit quietly within the wider wooded farmland vistas. Any erosion of this network will not only affect the setting of the village but the wide variety of flora and fauna which inhabit it. The designation of land north of the Main Road (Site 1, parcel B) will allow for the creation of additional publicly accessible open space which will provide opportunities for enhancing local biodiversity as well as providing recreational opportunities locally to reduce pressure on the nearby New Forest for walking and leisure opportunities.

The following opportunities to enhance local habitats will be supported, where they conform with the other policies of the development plan:

- i) Connect Sandle Copse PHI to the woodland habitat to the west and south of Forres Sandle Manor.
- ii) Creation of wooded habitat corridors to connect Brixey's and Reeve's Copse with Hawk Mill Farm and Lower Court Wood (ancient woodland) which adjoin the parish boundary in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.
- iii) Protection and enhancement of Ashford Water catchment and riparian corridor that flows into River Avon SAC through floodplain reconnection, in-channel enhancements, riparian planting and floodplain management.
- iv) Future management and enhancement of Common Land to the south of Court Hill.

3.54 The network has been mapped using publicly available data, primarily that produced by Natural England and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre. A local resident has also supplied a list of vulnerable wildlife species which can be found in Sandleheath including fungi, birds, flowers, animals and reptiles and insects. The full list can be found in Appendix D. The policy will also work alongside the emerging Hampshire Nature Recovery Strategy, to support the identified priorities with the Sandleheath Neighbourhood Plan area.

3.55 It is noted that the Allen River emerges from Cranborne Chase National Landscape as a designated 'chalk stream' before flowing into the SNP area and forming Ashford water. Protection of the unique qualities of this chalk stream should feature within future development mitigation opportunities.

Policy SAN8: CONNECTING THE VILLAGE

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the existing Active Travel Network and opportunities for improvements, as shown on the Policies Map for the purpose of prioritising active travel in Sandleheath, encouraging the use of public transport and protecting and enhancing Public Rights of Ways. The Neighbourhood Plan also identifies the Sandleheath Traffic Management Plan, which prioritises pedestrian safety. This can be found in Appendix B.

A. Development proposals on land that lies within or adjacent to the Network should avoid harm, should sustain and where practicable enhance the connectivity of the Network by virtue of their layout, means of access and landscape treatment, including the creation of safe and suitable links to the existing footways, footpaths and walking routes.

B. The Sandleheath Traffic Management Plan (TMP), identifies opportunities where public realm improvements are required to improve highway safety. Development which lies within or adjacent to areas identified within the TMP must avoid measures which would adversely affect the ability to implement these proposals.

C. The Active Travel Network identifies opportunities where public realm improvements are required to enhance the walking, wheeling and cycling environment, improve residential amenity and highway safety. Proposals which deliver opportunities for such improvement will be supported. Proposals which support the priorities of the emerging New Forest Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, where proposals also accord with the other policies of the Development Plan.

D. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals take opportunities to incorporate the provision of conveniently located bus shelters, with seating and step-free access at boarding points. Major residential developments should incorporate or fund measures that improve local bus services, including but not limited to, route extensions, frequency enhancements, flexible bus services (Demand

Responsive Transport) or community transport services, in support of the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (2024- 2036)

3.56 Sandleheath Traffic Action (STA), a volunteer group working with Sandleheath Parish Council, has developed a Traffic Management Plan to address long-standing speeding concerns and improve safety on the village's busy rural roads.

3.57 The plan has received widespread support from residents and includes measures to calm traffic, enhance pedestrian safety, and reinforce Sandleheath's identity as a residential community. Phase one of the Traffic Management Plan has been supported and funded by NFDC, who awarded £99,000 of strategic CIL to support implementation which will be carried out both by Hampshire County Council, under the Community Funded Initiative scheme, and by local private contractors. The funding will support a programme of road markings, redesigned village entry points, new signage, and measures to improve pedestrian safety at key locations.

3.58 The STA plan focuses on a strategy to make the area feel distinctly residential and encourage drivers to slow down. Speeding has been a persistent concern for residents, prompting calls for urgent action. The new measures aim to improve safety, protect the environment and support the quality of life for the whole community.

3.59 The ambition of the policy is that developers whose schemes are proximate to the identified opportunities for improvement are able to undertake such as measures as part of their development (likely secured through a S278 agreement). Alternatively, further CIL contributions will be used to fund phases 2 and 3 of the plan.

3.60 The neighbourhood plan also seeks to encourage safe, accessible and convenient means of walking, wheeling and cycling through the Parish and improve access to and frequency of bus services accessing the parish. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts will be prioritised for investment in public transport improvements, including potentially the provision of a community bus for the parish. Currently, the only bus stop in the village is located at the crossroads of Court Hill, Alderholt Road and Rockbourne Road, which is only accessible off road. There is currently no bus due to a recent withdrawal of service (September 2025)

3.61 The Policies Map shows the full extent of the existing Network which allows applicants to determine if their proposals should take this policy into account. Where proposals include provision for landscaping, new means of access or new layouts, there may be an opportunity to relate the land better to the Network and/or improve the attractiveness of rural routes. At the very least, the policy requires that proposals that will undermine the existing value of the Network will be refused permission. The opportunities identified by the Active Travel Network include ;

- 1) Those contained in the Sandleheath Traffic Management Plan (Phase Two and Three)
- 2) The creation of a circular walk around the village including:
 - i) Securing public access to the existing Lady's Walk, (subject to approval from Forres Sandle Manor School) connecting to the existing bridleway in Marl Lane, or the creation of an adjacent footpath within site 8.
 - ii) Creation of a new footpath/bridleway from Main Road, heading south across the stream to connect into the existing restricted byway to Alderholt Mill (outside parish boundary).

- 3) Widening the footway south of Main Road to the east of the village to connect to Ashford/Fordingbridge, with the introduction of a safe crossing point to connect to the footway to the north at the village entrance.
- 4) Widening the existing footway along to north of Main Road and Station Road to allow pedestrians to walk and pass safely.

3.62 Developers and those involved in improving and enhancing active travel routes are directed to use the [Healthy Streets Indicators Assessment](#) tool to ensure that the whole community is able to access and enjoy the network. The tool includes planning safe routes which avoid severance including the removal of physical barriers wherever possible, making crossings easy and considering the appropriate placement of new street furniture as well as providing adequate spaces to rest or shelter. Proposals for new active travel routes should also seek to ensure they do not result in the loss of important biodiversity, including rare habitats and wildlife.

3.63 Hampshire County Council and NFDC conducted a consultation on the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in September-November 2024 and anticipates adopting this during 2025. Also of relevance is the [Hampshire Countryside Access Plan](#)

3.64 The Parish Council may seek to work with Hampshire County Council and operators to develop a Sandleheath Bus Connectivity Action Plan (SBCAP), supported by the [Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan](#) (2024- 2036) aimed at securing service improvements over the Plan period.

Policy SAN9: DARK SKIES

- A. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should be designed to avoid the occurrence of light pollution. Wherever practicable, the use of streetlighting should be avoided unless a significant safety issue has been identified which would require its incorporation.
- B. Wherever practicable, new external lighting must comply with the current [Cranborne Chase National Landscape Good Practice Note 7b\(i\)](#).
- C. Safety and security lighting schemes should be kept to the minimum illumination necessary to achieve its purpose. Where required, such schemes should employ energy efficient forms of lighting that are fully shielded to eliminate emission above or near the horizontal, are on active controls such as motion detectors or timers to ensure that they are only on when they are needed, reduce light scatter and comply with the current guidelines established for Environmental Zone E1 by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP).
- D. Development proposals demonstrate how they will prevent light pollution. Information on these measures must be submitted with applications.
- E. The design of new buildings must minimise light projected from windows and doors, particularly from skylights and large, unshielded expanses of windows.

3.65 This policy seeks to retain for the benefit of the local community and wildlife the existing dark skies which have traditionally characterised the parish. In general villagers are very much against the installation of artificial lighting as it would effectively change the character of the area and could lead to cases of anti-social behaviour, which is not currently a factor in village life. To date the lack of street lighting has not been the subject of a safety issue. This policy directs development proposals to demonstrate how they will conserve and enhance the intrinsic quality of dark night skies and that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken to ensure the sky quality in the surrounding area is not negatively affected, for example through avoiding the use of outdoor lighting or if lighting is required, its justification and how its impacts will be mitigated.

3.66 Sandleheath adjoins the south-eastern border of the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (CCNL) which is an International Dark Skies Reserves (2019). To support their Dark Skies designation, Sandleheath currently observes a similar dark skies approach, wherever possible, to prevent light pollution. This policy aims to minimise light pollution and protect the natural beauty of the night sky for stargazing and wildlife.

3.67 CCNL partners, including Hampshire and New Forest District, have an obligation under the IDSR designation to reduce light pollution year on year, and not merely to minimise the increase in light pollution. Effectively that means that future development on greenfield sites where currently there is no light pollution must not produce polluting light. CCNL is happy to advise councils and developers on good lighting that is not polluting. Often it is retrofitted lighting that is problematic, and CCNL is happy to work with developers to provide good lighting as part of their product package so that retrofitting is unnecessary. Policy SAN9 addresses a series of matters. Part C comments about lighting levels produced by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. The Correlated Colour Temperature (CCT) of the lighting should be 2700K or lower. Part D comments about the information required in planning applications. In circumstances where a development would potentially impact on light levels in the area, an appropriate lighting strategy will be secured by planning condition. Part E comments about the design of new buildings to minimise light projected from windows and doors. This could be achieved via brise soleils, automatic dusk-to-dawn opaque blinds, or polymer dispersed liquid crystal “smart” glass.

Policy SAN10: MITIGATING EFFECTS OF EUROPEAN SITES

All net new housing should make a financial contribution to delivery of the New Forest Recreation Management Strategy, or deliver appropriate mitigation measures, as outlined in the NFDC New Forest National Park Revised Habitat Mitigation Scheme.

Development proposals should demonstrate nutrient neutrality for phosphorus in relation to the River Avon SAC. This should be done through using the Natural England River Avon nutrient budget calculator and securing the delivery of offsetting measures as necessary to achieve neutrality.

3.68 The recreational pressures arising from residential development within the Neighbourhood Plan area have a potentially harmful impact on the internationally important nature conservation sites within the New Forest. To comply with both national and international legislation to protect the designated sites, measures need to be taken to ensure adverse effects on the integrity of protected sites from recreational impacts is avoided or mitigated. NFDC have prepared an updated Mitigation for Recreational Impacts on New Forest European sites Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted on 5 May 2021 and provides guidance on the implementation of [Policy ENV1: Mitigating the impact of development on International Nature Conservation sites](#) in the [Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy](#).

3.69 The SPD sets out the strategy using a suite of measures either provided by, or funded by, residential development within the NFDC Local Plan area to provide the required mitigation. It also sets out design guidance for how on-site recreation mitigation should be provided as part of new development for allocations which have the potential to deliver 50 or more dwellings.

3.70 A Habitats Regulation Assessment has been prepared (September 2025) to accompany the submission version of the Sandleheath Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy SAN11: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

A. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the following buildings and structures as Local Heritage Assets, listed below and shown on the Policies Map:

1. Sandleheath Uniting Church
2. Sandleheath Village Hall,
3. The Ladies Walk Gates, near village hall
4. Coronation Terrace

B. The effect of an application on the significance of the identified non-designated local heritage assets in the first part of this policy should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

3.71 Despite having a rich and interesting history, particularly around its importance as a brick making area in the late 19th and early 20th century, there are only two designated heritage assets e.g listed buildings.

- The Old Ship (Grade II)
- Sandle Manor School (Grade II)

3.72 This policy therefore identifies and seeks to protect other buildings that have local heritage interest in the village because of their architecture or historic connections. For each building, location or structure, a description of the essential features of that local interest can be found in Appendix C.

The SG originally identified a long list of 20 locations. As a result of the process some were found not to meet the criteria despite initial appearances and others were removed where the landowner objected to the inclusion. Whilst the views of the landowner do not affect the merits of whether the building meets the criteria, the creation of a Local List, as stated in Historic England's RSS "[Local Heritage Lists – A National Perspective](#)" (2025) , should be a collaborative approach; the policy is not intended to be adversarial.

Within the context of Part B of the Policy SAN11, wherever practicable development proposals should;

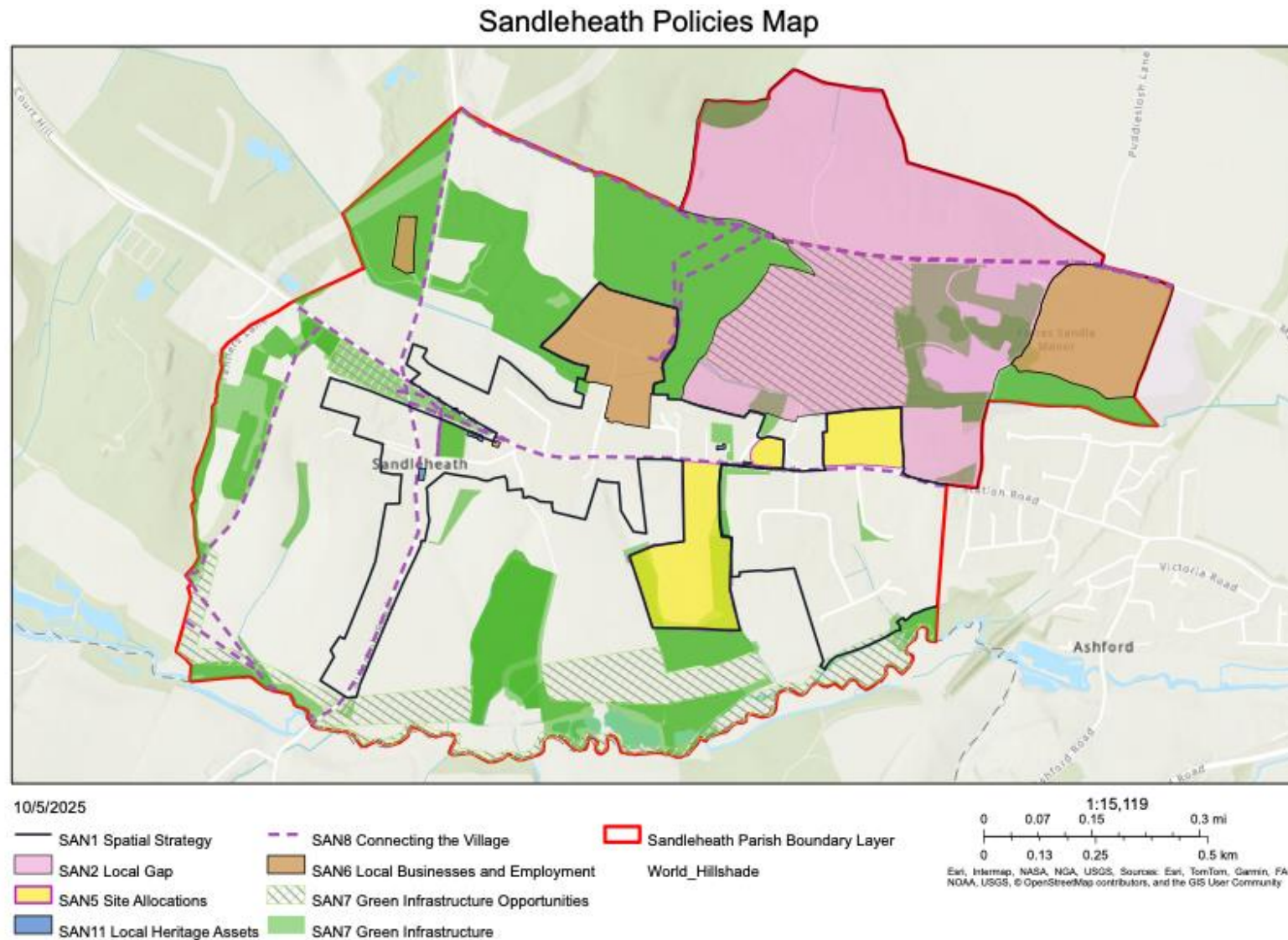
- demonstrate a thorough understanding of the significance of the non-designated heritage asset affected by the proposal, including any contribution made to significance by setting, how this has informed the proposal, and how the proposal would impact on the significance of assets affected. Information submitted will be proportionate to the importance of the non-designated heritage asset(s) and the potential impact of the proposal;
- ensure that proposals including external works, extensions, alterations and/or changes of use respect historic layout, scales, form, fabric (materials, finishes, design and detailing) and any other characteristics that contribute to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset(s)
- achieve a high-quality design which respects the heritage significance and local character of the asset concerned and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and ;
- preserve or enhance the significance and character of historic buildings and places when considering alternative uses, make sensitive use of redundant historic assets, and promote the viable use of non-designated heritage assets consistent with their conservation.

3.73 Appendix C has been prepared in line with the methodology advocated by Historic England and all landowners were contacted prior to the Regulation 14 consultation. Identifying these assets will raise the awareness of developers that a building has some local heritage interest that should be given proper attention in the design of their proposals.

3.74 The list will be reviewed at the same time as the Neighbourhood Plan (discretionary but recommended every five years).

Sandleheath Neighbourhood Plan Policies Map

A PDF version of the policies map is produced below. For an interactive version of the map, with functionality to isolate layers please go to <http://sandleheathplan.co.uk/policy-map/>



Sandleheath Inset Map



10/5/2025

— SAN1 Spatial Strategy

■ SAN2 Local Gap

■ SAN5 Site Allocations

■ SAN11 Local Heritage Assets

- - - SAN8 Connecting the Village

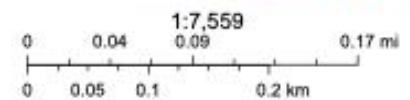
■ SAN6 Local Businesses and Employment

■ SAN7 Green Infrastructure Opportunities

■ SAN7 Green Infrastructure

□ Sandleheath Parish Boundary Layer

World_Hillshade



Esri, Intermap, NASA, NGA, USGS, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

4. INFORMATION

4.1 The Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented through New Forest District Council consideration and determination of planning applications for development in the parish. The Parish Council will monitor the effectiveness of the policies through the development management process. In addition New Forest District Council monitor the implementation of Neighbourhood Plan policies, once adopted, through the Authority Monitoring Report which is published annually. This report is prepared in consultation with relevant parish council each year. The Parish Council acknowledges the importance of undertaking a regular assessment of the need for the Plan to be reviewed. This is particularly important as the emerging Local Plan will be submitted for its own examination at the end of 2026. On this basis the Parish Council will assess the need for a full or partial review of the neighbourhood plan within six months of the adoption of the Local Plan.

4.2 The Parish Council will use a combination of the Local Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan policies to inform and determine its planning application decisions. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications made in the parish and it will be made aware of any future planning applications or alterations to those applications by the planning authority. It will seek to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan policies have been identified and applied correctly by applicants and by officers in their decision reports.

4.3 The success or otherwise of the policies will feed into the assessment of the need for a review of the Plan.

4.4 Opportunities may arise through S106 agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to secure financial contributions to invest in improving local infrastructure. When the Neighbourhood Plan is made, the Parish Council will be able to determine how and where 25% of the CIL collected from schemes in the parish is spent (currently only 15%) in accordance with the CIL Regulations.

4.5 The Parish will prioritise the following in spending CIL funds:

- Implementation of the Sandleheath Traffic Management Plan
- Creation and upgrading of local recreational and green spaces
- Upgrading local walking routes
- Creation of local community facilities.

4.6 SPC kindly acknowledges the help of the following in the production of the SNP:

- New Forest District Council
- [Locality](#)
- [ONH Planning for Good](#)

5. APPENDICES

5.1 SPC has referred to the following documents as its evidence to support the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Appendix A [Sandleheath Design Guidance and Codes](#) (provided separately-weblink)
- Appendix B **Sandleheath Transport Management Plan** (provided separately)
- Appendix C **Local Heritage Assets Report**
- Appendix D **Vulnerable Species List**.

APPENDIX C Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The list below is based upon the following Guidance criteria.

To be included in such a Local List, a building must demonstrate its suitability in some or all of the following criteria derived from the model criteria set out in Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition):

- *A good example of a characteristic local historic style.*
- *A building contributing to local character or integral to the character of a place.*
- *A building of exceptional interest, by virtue of its design and/or materials.*
- *A building with local historic associations.*
- *A modern building, or conversion of an older building, of exceptional design merit or interest.*
- *A structure, other than a building, with local historic associations or design interest.*

1. The Sandleheath Uniting (Methodist & Anglican) Church: First built in 1884 and extended in 1934 this Church has very strong local and historic associations. Located in the centre of the original village settlements it has played a key role in the lives of many villagers. In the previous century it also had a strong tradition of involving village residents in associated services which it provided including Sunday School classes, Open Air Camps on the nearby Common and annual outings/excursions. As such it is regarded as a building which is integral to the local character of Sandleheath.

2. Sandleheath Village Hall (formerly St Aldhelm's Church Mission Hall): Built in 1907 this building is regarded as having exceptional interest, by virtue of both its design and materials plus its current role as thriving Village Hall. Constructed in 1907 it is a fine example of an Arts and Crafts-style building which celebrates the Village tradition of brick making; its foundation stone remarks that it was built by 'Sandleheath men from Sandleheath bricks'. It also has historic connections, being built on land donated by the Hulse family or nearby Breamore House and served as a parish church until 2010. Since then, a Registered Charity was created to convert the building to a fully functional village hall. This Charity quickly raised over £222,000 for this purpose which reflects the significant heritage and community appeal of this building to local residents.



1. Sandleheath Uniting Church



2. Sandleheath Village Hall

3. The 'Ladies Walk Gates': A fine set of wrought iron gates supported by brick-built walls and gateposts bearing the dates '1936' believed to commemorate their construction. The gates are a former entrance from Main Road to Sandle Manor, once owned by the Hulse family whose former resident Lady Katherine Hulse, widow of the 5th Baronet Sir Edward Hulse, opened the above St Aldhelm's Church in 1907. Beyond the gates are a private walkway leading to Sandle Manor which was once used by the 'Ladies' of the Manor when worshipping at adjacent St Aldhelm's, hence the local name for this important landmark. It remains the only visible connection to Sandle Manor in the village and as such has significant historical associations.



3. Ladies Walk Gates



4. Coronation Terrace

4. Coronation Terrace: A small set of terraced buildings opened in 1911 named after the Coronation of King George and Queen Mary in the same year. Located at the centre of the village and clearly visible from Main Road it is widely regarded as a true 'landmark' which features significantly in the early history and photographs of village life at the turn of the last century. The buildings occupants still retain a strong sense of community identity together with a long history of organising street parties. The red-brick buildings also celebrate the Sandleheath brick making connections and have an unusual, partly concealed, four storey structure.

APPENDIX D – SANDLEHEATH SPECIES LIST

A shortlist of vulnerable wildlife species around Sandleheath

Fungi species

Earthstar fungus

A spectacular fungus needing woodland shade

Magpie Inkcap fungus

Woodland shady paths. Vulnerable to walkers

Scarlet Elfcup fungus

A small fungi which show up well in shady woodland patches. Frequent but slowly disappearing in disturbed SH woodland.

Bird species

Woodcock

Vulnerable to disturbance in SH woodland

Lesser Spotted Woodpeckers

Have been heard in woods around Sandleheath, but they are rare

Coal Tits

A delightful small Tit found in local gardens but requires wild places to forage in

Little Owls

Heard in the SH area but sadly disappearing from the local urban environment

Swifts

Now very uncommon in villages and farms around West Hampshire and East Dorset. 'Swift Towers' should be constructed in all local villages and, if possible, Swift nest boxes available to all house owners

House Martins

House Martins are also becoming scarce as a nesting species in the area. Nest boxes need to be made available

Common Partridges

Partridges have nested in the local woodland in the past, but it is now unlikely that these delightful birds are still around due to human and dog disturbance

Marsh Tits

Can be found in gardens next to woodland, but uncommon

Flower species

Yellow Rattle

A good environmental indicator plant. Now growing in Elms Close wildflower patches. Would be sad to lose

Common Spotted Orchids

Were growing on the Common but now uncommon along untreated pathways

Common Thistle

Becoming less common around SH due to the disturbance of natural grassland

Small Scabious

Found only in the Elms Close wild flower patches

Native Bluebells

Common in some local woodlands but vulnerable to hybridisation with more vigorous garden species (like Spanish Bluebell)

Oxeye daisies

There is a good shows of this species in the Elms Close wild flower patches

Animal & reptile species

Hedgehogs

Vulnerable and getting rare in gardens

Common Frog

Found in garden ponds but vulnerable to cats and local roads

Common Toad

Found in garden ponds but vulnerable to cats and local roads

Slow Worm

A healthy indicator species found in local gardens

Newts

Found in Sandleheath garden ponds. Vulnerable

Grass Snakes

Snakes of all species need undisturbed grassland and woodland

Insect species

All insect species

All invertebrate creatures in the SH area need consideration with the maintenance of wild patches (including bramble, fungi, grasses, trees, bare ground, rotting wood and wild flowers)

Willow Emerald Damselfly

A very rare species of dragonfly that has recently started breeding beside a stream in the SH area

Southern Hawker

A spectacular Dragonfly which is breeding in garden ponds in SH

Azure Damselfly

A bright blue Dragonfly which breeds local ponds

Broad-bodied Chaser

Another large Dragonfly which lays its eggs in SH ponds

Red tipped Clearwing moth

Rare. Has been found around trees on upper Common

Silver-washed Fritillary

A beautiful butterfly, found in local mature woodland but vulnerable to disturbance

Small Skippers

A small butterflower which likes rough grass patches

Common Blue

Delightful to see but needs rough meadows and grass patches

Holly Blue

A spring butterfly that likes garden Holly Trees

Small Tortoiseshell

An at risk butterfly in our gardens

Longhorn Beetles

An impressive beetle which frequents