

Supplementary Planning Document



The PARISH of GODSHILL

Adopted June 2015

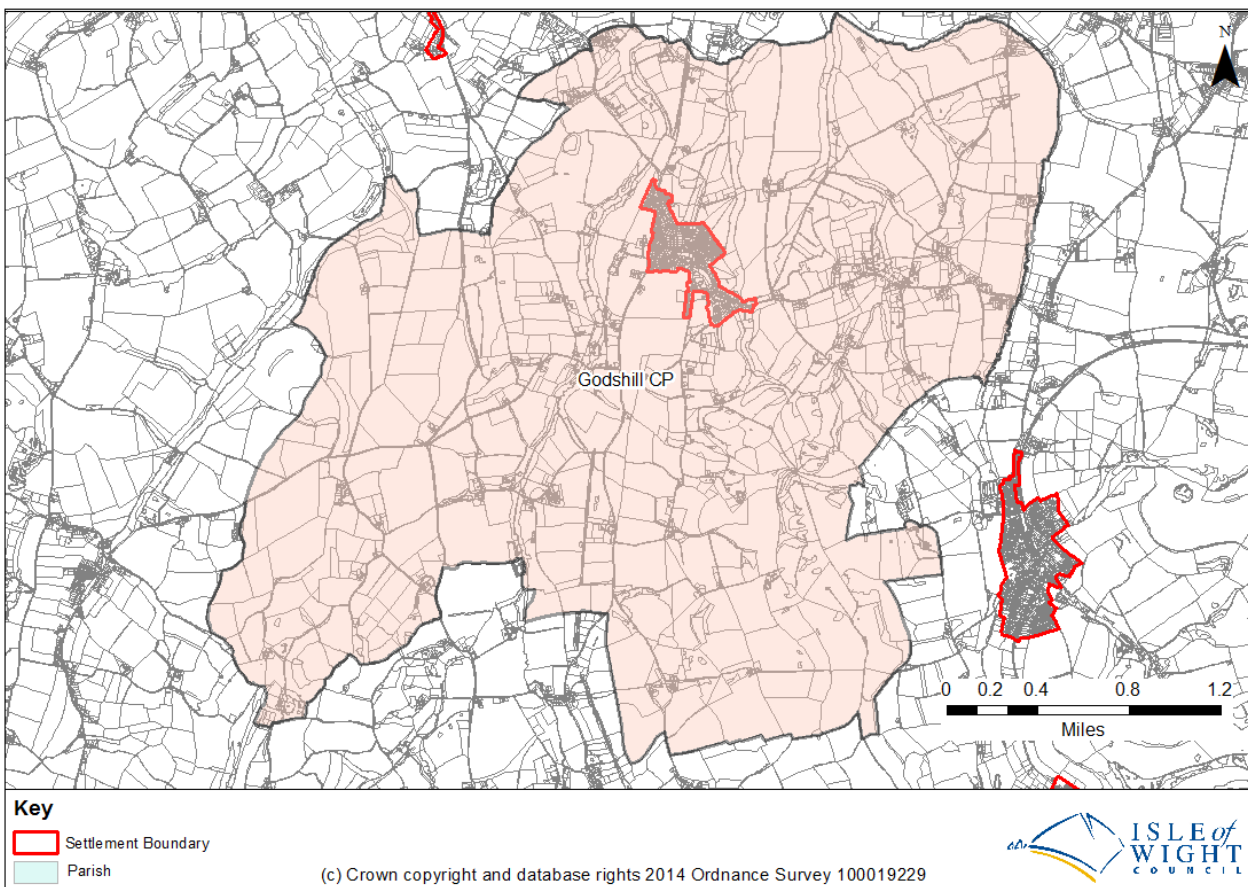
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1. Why a Supplementary Planning Document is required

- 1.1 Godshill Parish Council is preparing a Parish Plan for Godshill, which will cover a range of subjects. Not all of the subjects covered will relate to land-use and planning, so the decision was made to prepare a separate document, solely relating to planning.
- 1.2 This led to Godshill Parish Council leading on preparing a document dealing with planning-related issues of importance to the community, with a view to the Isle of Wight Council then adopting it as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
- 1.3 The adoption of such a document as an SPD will enable applicants and decision-makers to be aware of how the community would like to see the policies of the Island Plan Core Strategy applied to the parish of Godshill, and formalise the community's views within a planning document.
- 1.4 The policies in this document will form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the parish of Godshill, and should be read in conjunction with the policies of the Island Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance.

2. Background information



- 2.1 The settlement of Godshill is located within the Parish of Godshill. Policy SP1 of the Island

Plan Core Strategy identifies the settlement as a Rural Service Centre, and although no numbers have been allocated, a level of development is anticipated on the basis of future population growth, demographic change and future locally identified need.

- 2.2 Development is expected to be either within the settlement boundary or immediately adjacent it. Within the wider Parish area SP1 states that:

“Unless a specific local need is identified, development proposals outside of, or not immediately adjacent to ... defined settlements will not be supported”.

- 2.3 In 2013 Godshill Parish Council asked the residents of the parish to complete a questionnaire, so they could understand their community’s views and aspirations for the future. A Parish Plan Group was set up to assess the responses and to hold consultation events designed to involve everyone from the youngest to the most elderly residents. The summary findings and conclusions from these consultations and responses are contained within the Parish Plan, which is being developed in parallel with this draft SPD.
- 2.4 These consultations, together with the findings of a Housing Needs Survey (completed in 2014), and the Isle of Wight Council published Strategic Housing Market Assessment have informed the guidance within this document.
- 2.5 Godshill village sits at the centre of a rural environment of downs, rolling meadows and woodlands. Part of the village is designated as a conservation area and part of the village and parish is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is considered that there is a natural beauty and enduring heritage which is of great value to visitors and residents alike.
- 2.6 In acknowledgement of this setting it is important to identify the features that contribute positively to the character of the village, and that the policies of the Island Plan Core Strategy are applied across the parish to achieve this. This document should be read in conjunction with the policies of the Island Plan and policies should not be read in isolation.
- 2.7 This SPD will look at commercial facilities of local value, employment, tourism opportunities, transport and traffic issues, housing and development and the environment.

3. Environment

GP 1 - Environment

The Parish Council will support proposals that protect, conserve and/or enhance Godshill's natural and historic environments.

The Parish Council expects all development proposals to take account of the environmental (especially transport related) capacity of an area to accommodate new development and contribute to environmental conservation and enhancement.

The Parish Council considers that views and vistas within the Conservation Area and the AONB should, wherever possible, be protected.

- 3.1 Landscaping within any development is an important aspect of that development. In the Conservation Area it is particularly important for it is the established trees and bushes that turn the views and vistas inwards; without this mature vegetation the aspects would be outward looking. The village of Godshill has a natural beauty set within meadows and woodlands and it is considered by the Parish Council that this feeling must be maintained.
- 3.2 A draft conservation area appraisal for the Godshill conservation area had previously been prepared by the Isle of Wight Council. Whilst it has not been adopted, it has proved to be a useful source of information that has been used to shape the approach set out in GP1 and the supporting text.
- 3.3 The village lies in open country but the views are looking through the High Street, up the narrow streets to the church on the hill, along the rows of cottages on the High Street and to the south of the church over the area known as The Glebe. It is not until you get to the church that the long views towards the village and beyond can be fully appreciated, and the dominance of the church high on the hill realised.
- 3.4 The Conservation Area is rich in highlights but the important architecturally related ones are:
 - The area leading up to the churchyard past the thatch cottages
 - Church Hollow and Church Hill leading up to thatch cottages
 - The area formed by Chocolate Island, the Post Office, Syringa, Essex Cottage and The Old Vicarage and Model Village
 - The cottages forming a narrow "cut" through the High Street
 - The Griffin and general open area around it
 - The extensive use of Island stone and thatch throughout the area.
- 3.5 Historic England has warned that the Godshill Conservation Area is deteriorating and at risk of losing its special character¹. Their assessment is based on the information provided by the Local Planning Authority in response to Historic England's Conservation Areas survey. The main contributing factors are the lack of a character appraisal and management plan,

¹ Historic England Heritage at Risk Register 2014/South East.

although further factors have been identified that include residents and tourists being in conflict with traffic travelling through the village, commercial pressures from the many tourist attractions and development pressure.

- 3.6 The Parish Council agrees with Historic England in its assessment of the Conservation Area. However, the Parish Council would go further and considers that this loss of character can be attributed to unsympathetic alterations and infill development which once complete are very difficult if not impossible to reverse. The Parish Council considers that the sheer scale of infill development that has been permitted in the High Street has contributed largely to this state and the value of further development has to be set against the irretrievable loss of heritage that will result.
- 3.7 The Parish Council expects exterior lighting of premises including the floodlighting of sports facilities to be kept to the minimum necessary and positioned so as to not pollute the sky, be prejudicial to health or cause a nuisance.

GP 2 – Open Spaces

The Parish Council considers that existing open spaces and wooded areas should, wherever possible, be preserved in perpetuity.

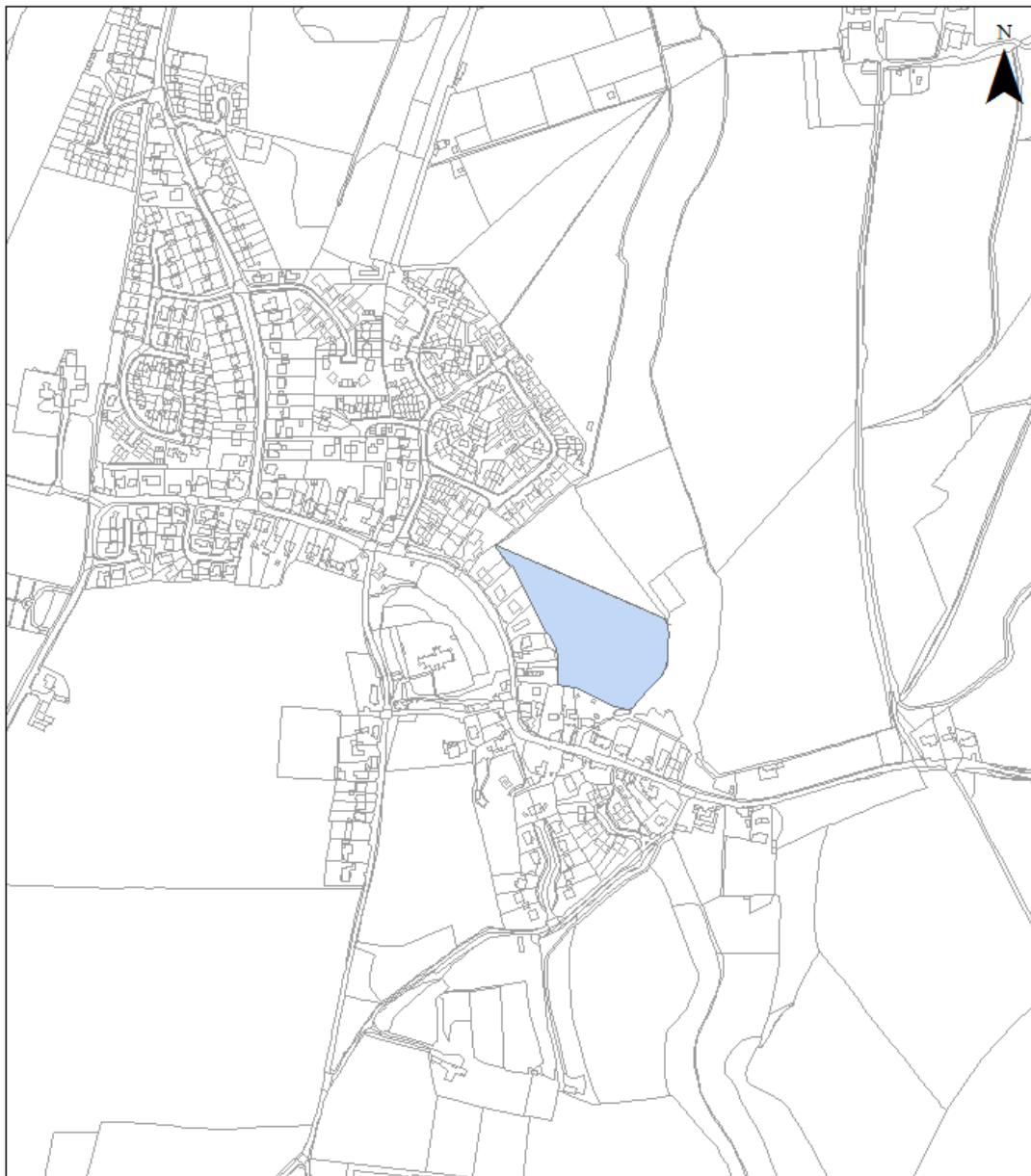
Because of its particular importance to the community as an amenity and recreation facility, the Parish Council will seek a Local Green Space designation for Central Mead (as shown on Map 1).

- 3.8 Protecting open spaces preserves the historic authenticity of the area so that further development does not impact as much as development over the last century. The close grouping of the buildings along the High Street gives a tightly knit appearance, broken only by the spaces between the buildings, opening up at the Griffin and the large open space to the side of the Model Village. This is an historic street where the historic components which contribute to its character are evident.
- 3.9 Church Hollow and Church Hill, the two streets leading up to the Church, raise a sense of anticipation as the crest of the hill is reached and the small square formed by the cottages is considered by the Parish Council to be one of the most important historic spaces on the Island. The landscaping around this introverted space contributes to this sense of enclosure.
- 3.10 The Parish Council's view is that School Road from the school into the village still offers a sense of anticipation as you approach the main village. The Parish Council considers that landscaping along this road could disguise the modern buildings to the east of the road, link the cluster of historic buildings around the school to the main village and improve this sense of anticipation.
- 3.11 Central Mead is an important open space for the community of Godshill. It provides a peaceful open space in the heart of the village, and is a well-used community playing field used by the school and residents alike. Whilst many people already enjoy using the facility, the Parish Council would like to see improvements made to improve the recreational offer by

replacing the existing somewhat dilapidated building on the site with a suitable multi use community facility which could include some provision for parking.

- 3.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) establishes that local communities “*should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them*”. This would then rule out development on those areas, other than in very special circumstances. When the Isle of Wight Council introduces a development plan document that covers Godshill, the Parish Council will lobby for the introduction of such a designation.
- 3.13 It is recognised by the parish council that not all open spaces and wooded areas may be preserved in perpetuity, should a development site come forward within the settlement boundary that would deliver community aspirations identified in other policies of this SPD.

Map 1: Proposed local green space designation at Central Mead



4. Design

GP 3 - Design

The Parish Council expects development proposals to demonstrate how they have considered the following:

- a) the development site's surrounding environment.
- b) the densities of the surrounding built form.
- c) views into or out of the landscape.
- d) avoidance of 'street clutter'.
- e) treatment of hedges and verges of narrow rural lanes where appropriate.
- f) provision of hard and soft landscaping to compliment, and wherever possible, improve the natural environment.
- g) the East Wight Landscape Character Assessment.

- 4.1 The "Street Scene" is important in all environments to represent the character of the area. In Godshill the character of the village centre and the High Street is particularly important as signified by their designation as a Conservation Area and AONB.
- 4.2 The Parish Council considers that all new infill development should look to complement the style and scale of the most dominant properties nearby closely observing the materials, colours and techniques used in their construction. This is particularly important if it is ever deemed necessary to build in the conservation area and AONB.
- 4.3 Designers of properties within developments other than what could be considered infill should be encouraged to borrow ideas for styles and materials from elsewhere in the village.
- 4.4 Away from the more traditional part of the village which is that area designated a Conservation Area, the use of modern sustainable materials and design should be encouraged providing it does not lie at odds with its environs.
- 4.5 Any form of development which would be dominant in its setting, have an adverse impact on and detract from views into and out of the village should be discouraged. Ideally design and setting should be in harmony.
- 4.6 The Parish Council considers that the local environment is often affected by commercial signage clutter and presentation. Traffic management signs and road markings should be sympathetic to the environment in which they sit whether this is an historic or modern setting. Business signs should complement their setting and not jar with it. A reduction in the temporary nature of business signs is desirable as they are often the source of the problem.
- 4.7 Landscaping should retain indigenous species of trees and shrubs wherever possible and replant these to preserve the arboreal relationship. Only indigenous species should be used to build new hedges.

- 4.8 The East Wight Landscape Character Assessment (May 2015) provides detail on character areas, including those within the parish of Godshill. This includes key characteristics, sensitivities and landscape guidelines and should be referred to at the site specific planning application stage.
- 4.9 The narrow rural lanes and their hedges and verges should be protected as far as is possible in order to retain the rural feel. The widening of lanes or the introduction of pavements and kerbs should be avoided unless there is an overriding case for safety.
- 4.10 The Parish Council considers that the climate and presentation of the village would be improved by placing and maintaining container trees and similar plants around the village. Verges could be planted. The Parish council would like to see a high proportion of flora included in any development. All this would help improve the environment by absorbing fumes/noise/dirt in addition to helping to create a pleasing appearance.
- 4.11 The Parish Council considers that all new development should include appropriate landscape design which should incorporate trees, seasonal planting, street furniture, signage and all visual impact proposals.

5. Housing

GP 4 – Housing

The Parish Council will support housing development schemes that:

- a) demonstrate how they contribute to a local need or demand being met and/or**
- b) contribute to delivering wider community aspirations including a new school facility, health facility and public car parking.**

It is the preference of the Parish Council that housing development schemes are situated in the following general locations:

- i) Deacons Nursery on the north east boundary of the village**
- ii) Munsley area on the north boundary of the village**
- iii) Scotland Farm on the west boundary of the village**

These general locations are shown on Map 2 below.

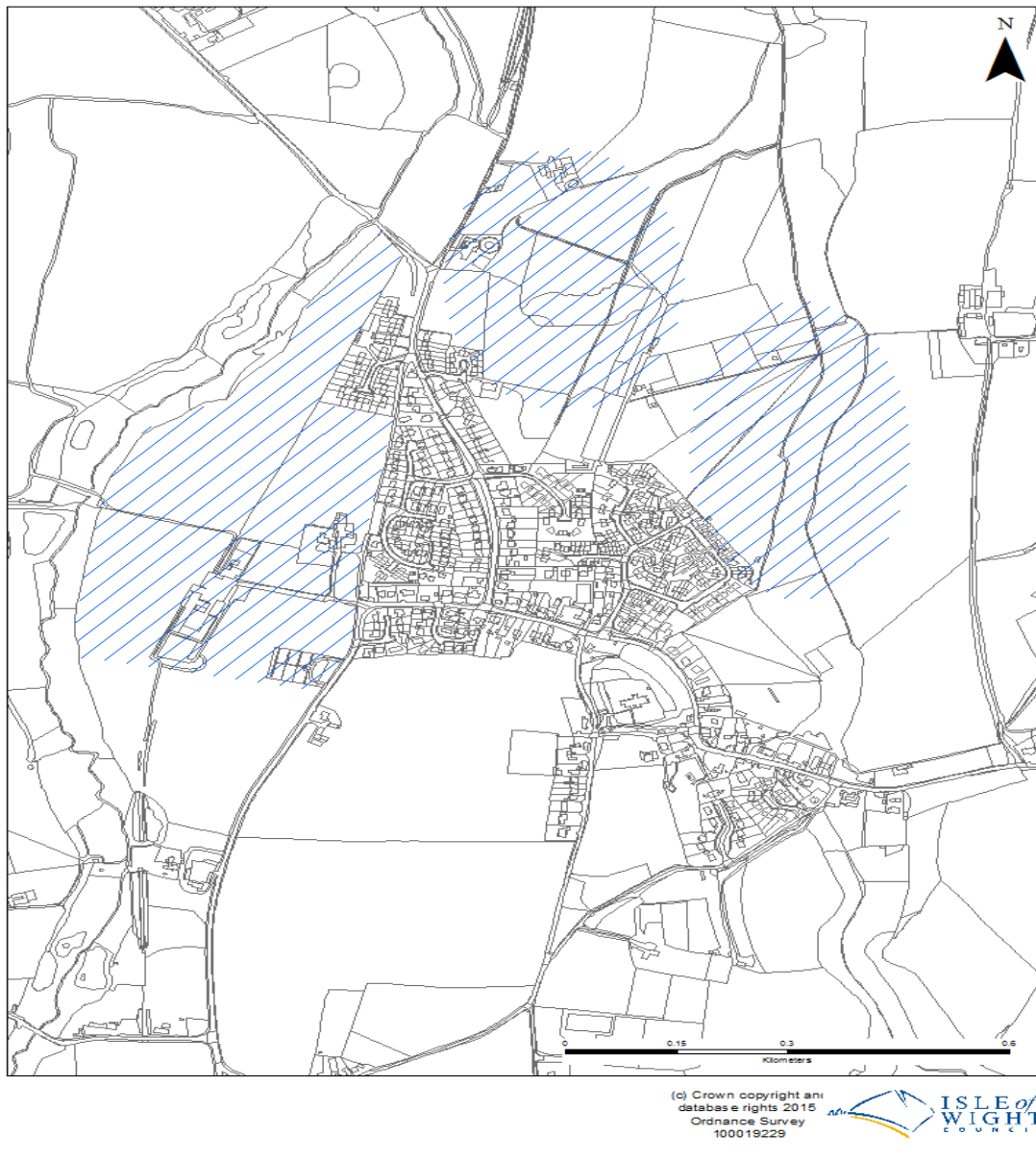
- 5.1 In 2013/14 the Parish Council undertook several surveys and consultations with residents looking at housing needs and their aspirations for the future of the community. The outcome of these consultations was that, on the basis of the housing needs survey alone, there was no identified local housing need in the parish².
- 5.2 Whilst this survey did not identify a local housing need it is recognised that a local requirement (based on population change) might still exist but the Parish Council expects

² <http://www.iwight.com/Residents/Environment-Planning-and-Waste/Planning-Policy-new/Community-Planning/Housing-Needs-Surveys>

developers to provide a justification, in line with the policy statement GP4, for any units provided.

- 5.3 The statistics for Godshill show the area being favoured by the older generation with a high percentage of retirees (34%) living in predominantly detached properties (46% of dwellings are detached). There are no care homes or health facilities in the parish. The one GP practice is located in an adapted private house. These statistics do not bode well for the future of Godshill. The parish council will therefore, support those development schemes that contribute to alleviating this situation but not to the detriment of other criteria laid down in this document.

Map 2: General locations for development preferred by the parish council



6. Traffic & Roads

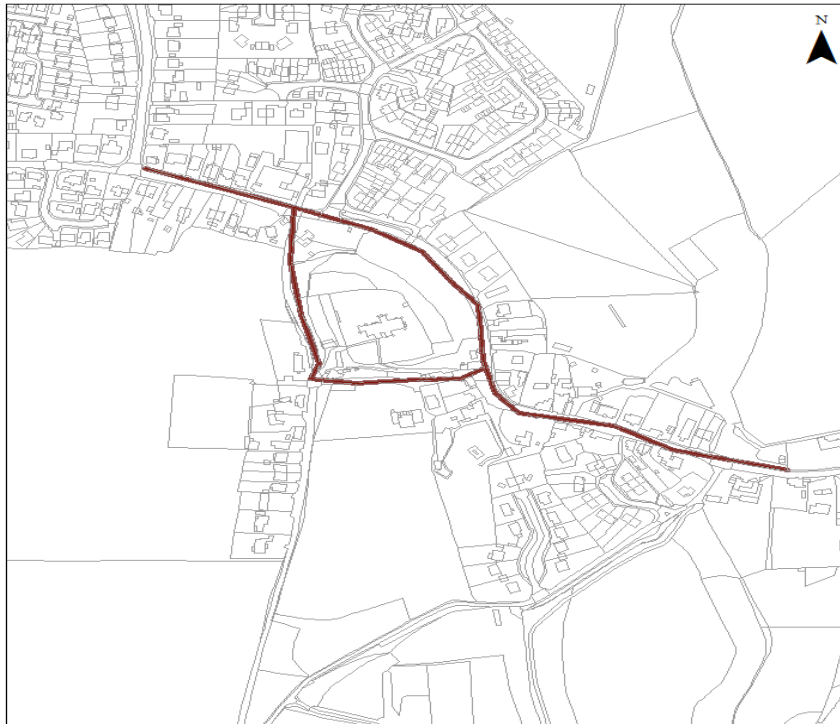
GP 5 – Traffic Management

The Parish Council will support development proposals that:

- a) contribute to the reduction of traffic speed, particularly between the High Street and School Road.**
- b) introduce traffic calming measures within the village centre.**
- c) divert through traffic and heavy goods traffic away from the village centre though not at the expense of the narrow rural roads of the parish that could not take it.**

- 6.1 The A3020 runs through the heart of the village and is one of the Islands main highways. The traffic during the daytime is heavy, often speeding, and great care needs to be taken negotiating the very narrow carriageway by drivers and those pedestrians who are obliged to walk on the carriageway.
- 6.2 Traffic impacts safety, air quality, sound, quality of life of residents and quality of visitor experience. Heavy traffic and speeding vehicles are the root cause of the problems experienced and efforts are essential to mitigate them.
- 6.3 The Parish Council is concerned that heavy, fast moving traffic through the centre of Godshill is polluting the atmosphere with exhaust emissions, which include diesel particulates, causing structural damage to roads and buildings along with extreme annoyance with the noise they make. It is to be noted that there are historic buildings abutting the High Street that are several hundred years old on a road that is so narrow in places that vehicles are constantly having to “give way”. The High Street is no longer fit for purpose designed as it was for the horse and cart.
- 6.4 Therefore, the Parish Council considers that future plans must alleviate these threats by introducing speed restrictions, by working towards diverting through traffic and heavy goods traffic away from the village centre, by enforcing noise abatement regulations and by working to improve the free flow of traffic.
- 6.5 The Parish Council considers that the speed limit through the High Street and School Road should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph and will pursue this issue with the relevant authorities.

Map 3: Suggested restricted speed areas



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- 6.6 The Parish Council would also support the introduction of traffic calming measures which would have a significant positive impact on the issues identified in paragraph 5.1. The calming measures introduced should be designed to be compatible with the ambience of the parish in mind. Historic England has published advice on caring for historic streets in the 'Streets for All' guidance³.
- 6.7 Developments that might result in inappropriate traffic using the narrow rural lanes of the parish should be discouraged.
- 6.8 The Parish Council will support initiatives that serve to alleviate the problems caused by traffic within the parish, and in particular the village. The importance to the community of addressing the negative impact of increasingly heavy traffic cannot be overemphasised.

³ <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/streets-for-all-south-east/south-east-streets.pdf/>.

GP 6 – Parking

The Parish Council will support development proposals that maintain and increase the availability of parking within the village, particularly around Godshill school. Relevant development proposals will be expected, by the Parish Council, to:

- a) prevent the loss of car parking provision within the village.**
- b) protect and enhance the availability of privately owned car parking within the village.**
- c) maintain the availability of public car parking spaces for public and visitor use.**
- d) enhance the provision of “off road” delivery points within the High Street area.**

The Parish Council will not support development proposals that:

- e) rely on the council owned car park opposite the Griffin public house and/or**
- f) lead to a significant increase in traffic at the junction of School Crescent and School Road.**

- 6.9 The community considers that traffic on the A3020 is a major problem and this is exacerbated twice a day during term time by additional school traffic. Obstructing driveways, parking on yellow lines, parking on pavements are but some of the problems. The Parish Council would look favourably at any scheme that provided a solution to these problems. Conversely if the scheme were to lead to an increase in traffic on the A3020 and exacerbate the problem then the scheme would not be supported.
- 6.10 Visitors to the village are currently reliant on The Old Smithy’s car park which is a privately owned car park. There is only one public car park in Godshill (adjacent to The Old Smithy) which has 32 parking spaces. The Parish Council is concerned that if The Old Smithy were to limit their parking in any way there would be a serious problem. Development has been allowed on a car park in the centre of the village in the past which removed an alternative to the Old Smithy for the gain of one home.
- 6.11 The Parish Council is concerned that parents delivering and collecting children from school are faced with a quandary over parking. There is no convenient place for them to park without causing an obstruction and risking the ire of people inconvenienced. There is a School Travel Plan in existence but it is proving very difficult to implement it consistently. The school is on an old site whose environs do not facilitate modern transport requirements and so a move to an alternative location would be supported.
- 6.12 The Parish Council would support the upgrade of the car park opposite the Griffin, including entry improvements to facilitate access/egress by coaches and provision of a bus stop for the public bus service.
- 6.13 The conversion of outbuildings or attached garages to accommodation units should be discouraged if this results in the loss of off road parking such that the parking remaining does not meet current standards.

- 6.14 The conversion of front gardens to off road parking should be limited where this detracts from the character of the locality. The limitation is if this alleviates the problem of kerbside parking.
- 6.15 Delivery drivers to local businesses in the High Street, in particular, do not always park sensibly and obstruct other road users and pedestrians by parking on pavements or obstructing bus stops and driveways. As a result of this pavements are being damaged and pedestrians are forced to walk in the roadway where “near misses” are a daily occurrence. Other drivers stop on the High Street to drop off / pick up passengers or to “buy an ice cream”.

7. Economy

GP 7 - Economy

The Parish Council has a business friendly approach and positively encourages the establishment of new businesses in the parish. The Parish Council will promote tourism as a means of supporting local businesses as well as showcasing the village heritage.

The Parish Council will support proposals that support diversification of business use whilst supporting the rural community and cottage industries that make up a large proportion of the employment provision in the local area.

- 7.1 Godshill village is among the most visited tourist attractions on the Island and the local businesses depend on this for their existence. The Post Office, two pubs, restaurant, tea gardens, gift shops, service station, riding schools and various attractions provide meaningful employment for many people including local residents.
- 7.2 Godshill Parish benefits considerably from the rich fertile soil which runs through it. Cereal crops, vegetables and fruit grow in abundance. The meadows, downs and woodlands support a great variety of flora and fauna. The Parish Council wishes to protect the rural environment by confining development, where possible, to brownfield sites and areas that will not damage this desirable environment. However there will be the need, in certain areas, to support development on appropriate greenfield land if the aspirations of the Parish are to be delivered.
- 7.3 The Parish Council considers that it should support local business by improving the viability and vitality of the local offer but not at the expense of large employment sites being brought forward that would impact detrimentally on the character of the local area.