WALKERN
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
2021 - 2033

First Revision











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Contents

Foreword 4

1 Introduction 6

Purpose 6

Submitting Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area 6

Planning Policy Context 6

Monitoring and Review 7

2 Process Summary 8

Planning Development Process 8

Community Engagement 9

Evidence Base Overview 10

3 The Parish of Walkern 11

4 Vision and Objectives 13

Our Vision 13

Objectives 13

Policies and Policy Map 14

5 Policies Map 15

Policies Map for Village Inset Area 16

6 Neighbourhood Plan Policies 17

Policy WLK1 Sustainable Development 18

Landscape 18

Views 20

Policy WLK2 Important Views, Vistas and Landscape Features 21

Conservation and Heritage 22

Policy WLK3 Walkern Conservation Area 23

Policy WLK4 Non-designated Heritage Assets 24

Policy WLK5 Archaeology 25

Biodiversity 25

Policy WLK6 Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity 26

Policy WLK7 Protection of Trees and Hedges 29

Green Infrastructure 29

Policy WLK8 Protected Recreational Open Spaces 30

Policy WLK9 Green Corridors 32

Policy WLK10 Local Green Space 33

Housing 39

Policy WLK11 Land South of Froghall Lane (Midsummer Meadows) 40
Policy WLK12 Housing Infill Sites 41
Policy WLK13 Rural Homes 42
Design of New Development 42
Policy WLK14: Design of New Development 43
Employment and Business 44
Policy WLK15 New Businesses 44
Policy WLK16 Diversification of Farm Businesses 45
Policy WLK17 Home Businesses 46
Sustainable Transport 46
Policy WLK18 Sustainable Transport Provision 48
Facilities And Services 48
Policy WLK19 Valued Community Assets 50
Implementation 51
Policy WLK20 Funding Priorities 51
Appendix A Policies Mapped to Objectives 52
Appendix B Views, Vistas and Landscape Features 53
Appendix C Non-Designated Heritage Assets 58
Appendix D Designated Wildlife Sites 61
Appendix E Walkern Tree Charter 63
Appendix F Green Corridors 66
Appendix G Local Green Space 67
Local Green Space Assessment – Basic Criteria 71
Local Green Space Assessment – Special Features 72
Appendix H Walkern Flood Plain Map 73
Appendix I Detail of Protected Recreational Open Spaces 74
Appendix J Car Parking Standards 77
Appendix K Action Plan 79
Appendix L Abbreviations & Glossary 80
Appendix M References and Resources 81
Appendix N Acknowledgements 82

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area 7
Figure 2: Process Chart for Preparation of the Plan 8
Figure 3: The Beane Valley 19
Figure 4: View 4 East from Box Wood towards Walkern 20
Figure 5: Bassus Green and Clay End 22
Figure 6: Examples of Lidar imagery of Box Wood (left) and Walkern Bury (right) 25
Figure 7: Bassus Green Road Verges 26
Figure 8: Hedgerow on lane Clay End (L) & Oak between Clay End and Bassus Green (R) 27
Figure 9: Magna Carta Oak (left), Box (right) 27
Figure 10: Turner's Oak 28
Figure 11: Recreation Equipment at WSCC 30
Figure 12: Established Green Corridor, Walkern Hall Farm 31
Figure 13: Map of LGS1 & LGS2 34
Figure 14: Map of LGS3 35
Figure 15: Maps of LGS4 & LGS5 36
Figure 16: Map of LGS 6 36
Figure 17: Map of LGS 7 37
Figure 18: Map of LGS 8 37
Figure 20: The narrow lane to Manor Farm is adjacent to this wall and pond 45
Figure 21: Congestion in the High Street 46
Figure 22: Walkern Sports and Community Centre 49
Figure 23: Walkern Sports and Community Centre 51
Figure 24: The Beane Valley 51
Figure 26 Detail of All Important Views 57
Figure 27: Post Box (left) and Lamp Column (right), Clay End 58
Figure 28: Decorative Lamp Columns (High Street) 59
Figure 29: Decorative Lamp Column, St Mary's Church 59
Figure 31: Weir (left) and Bridge (right), High Street 60
Figure 32 Veteran Yew, Box Wood 65

Foreword

The residents of Walkern recognise that the unique location of the parish gives all its inhabitants the many benefits of living in the beautiful surroundings of the Mid Beane Valley. The Village is surrounded by agricultural fields lined with, in some cases, ancient hedgerows, native woodland, wildflowers among our grass verges and a variety of walks for our wellbeing and interest.

The Beane chalk stream runs through the parish and over many years residents have enjoyed the stream by paddling in it and feeding the resident ducks and, on occasions, the fish too. Our wildlife is abundant from visiting birds, which many residents feed and make homes for. We also have a herd of deer regularly passing through the village over the fields to Box Wood, kingfishers living and nesting near to humans and foxes and badgers taking a walk down the High Street or through our back gardens. Then there are also slow worms, frogs and hedgehogs that survive largely thanks to residents who make sure there is enough food and shelter.

Walkern has a vast history from families that can trace their lineage back several generations, to the many interesting, listed buildings and our two remaining listed churches both of which have their own history. Firstly, St. Mary's with links to the Doomsday Book and then secondly, the United Reformed Church with its rare tree just quietly observing passers-by. Our three graveyards are cut and tidied by volunteers as well as paid gardeners and again they hold interesting information, which a resident has documented. Our War Memorial also has its stone cleaned and area tidied by two dedicated volunteers.

Most of the village is in a conservation area. The Walkern Sports and Community Centre has been operating for many years but is truly coming into its own now with a dedicated committee of volunteers hiring out the updated hall to people inside and outside of the village for a variety of events. The sports field is appealing to various age groups with a variety of outdoor fitness equipment suitable for all residents from the age of fourteen including some equipment specifically designed for less abled users. The field for football and cricket is regularly mown and well-tended with benches to sit at and enjoy the surroundings, as well as fitness classes inside and out and there are also further plans to provide additional outdoor services for the benefit of all residents soon.

The central play area for younger children has had a recent makeover and is about to have further improvements made for safety reasons and to give the area more appeal to parents and children alike, with further shrub planting and play equipment planned. Our primary and nursery schools give our children a healthy green area to learn and play in and they are an integral part of our community.

Finally, and most importantly there are the people themselves, many of whom volunteer to help others by running clubs, producing the Walkern Journal ten times per annum, running and supplying a food bank at St. Mary's, helping maintain the churches and grounds, using their skills wherever required. Our allotment ground plots are fully occupied with tenants working hard to grow a variety of fruit and vegetables throughout the seasons.

We have a choice of two cafes and two public houses offering residents, visitors, cyclists and walkers a place to rest as well as eat and drink. Walkern is lucky to have a well-stocked local shop at the heart of the community.

All the above helps to make Walkern a thriving village and a pleasant place to bring up children, walk the dog, retire to and ultimately to enjoy the beautiful countryside.

The Localism Act, which came into being in November 2011, devolves greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood development plans come out of the Government's determination to ensure that local communities are actively involved in the decisions that affect them. With continually changing planning legislation and national guidance, we hope that this statement stays true. The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan establishes a vision for the whole Parish to help deliver the local community's wishes and needs for the original Plan period 2017-2033 and the updated Plan (2021 – 2033) builds on this. The Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory document that has been incorporated into the District Planning Framework and is used by East Herts Council to assist in determining planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Our Plan has been produced by residents, with the support of the Parish Council. The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group consulted and listened to the community and local organisations on a wide range of issues that influenced the wellbeing, sustainability, and long-term preservation of our rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure that the views and policies contained in the Neighbourhood Plan reflect the opinions of a high percentage of Walkern residents.

Walkern and its environs has changed considerably over the last 60 years. We recognise that this is likely to continue up to 2033 (our Neighbourhood Plan period). We have not limited the Neighbourhood Plan to just shaping new housing developments. The vision and objectives set out in the document broaden the original Plan to include social, economic, and environmental issues such as transport, employment, education, flooding, landscape, heritage and wildlife. This updated version goes further to include preservation of our trees and hedges, defines infill, lists community assets and provides guidance on design.

Our consultation with our community and others has ensured that the Neighbourhood Plan conforms to the objectives of the Localism Act 2011. It will supersede the original Plan and sit alongside East Herts District Plan.

Tom Deffley, Chair of Walkern Parish Council (2019-2023)

1 Introduction

Purpose

1.1 The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan (referred to as the Neighbourhood Plan or the Plan) has been written in response to the rights given to local communities through the Localism Act 2011 to shape development in their areas. It has been prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and sets local policies to be used in determining planning applications.

1.2 The Neighbourhood Plan was first adopted in 2018. The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan First Revision 2021 – 2033 has been revised to reflect changes in policy at national level and physical changes in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

1.3 The Parish Council has monitored planning decisions to make sure that the Neighbourhood Plan is effective and have found permissions given for new developments which are not in keeping with the village.

1.4 Local circumstances have also changed, including the construction of the Froghall Lane development, threats to the Scheduled Monument and Ancient Woodland at Box Wood and the loss of the doctor's surgery. There has been continued development pressure on the village and new developments in the hamlets and on farmsteads.

1.5 To ensure the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan remains effective and up to date a review of the Plan has been undertaken by Walkern Parish Council. This revised version of the Neighbourhood Plan will ensure the policies contained within it make it clear where development is acceptable, what it should look like and what should be protected.

Submitting Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

1.6 Walkern Parish Council is the qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan. The whole Parish of Walkern was formally designated as a Neighbourhood Area through an application made under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (part 2 S6) and approved by East Herts District Council on 6th January 2015. The Neighbourhood Area is shown on the map in Figure 1.

Planning Policy Context

1.7 Walkern Parish is in the District of East Hertfordshire and the County of Hertfordshire. The Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the Development Plan and in particular with the strategic policies in the East Herts District Plan (EHDP) October 2018, which was adopted on 23rd October 2018 by East Herts District Council (EHDC) and covers the period 2011 - 2033. Other documents that have been taken into account in the preparation of this Plan are the Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the Minerals and Waste Local Plans prepared by Hertfordshire Country Council (HCC). The current planning documents can be found on the East Herts Council and Hertfordshire County Council websites.

1.8 The Neighbourhood Plan considers the three overarching objectives of achieving sustainable development and the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023 paragraph 8. All subsequent references to the NPPF relate to the NPPF December 2023 Regard has also been taken of current National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Further details of how the Neighbourhood Plan accords with national planning guidance can be found in the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement.

Monitoring and Review

1.9 Walkern Parish Council will continue to monitor the Neighbourhood Plan to determine its relevance and will consider further reviews, if necessary.

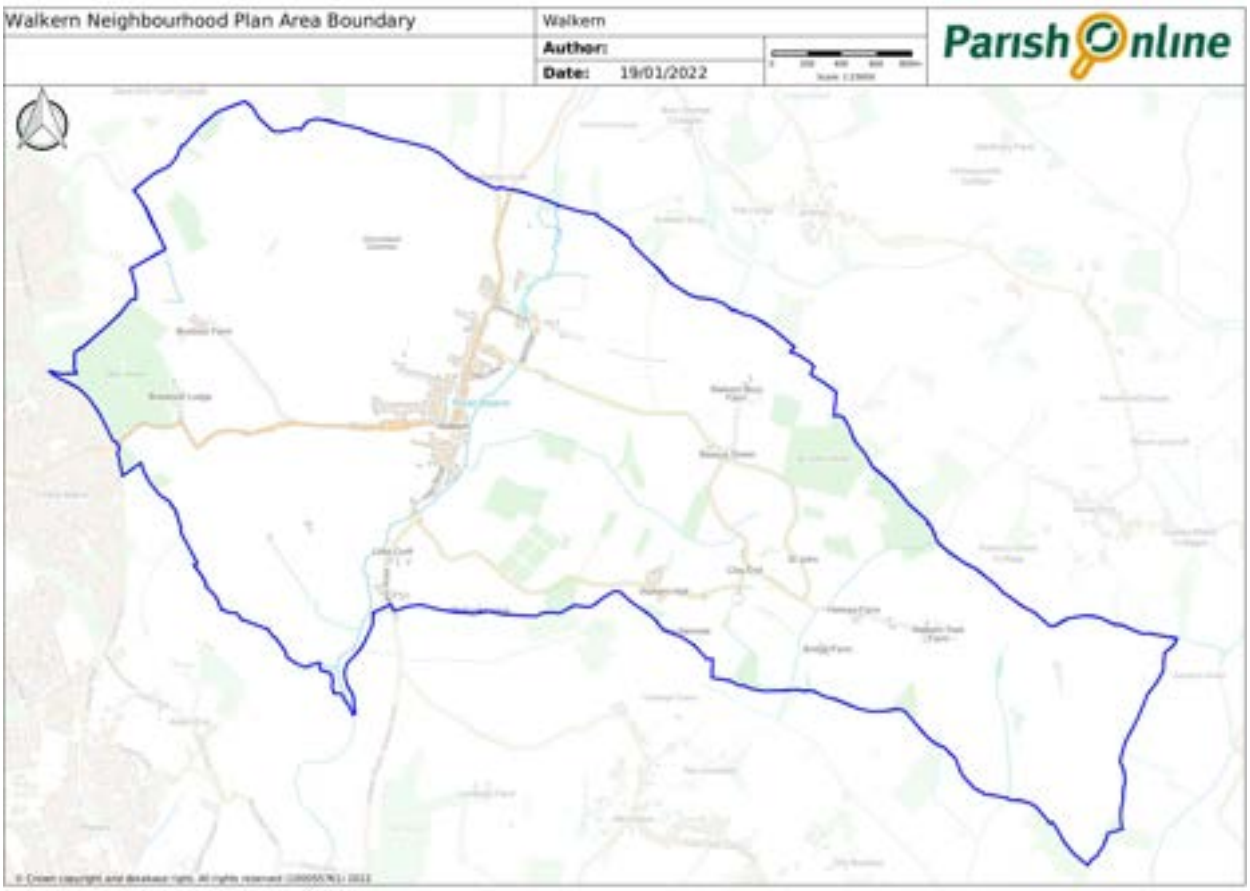


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area

2 Process Summary

Planning Development Process

2.1 Walkern Parish Council first resolved to prepare a neighbourhood plan in May 2014. A group of residents, the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Group (WNPG), was formed to prepare the Plan on behalf of the Parish Council.

2.2 The First Revision of the Neighbourhood Plan was agreed at a Walkern Parish Council meeting on 1st October 2020.

2.3 The original Neighbourhood Plan has been used as the basis for the review. It has been amended following consultation with the community and other stakeholders, by Walkern Parish Council with the help of the original planning consultant who was familiar with the village and the objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.4 There was a commitment in the original Plan to monitor its continued relevance and undertake a review in five years. Although it is only four years since the adoption of the Plan, most of the content was written many months earlier. Monitoring has revealed weaknesses in the policies and the need for changes in the original text, including expansion and clarification of some statements. Our Green Belt and the environment in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt are under threat and any further development must be sustainable. The impact of the eastern extension of Stevenage into the Neighbourhood Plan area, will increase traffic and pollution with extra vehicles using Walkern village as a shortcut to the A507, A10 and A120.

2.5 This Plan is a First Revision of the original adopted Plan. The process chart below shows how the revision of the Plan progressed.

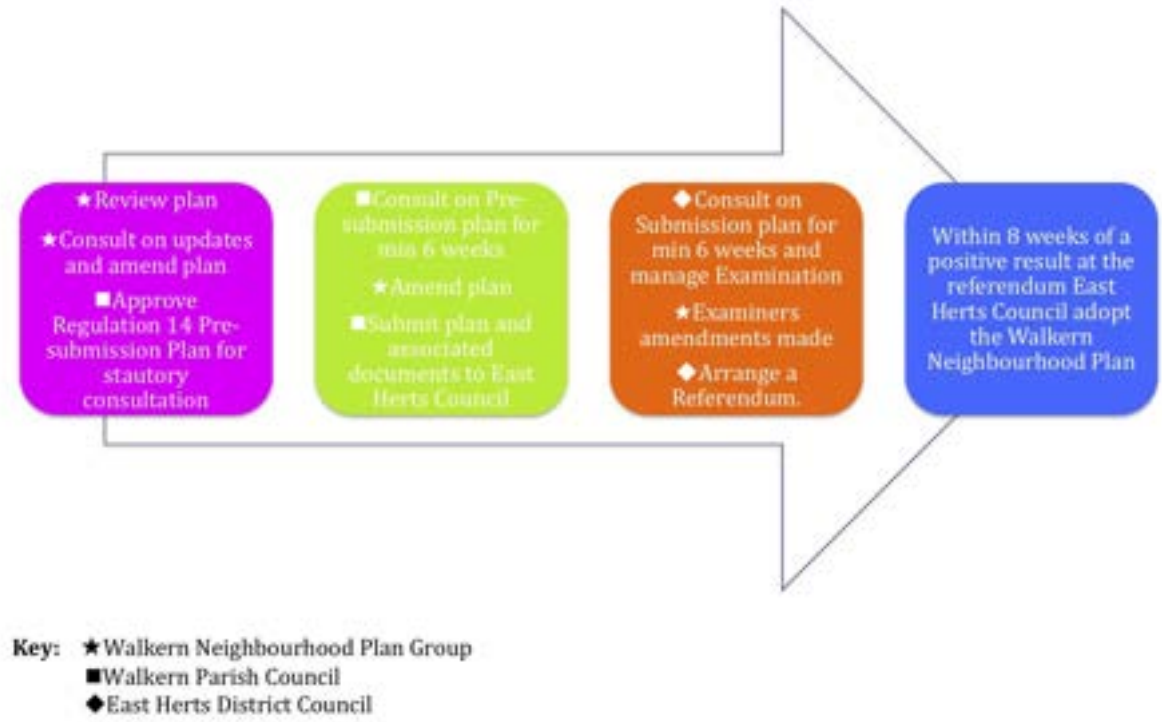


Figure 2: Process Chart for Preparation of the Plan

2.6 The initial survey which was undertaken to gather views about the Parish is still relevant. In the absence of a Parish Plan or design statement, the survey results formed the basis of the key policy areas for the Neighbourhood Plan. The key policy areas in the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- Environment (including environmental quality, heritage, climate change, pollution and flooding, biodiversity, trees and hedges, and green corridors)
- Housing and Development (including design and infilling)
- Employment and Business (to protect the local economy and providing for working from home)
- Traffic and Transport (including sustainable transport and the impact of motor vehicles)
- Facilities and Services (including wellbeing, community, and leisure).

2.7 In a workshop guided by the planning consultant a vision and several objectives were developed under each key policy area. Both were subject to consultation with the community. Both have been reviewed and consulted upon again. A table showing how the key objectives will be achieved through planning policies, can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.8 The preparation of the original Plan was delayed when a large site on Froghall Lane was refused outline planning permission. The applicant lodged an appeal and following a public inquiry the appeal to build up to 85 new homes was granted. East Herts Council acknowledged that this level of development would satisfy the housing requirement for the village as set out in District Plan Policies DPS3 and VILL1. As a result, neither the original nor the revised Neighbourhood Plan allocates any sites for housing development.

2.9 Many ideas and suggestions on how to improve the lives of people living and working in the Parish were collected during the Plan preparation process. Those issues and suggestions that could not be achieved through the planning process have been captured in an Action Plan which is attached at **Appendix K.**

Community Engagement

2.10 A Consultation Statement was produced to accompany the Neighbourhood Plan. The statement outlines the process of community engagement, lists consultees, and describes the engagement techniques used and events held including reports of engagement events.

2.11 The Parish Council website updated the community on process with the revision of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.12 On Sunday 1 August 2021 the Parish Council held an open event at the Walkern Sports and Community Centre. Villagers were able to read display boards explaining why the Neighbourhood Plan was being updated and filled in questionnaires to record their views. There was a general understanding of the purpose of the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Feedback gathered from the community at this event shaped the Regulation 14 draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, refining its objectives and strengthening its policies. The results are appended to the Consultation Statement.

Evidence Base Overview

2.13 Evidence to support the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was gathered continuously throughout the preparation process. The analysis, objectives and policies in the Neighbourhood Plan have drawn on a wide variety of sources.

These include:

- Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
- Hertfordshire Gardens Trust
- Historic Environment Record (HCC)
- Historic England
- Natural England (via Magic)
- East Herts District Council
- Parish Online to improve mapping capabilities
- ONS to provide initial results of the 2021 Census
- Local Businesses
- River Beane Restoration Association
- Environment Agency for an up to date flood map
- Locality on how to revise a Neighbourhood Plan

2.14 More detailed information on the evidence base can be found in the Consultation Statement and in the Appendices and supporting documents accompanying the Neighbourhood Plan.

3 The Parish of Walkern

Location and Main Features

3.1 Walkern Village lies a little over a mile to the east of Stevenage with the Parish boundary abutting the town at Box Wood. Apart from Walkern Village there are two small hamlets of Clay End and Bassus Green, located in the east of the Parish. The rural nature of the Parish is a stark contrast to the new town situated on its boundary.

3.2 The predominant natural feature of the Parish is the valley of the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that bisects the area, running north to south parallel to Walkern High Street.

3.3 The area of the Parish is approximately 12,100 hectares with 1541 'usual' residents living in 621 households, at the last census (2011).

History

3.4 Walkern is noted as the home of Jane Wenham, who in 1712 was the last woman in England to be convicted of witchcraft and condemned to death. It is also one of only 22 places in England with a direct link to the Magna Carta. The effigy of Baron William de Lanvalei, one of the Barons elected to enforce the law of the Magna Carta eight centuries ago, lies in St Mary's Church.

3.5 The parish Church of St Mary the Virgin is one of the oldest village churches in Hertfordshire, with a Saxon wall and rare chalk crucifix dating back to the mid-10th century. The village had several mills for grinding wheat with the original medieval mill first located near the church and then moved down stream to the southern end of the village and later rebuilt and converted to steam power. This continued in operation until the Second World War. To the west of the High Street is a rare octagonal dove house built around 1700. The High Street itself was not metalled until 1930 and streetlights were installed in 1938.

3.6 After the war in 1946 Walkern was self-sufficient as an agricultural village with 34 businesses providing the everyday needs of its residents. Trades included a shoe shop, general store, butcher, baker, greengrocer, tobacconist, rug maker, seamstress, coal merchant, wood yard, beekeeper, plus a brewery, four pubs, several churches and large farms employing many residents.

Walkern Today

3.7 The village today still has several shops, including a convenience store/post office, a nail and beauty shop, a photographic and hair salon (by appointment only), two tearooms, two pubs, a garage and petrol station, and a seasonal Christmas shop. Farms still operate, but with very little staff. The Piggeries on Benington Road and commercial units at Manor Farm on Dove House Lane accommodate small businesses but altogether, these provide very little employment and so most residents travel outside the village to work, or work from home.

3.8 Public transport in the village is poor and without a car, residents have to rely on a limited daytime bus service or taxis to reach Stevenage town and rail station. Coaches ferry children to and from the middle school and college in Buntingford. From September 2022 many children will be required to attend Stevenage schools and no longer Buntingford. With no coach provision this means that existing transport arrangements are inadequate. On-street parking and traffic congestion is part of daily life in Walkern, particularly in the High Street and in the vicinity of the school. This is exacerbated by traffic including heavy lorries using the B1037 as a back route out of Stevenage.

3.9 People like living in Walkern Parish and value their rural surroundings highly, according to the Neighbourhood Plan survey and feedback from consultation events. With approximately 32% of respondents to the CDA Herts Housing Need Survey 2017 (CDA 2107 p.12) having lived in Walkern for more than 20 years, this indicates the relative stability of the community. House prices in the Parish are high. There were only 9 properties sold in Walkern in the 12 months to April 2022 with an average price of £379,333. One of these was a flat. The average price of houses sold was £404,500.

3.10 The recommendations of the CDA report on housing need in Walkern indicate that, in order to serve the local community, 16 affordable units should be identified for local residents. This was further clarified as the most significant need being for two bed homes for small three person families (7 units), one bed homes for single people (5 units), and three bed homes for four person families (4). Of the 31 respondents who desired affordable homes, only 2 asked for bungalows and 7 asked for flats. Almost 50% of respondents who commented on where the affordable housing should be located identified the land at Froghall Lane.

3.11 The village store is an important facility for residents and was designated an Asset of Community Value, providing a local meeting point as well as an essential service for those who do not have private transport. Other private community facilities that are particularly valued are the Yew Tree and White Lion pubs and the United Reform Church (URC), which has been completely renovated with a new kitchen and now offers facilities for local groups to meet.

3.12 Improvements have been made to the primary school, which offers pre-school places and a toddler's group and takes pupils from outside the village. The Walkern Sports and Community Centre football pitches are well used and has facilities for cricket and basketball. The Parish Council is committed to further improving the outdoor facilities with a variety of additions including the newly installed fitness trail and seating area at the Sports Field.

3.13 As a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, consultation exercises, ideas and suggestions were made for improvements to facilities and services in the Parish. These have been captured in a Project List. Grant funding through schemes such as Biffa, Heritage Lottery Fund, Locality, and funding from new developments (S106) will be directed to projects that will benefit the greatest number of residents and businesses. These projects will be complimentary to and implemented in parallel with, the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, to achieve the objectives set out in section 4.

4 Vision and Objectives

Our Vision

4.1 Our vision is to help inform the decisions reached by East Herts District Council across all areas of development in the Parish of Walkern. It is to ensure the village grows gradually to preserve the character and the rural feel of the Parish. Future development must be sustainable based on the principle that better lives for residents now, do not mean worse lives for future generations. We believe that the planning system is about positive growth, making economic, environmental and social progress to enhance every aspect of the Parish of Walkern. Our vision statement is:

The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan will shape the evolution of Walkern over the next 11 years by meeting the aspirations and needs of the local community. We are committed to preserving Walkern's historic character and strong rural identity by ensuring that development in the Parish is sustainable, protects valued natural features, strengthens a sense of community and enhances wellbeing of new and existing residents. We want to make sure Walkern Parish remains a great place to live.

Objectives

4.2 The objectives focus on specific parts of the vision statement and provide the context for the planning policies

4.3 The objectives are as follows:

A. Ensure the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that runs through Walkern Parish, is preserved, protected from over-abstraction and public access is maintained

B. Enhance and improve the environment and environmental quality of the Parish, minimising noise, air and water pollution

C. Ensure the mix, size and type of new housing meets local needs, including a sufficient supply of affordable housing for sale and rent and preferential access to some new homes for people with a strong local connection

D. Require new development to be of high-quality design, built to a high sustainability standard and to be sympathetic to, and improve, the look and feel of the Parish

E. Ensure that new development is phased and located to minimise the impact on the already limited road infrastructure in the village

F. Ensure the design and location of new developments are resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding

G. Support existing businesses, creative industries and home working, and encourage new local employment opportunities for residents

H. Preserve and enhance public transport services to and from the village for residents who do not have use of a car, and encourage safe walking and cycling options

I. Ensure that community facilities and services enhance the health and wellbeing of residents

J. Ensure the village has recreational facilities that meet the needs of young children, teenagers and adults, and strengthen the sense of community

K. Make the best possible use of funding through Section 106, a Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding related to development in the parish, to improve parish facilities.

4.4 The last of these objectives assumed that East Herts Council would, at some point, set a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Until such time as a CIL is set, either locally or nationally, this objective is relevant to ensuring the best use of Section 106 funding from new development and any other form of funding that can contribute towards the enhancement of the Parish. The Action Plan attached as an **Appendix K** includes projects that have been identified by the community as enhancements to life in the Parish.

Policies and Policy Map

The Policies

4.5 The following chapter sets out the planning policies for Walkern Neighbourhood Plan First Review for the period to 2033. This ties in with the end of the Plan period for the East Herts District Plan. The planning policies, together with the reasoned justification for them, reflect the main issues raised through consultation with the community and how the Plan aims to achieve the Objectives A – K.

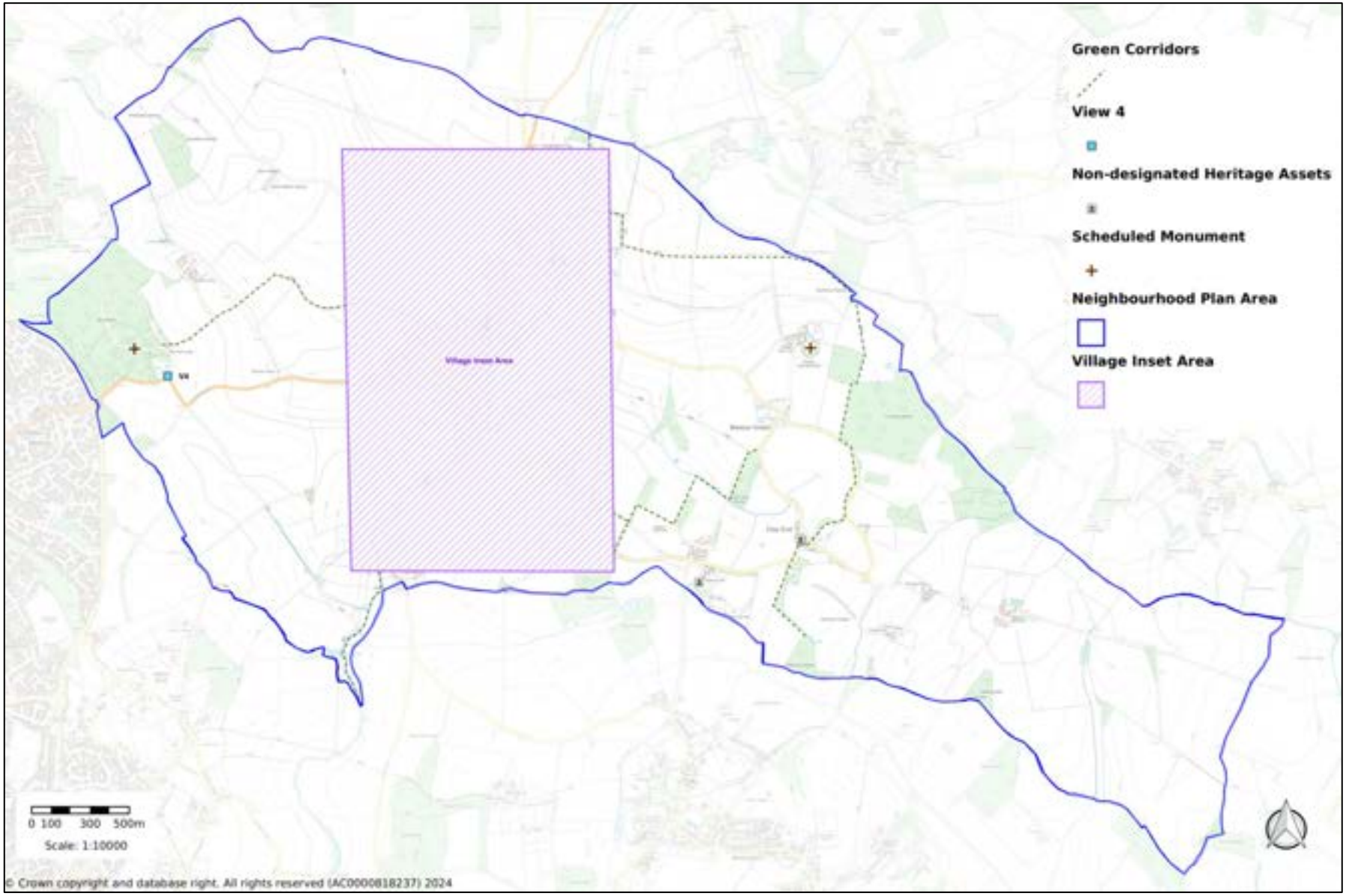
The Policies Map

4.6 The **Policies Map** should be read in conjunction with the policies as it shows where in the Neighbourhood Plan Area the policies apply, for example, the areas designated as Local Green Space.

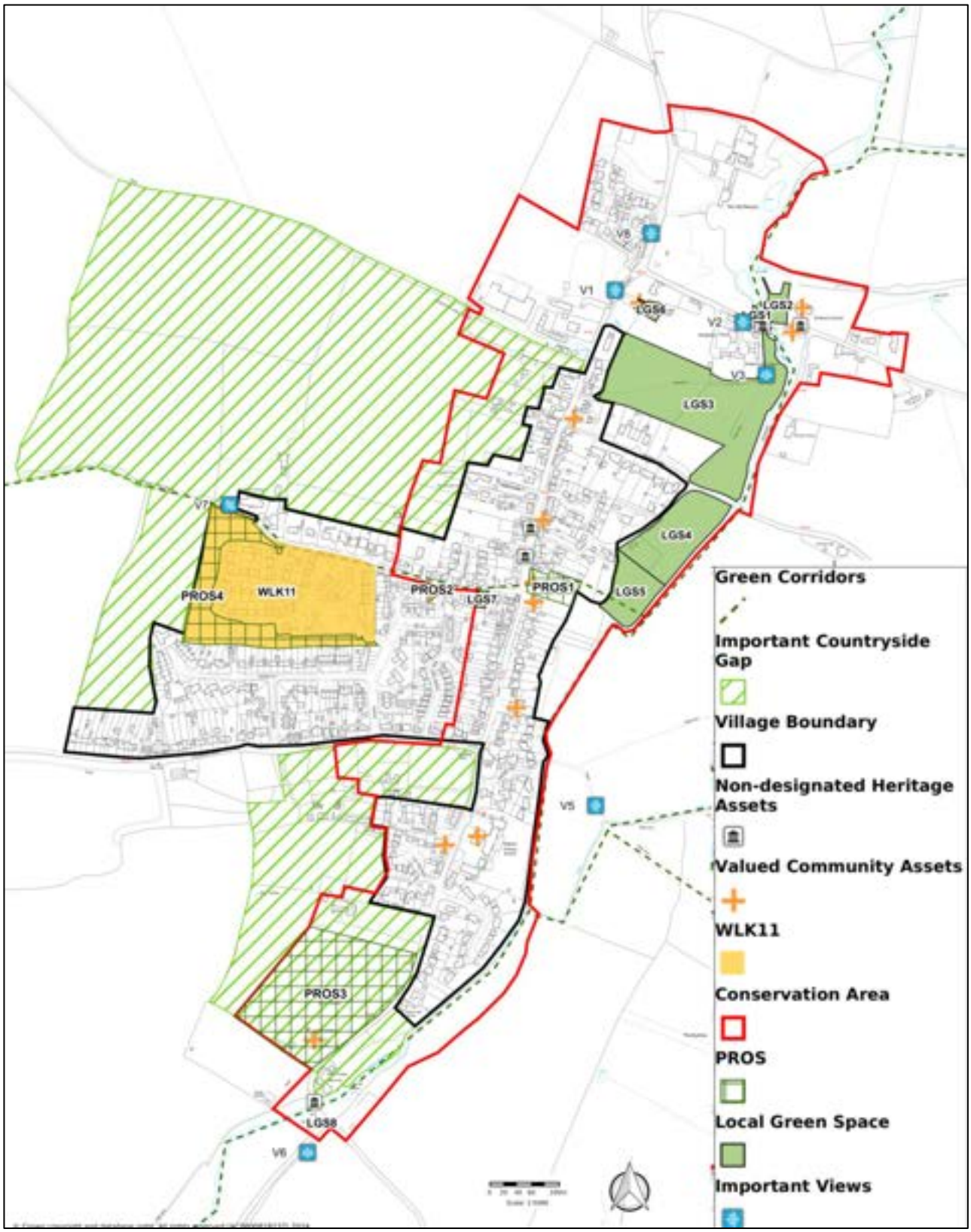
4.7 The Map is shown at two scales with one map covering the whole of the Neighbourhood Plan Area at a smaller scale and a Village Inset Map at 1:10,000. In addition, each Local Green Space has a larger scale map (see the section Green Infrastructure **Policy WLK10**).

4.8 Please note that to make the maps as large as possible for a printed document, only the scale bar can be relied upon. Please contact the Parish Council if you require an accurate map from which to measure using a scale rule.

5 Policies Map



Policies Map for Village Inset Area



6 Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Strategic Context

6.1 This chapter sets out the planning policies for the Parish of Walkern for the period 2017-2033, which are aligned with the end of the plan period for the East Herts District Plan. The planning policies, together with the reasoned justification for them, are set out below. The policies reflect the main issues, which were raised in consultation. **Appendix A** sets out how the policies will achieve the objectives.

6.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the East Herts District Plan provide the overall policy context for the Neighbourhood Plan. Regard has also been given to National Planning Practice Guidance (introduced on-line by the Government since March 2014).

6.3 East Herts District Plan Policy DPS3 Housing Supply 2011-2033 identifies Group 1 Villages, of which there are eight including Walkern, as contributing 500 homes. Policy VILL1 Group 1 Villages requires each of the eight villages to grow by at least 10% (based on the 2011 Census). The minimum requirement for Walkern is 55 homes. Since the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan was made, 85 homes have been built on Midsummer Meadow (Land South of Froghall Lane). This development far exceeded the minimum number of new homes required by Policy VILL1. As a result, there is therefore no requirement for this First Revision of the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan to include housing site allocations.

6.4 In these documents, particularly in paragraph 8 of the NPPF, there is a commitment to achieving sustainable development with three overarching objectives: an economic objective; a social objective and an environmental objective. Following these objectives will create sustainable communities which embrace the principles of sustainable development using a coordinated approach to the delivery of homes, jobs and infrastructure and development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

6.5 At the heart of the NPPF, there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be a common theme, running through plan-making (including neighbourhood plans) and decisions taken on planning applications for development. These overall principles are reflected in the East Herts District Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan is strongly committed to these principles and to the delivery of sustainable development. In accordance with its stated objectives the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect and maintain the strong community, which binds the village together, whilst protecting and enhancing the environment of the Parish for the future. At the same time the Neighbourhood Plan supports the development of the economy and local facilities and services in ways that protect the overall character of the area.

Policy WLK1 Sustainable Development

I. **Support will be given to development proposals which accord with the principles of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF, East Herts District Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan.**

II. **The Neighbourhood Plan ensures that development in Walkern is sustainable for the community, for the provision of homes, the protection of the environment and economic sustainability of businesses.**

Landscape

6.6 From the responses to public consultation, the countryside and landscape of the Parish of Walkern are greatly valued by the local community and by visitors to the area. The rural nature of the Parish is described in detail in the East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, adopted by the district council in 2007 as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

6.7 According to the SPD, the Parish of Walkern is in two landscape character areas. The bulk of the area, including Walkern village is within Landscape Character Area No. 39, the Middle Beane Valley. The rest of the Parish is within Landscape Character Area No. 140, the Ardeley and Cottered Settled Plateau, with Walkern Hall at its southern extremity.

6.8 The area No. 39 is described as "open farmland with small, grouped woodlands, linked by hedges." Characteristics include "medium to large-scale field patterns" and "strongly undulating slopes", with "a remote character, despite proximity to Stevenage." The low impact of built development and lack of land use change is an essential feature, which must be retained in the gap between Walkern and Stevenage to preserve the character and rural nature of the area.

6.9 Much of the land between Stevenage and Walkern is designated as Green Belt. A purpose of the Green Belt designation is to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another. Additionally, land between Walkern's village boundary and the Green Belt, together with land to the east of the village, is designated in the District Plan as 'Rural Areas Beyond the Green Belt' (Policy GBR2). The purpose of Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt policy is to maintain the countryside as a valuable resource, permitting those developments that require a countryside location or are defined as appropriate development within the countryside.

6.10 The character of Walkern village, north of Froghall Lane and west of the High Street is of properties predominantly fronting the road, many with very large back gardens with open countryside beyond. Most of these buildings are Listed or identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 as contributing to the special interest of the conservation area. Occasional small groups of additional homes in courtyard developments contribute some variety.

6.11 The character of Walkern village south of Stevenage Road and west of the High Street, is mainly open with two large characterful homes and three close style developments (Rockery Close, The Maltings, Wrights Meadow), mostly hidden behind listed characterful built frontages, with Springhill (204 High Street) signalling the end of the village on this side of the road.

6.12 To retain the special character of the conservation area, any significant development behind the High Street to the west should demonstrate that it will not have an adverse impact upon the character of this part of the village or the setting of the conservation area.

6.13 The recent housing development in Walkern at Midsummer Meadow can be seen from Box Wood and the edge of Stevenage. The proposed development on the edge of Stevenage (Gresley Park) will be visible from Walkern thus eroding the visible and physical gap between the large town and the village and negating the phrase 'low impact of built development'.



Figure 3: The Beane Valley

6.14 Area No. 140 is described as an elevated plateau between the valley of the River Beane to the west and the more open arable plateau to the east. It is summarised as a "settled plateau landscape with a strong sense of historic continuity", also a "tranquil and traditional landscape with few detractors." This landscape is considered to be unusual in Hertfordshire.

6.15 The character assessments confirm the perceptions of local people about the landscape, particularly about the Beane Valley, and the open and tranquil nature of the countryside. In both landscape character areas, the SPD recommends that the landscape should be "conserved and strengthened." The Parish Council supports this approach to conserve the rural landscape. East Herts District Plan Policy DES 1 seeks to protect the overall landscape character of East Hertfordshire, guided by the detailed assessments in the SPD.

6.16 Within the Parish, the relationship between the settlements and the surrounding rural landscape is particularly important. Walkern itself has a linear form, running along the valley of the River Beane. The village is surrounded by a combination of farmland and woodland, with many mature trees within and around the settlement. These elements are also important features of the hamlets of Clay End and Bassus Green, which are situated on the higher ground to the east of Walkern.

6.17 It is important that any new developments in the Parish are sympathetic to this local landscape character. Land lying in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt between Walkern and Stevenage is defined in this Plan as an Important Countryside Gap and is shown on the Village Inset Policies Map. New development will be permitted within the Important Countryside Gap provided that it does not result in physical or visual coalescence of Stevenage and Walkern or adversely impact the separate character, appearance, and identity of Walkern.

Views

6.18 Walkern has a minimal impact on the views across the river valley as it nestles in the gently rolling landscape. The Neighbourhood Plan has identified several key views, vistas and landscape features, listed in **Policy WLK2**, detailed in **Appendix B** and shown on the **Policies Map**. To maintain the integrity of these important views, vistas and landscape features and ensure new development does not impinge on the rural setting of the village, development proposals must include an assessment of any impact and how that impact will be mitigated.



Figure 4: View 4 East from Box Wood towards Walkern

6.19 Mitigation of important views could take the form of natural screening such as mitigation planting/boundary treatment (see reference: Landscape Issues in your Neighbourhood Plan (CPRE)). Site specific design of buildings and structures could include a careful colour choice, lowering heights, or using appropriate materials. Proposals where a harmful impact is identified will only be permitted where effective mitigation measures can be delivered.

6.20 To assess the landscape and visual impact on important views an appropriate methodology should be used. The use of Verified Views such as annotated photographs or photomontages are two such methods (see reference: Historic England Research Report Series 17-2019).

6.21 These views, vistas and landscape features should be protected from the harmful impact of development in accordance with **Policy WLK2** of this Plan. The location of the viewpoints and the extent of the views are shown on the **Policies Map**. Photographs and descriptions of Views are in **Appendix B.**

Policy WLK2 Important Views, Vistas and Landscape Features

I. Development proposals will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that measures have been taken to contain and mitigate the visual impacts of development on the open character of the landscape setting of Walkern.

II. Eight important views and vistas are identified on the Policies Map and detailed in Appendix B. These are:

View 1: West from opposite the United Reformed Church (High Street) through Manor Farm paddock

View 2: East along Church End over the ford

View 3: North from the meadows to St Mary the Virgin Church

View 4: East from Box Wood towards Walkern

View 5: East of the River Beane to Wrights Tower House above the Finches

View 6: North from the entrance to Walkern along Benington Road

View 7: South west from Froghall Lane towards Stevenage

View 8: East of High Street at Glebe View

III. In addition, the River Beane Valley is the primary landscape feature in the Parish and provides an important gap between Walkern and Stevenage. Within the area defined as Important Countryside Gap on the Policies Map, new development will only be permitted if it does not result in the physical or visual coalescence of Stevenage and Walkern and would not undermine the separate character, appearance and identity of Walkern.

IV. Any development proposals in the Important Countryside Gap or within the identified views should, where appropriate, include a landscape and visual impact assessment of harm, using an appropriate methodology. Proposals where a harmful impact is identified will only be permitted where effective mitigation measures can be delivered.

Conservation and Heritage

6.22 The consultation responses during the preparation and First Revision of the Neighbourhood Plan, show that the community places considerable value on the historic environment and built heritage of the Parish. Central to this concern is the Walkern Conservation Area, which covers the historic core of the village, and its setting. Along the High Street, there are many listed buildings, dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries, reflecting the vernacular architectural style of construction in this part of Hertfordshire. One of the most significant buildings is the Grade I listed Church of St. Mary the Virgin, which is the oldest village church in the county. At the northern end of the village, at Church End, there is a ford on the River Beane, which is below the mediaeval Bridgefoot Farm.

6.23 To the east of the Parish, the hamlets also contain features of historic interest. Bassus Green is close to the remains of Walkern Castle and is characterised by a small collection of pre-16 century thatched cottages and farm buildings. Clay End also has a mixture of historic cottages and farm structures. Both hamlets are accessed by an ancient pattern of narrow country lanes and historic footpaths and bridleways, screened by hedgerows.



Figure 5: Bassus Green and Clay End

6.24 The NPPF advises that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Scheduled monuments are noted as being of the highest significance. Walkern has two scheduled monuments: Walkern Bury ringwork medieval fortifications and the earthworks spread over a significant area in the southern part of Box Wood.

6.25 The Parish Council supports the aims of East Herts District Plan Policies which seek to protect heritage assets. In Conservation Areas, District Plan Policy HA4 states that new development, alterations and extensions to existing buildings will be permitted where they preserve or enhance the established character of an area. Proposals outside a conservation area which affect its setting will be treated likewise. District Plan Policies HA5 and HA6, seek to control the design of shop fronts and the regulation of advertisements in conservation areas.

6.26 The Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2016 identifies numerous buildings and structures which are not listed (designated heritage assets in their own right) but which make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area. This Plan highlights specific aspects of Walkern Conservation area that contribute to its significance (**Policy WLK3**).

Policy WLK3 Walkern Conservation Area

I. **Development within Walkern Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced. The elements of the Conservation Area which make a positive contribution to it, as defined in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposal 2016 (or an updated version) should be preserved in a manner appropriate to their significance..**

II. **Development will be supported where it makes a positive contribution to the rural landscape of the Beane Valley and the setting of Walkern's Conservation Area.**

6.27 The District Plan also contains a pledge, in Policy HA2, to engage with local communities on the protection of non-designated heritage assets. A new Government initiative was launched in September 2019 to help ensure local buildings are preserved for future generations by encouraging non-designated heritage assets to be identified during the preparation of neighbourhood plans. Historic England describe non-designated heritage assets are locally identified buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions (see reference: Local Heritage Listing Historic England Advice Note 7). Local heritage can benefit the local economy as well as help to define a sense of place and provide a feeling of community identity and well-being.

6.28 Hertfordshire Gardens Trust were consulted on potential parks and gardens with heritage interest. Both Walkern Hall and The Old Rectory have garden features which are protected by virtue of being listed buildings in their own right. Walkern Hall has an ornamental walled garden with carved well head, fountain, and summer house. There is a ha-ha, beyond which is a medieval hunting park. The wealth of heritage within the designed landscape makes it worthy of inclusion as a non-designated heritage asset.

6.29 The Old Rectory is at the north end of the village north west of the church. The walled garden is separately listed, as is The Granary, which is close to the High Street. Subject to further research, may become eligible as non-designated heritage assets.

Policy WLK4 Non-designated Heritage Assets

I. The following non-designated heritage assets have been identified in this Neighbourhood Plan:

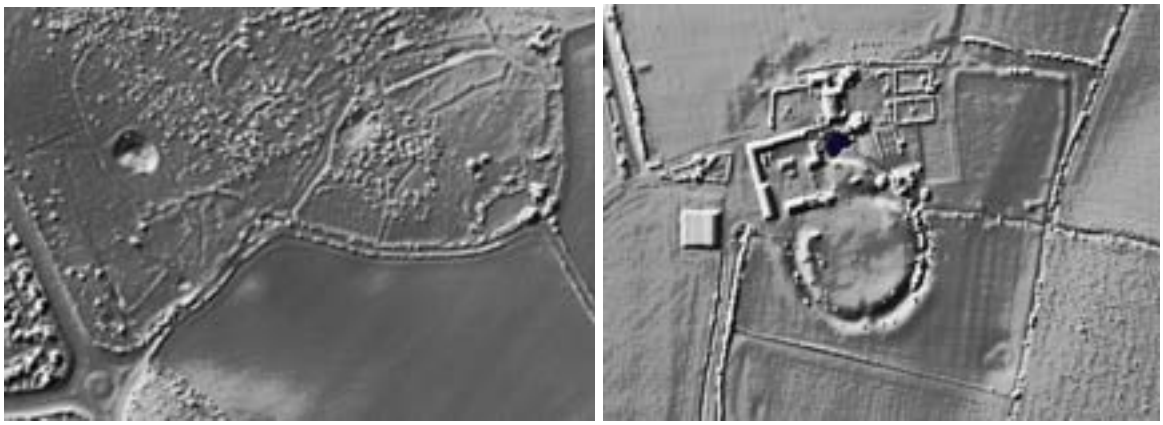
- **Queen Elizabeth II pole mounted post box, Clay End**
- **Decorative cast iron lamp column, Clay End**
- **Decorative cast iron lamp columns, High Street, Walkern**
- **Decorative cast iron lamp column, Church End, Walkern**
- **Bridge and weir, High Street Walkern**
- **Gardens at Walkern Hall, Cley End**

II. Development proposals which affect these heritage assets, or are within their setting, should avoid or minimise any harm to their significance. A proportionate description of their significance and the impact of the proposals on it should be provided by applicants, to enable a balanced judgement to be made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

6.30 Across the Parish, there are several potential sites of archaeological interest. A general policy on the protection of archaeological sites and assets is contained in the East Herts District Plan (Policy HA3). The policy requires a desk-based assessment of any proposal, which may affect a site of potential archaeological interest. There are several Areas of Archaeological Significance in the Parish, which are shown on the East Herts District Plan Policies Map.

6.31 Walkern History Society in conjunction with North Hertfordshire Museum are undertaking a project to expand on the limited knowledge of Walkern and build up a story of the village through time. This has so far involved a test pit programme which started in 2017 when the Historic Environment Record contained only 109 entries. Test pits have been dug predominantly along the High Street but also at the church (Church End) and at the Walkern Mill (see reference: North Herts Museum).

6.32 Over the same period, the Scheduled Monument at Box Wood has been put at risk from the subdivision of the wood and sale of plots. There is still much to learn about this monument. Walkern Bury Scheduled Monument also has the potential to extend well beyond the clearly visible earthwork. Other possible sites of interest are Cobble's Spring, south of the village. The Parish Council welcomes the illumination of Walkern's history though a greater understanding of archaeology.



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Figure 6: Examples of Lidar imagery of Box Wood (left) and Walkern Bury (right)

Policy WLK5 Archaeology

I. **The identification and protection of local sites of archaeological interest and their enhancement is supported.**

Biodiversity

6.33 The wider countryside of the Parish contains many features of significant value for wildlife and nature conservation, many of which were identified by residents in consultation. Underground springs and wells from the chalk aquifer, and the River Beane, an important and rare chalk stream, and one of about 200 remaining worldwide, provide a perfect habitat in which an abundance of flora grow and fauna, including slow worms, newts, frogs, and kingfisher are found. The woodlands, hedgerows, and the agricultural landscape of the Parish support a diversity of life forms, the survival of which has been assisted by conservation work. The local planning authority, in collaboration with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, has also designated local Wildlife Sites. These sites are described in an inventory in **Appendix D**.

6.34 During the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, members of the WNPG compiled a detailed inventory of plants, animals, birds, and insects, which could be found in the parish. The survey also listed the sites of nature conservation value, Ancient Woodland Inventory Sites, and the designated local Wildlife Sites. Maintaining and improving the quality of wild-flower rich natural or semi-natural habitats including designated sites is an important priority for the *National Pollinator Strategy 2014* published by Department of Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

6.35 The East Herts District Plan recognises that nature conservation is an integral part of the planning system. Thus, the most important areas for biodiversity are identified on the East Herts District Plan Policies Map. Policy NE1 of the document affords protection to International, National and Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites. Development will not be permitted unless there are reasons, which clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of a site. The policy also includes provision for compensation or mitigation where development proposals are allowed. The Parish Council supports this approach.

6.36 The East Herts District Plan acknowledges the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect species and plants and the diversity of habitats (policy NE2). Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust reintroduced Water Voles higher up the River Bean at Watton-at-Stone/Stapleford in July 2022. A prerequisite for successful reintroduction includes suitable riverbank habitat.

6.37 The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (2006) identifies those species and habitats that are a priority for conservation, many of which are present in the Parish of Walkern. There are several sites where species and habitats need to be protected and development proposals will be permitted, only where harm can be avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated for in accordance with national policy.

6.38 The Environment Act 2021 introduces a new requirement that most planning permissions in England must deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain. This biodiversity net gain should be measured and delivered in accordance with national legislation and guidance.

Policy WLK6 Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity

I. **Wildlife and significant habitats including the River Beane will be protected from any significant harmful impacts of development, including pollution, unless avoided, adequately mitigated or compensated for in accordance with national policy.**



Figure 7: Bassus Green Road Verges

Trees, Hedges and Woodland

6.39 Trees and hedgerows perform many functions including supporting biodiversity, providing shade and shelter, modifying the effects of climate change, and the general feeling of wellbeing and amenity they provide. Walkern has many old and beautiful trees, hedges and areas of ancient woodland. Some are already protected by virtue of their being within the Walkern Conservation Area or subject to Tree Preservation Orders.



Figure 8: Hedgerow on lane Clay End (L) & Oak between Clay End and Bassus Green (R)

6.40 Rare and interesting trees can be found in Walkern. Three such examples are a Turner's Oak (Quercus turneri), which lies in the field to the north of St Mary's church, the Magna Carta Oak, in St Mary's churchyard, and a Box tree in the churchyard of the URC, High Street. Turner's Oak is a rare hybrid of the English oak, crossed with a Holm oak by an Essex nurseryman in the 18th century. It was planted by Rev. Benjamin Heath in the late C18th/early C19th when the field was part of his pleasure garden. It is semi-evergreen, losing its leaves in spring. The Magna Carta Oak was grown from an acorn collected from the Parliament Oak in Sherwood Forest. It was planted to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta and its significance for the village of Walkern. The Box tree is over 200 years old. Both trees are within Walkern Conservation Area.



Figure 9: Magna Carta Oak (left), Box (right)

6.41 Other trees in open farmland are more vulnerable to damage due to passing vehicles and lack of management. Herts Environmental Record Centre have 19 veteran and mature individual trees identified in the parish. In addition to the Turner's oak mentioned above there are 16 other oaks, the largest of which is in the garden of Walkern Hall Farm, a hornbeam, and an ash. In addition to these individually recorded trees there are three ancient woodlands. Box Wood, St John's/Lords Wood, Walman's Wood. All three are Local Wildlife Sites.



Figure 10: Turner's Oak

6.42 Box Wood has been particularly at risk following the subdivision and sale of leasehold plots. More details of the importance of Box Wood can be found in the Addendum to **Walkern Tree Charter at Appendix E** including a photograph of a veteran yew tree (see Figure 29).

6.43 New developments should, wherever possible, retain existing trees, hedgerows and green road borders. Planting more native climate resistant trees is encouraged, in open spaces and in new developments.

6.44 The plight of trees and hedges is highlighted in the Tree Charter in **Appendix E**. This provides commitments, advice, guidance and encouragement to nurture trees in the Parish.

Policy WLK7 Protection of Trees and Hedges

I. **Trees and hedgerows are protected by Policies DES4, HOU2, NE3 and NE4, and individual site allocations in East Herts District Plan.**

II. **The planting of trees able to withstand climate change will be encouraged at every opportunity.**

III. **Development will be supported that adopts the principles in the Walkern Tree Charter Appendix E which provides information to assist developers to recognise the importance of trees in Walkern.**

Green Infrastructure

6.45 Both the NPPF and the East Herts District Plan introduce the concept of green infrastructure, described as "a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities." East Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan applies these principles to the district and provides an overview of its green infrastructure assets and the opportunities to enhance and develop them. Policy NE3 of the East Herts District Plan seeks to protect and enhance the network of green infrastructure.

Open Spaces

6.46 There are six open spaces within the village which are recognised as important for recreational purposes. These vary from small play spaces for young children to large spaces for healthy outdoor leisure pursuits. The Playground, the Play Area and the Sports Field are identified on East Herts District Plan Policies Map and are protected by Policy CFLR1.

6.47 The Playground is also identified as Important Open Space in Chapter 5 of Walkern Conservation Area, Character Appraisal and Management Proposal 2016, because it creates a diversity in the street scene with green space extending from the edge of the village right up to the High Street. There are views over large gardens to the River Beane valley. The Playground is a safe fenced space in the centre of the village with a range of children's play equipment with seating and wildlife areas.

6.48 The Play area is a small safe site within the Aubries development with play equipment for smaller children. It is the only play area available without having to cross the High Street to the Playground.

6.49 The Sports Field at Walkern Sports and Community Centre (WSCC) is well used for football in the winter and cricket in the summer, with occasional events also held here. It has been enhanced with seating areas for picnics, tree planting and active outdoor gym equipment. It is a valuable asset for the village.

6.50 Midsummer Meadows (PROS4) was not in existence when the District Plan was adopted. This space is an integral part of the Midsummer Meadows housing development. Doubling as an area of biodiversity and incorporating SUDs, it is also an important walking link through to Froghall Lane.

6.51 Protected Recreational Open Space (PROS) are shown on the **Policies Map, and described, with photographs, and a detailed map in Appendix I**. Green spaces within the village that are accessible to all residents should be retained. Accessibility relates to both their location and the ease of reaching the spaces on foot or by sustainable transport and the ease of use of the spaces for all ages and abilities.



Figure 11: Recreation Equipment at WSCC

Policy WLK8 Protected Recreational Open Spaces

I. The following sites as identified on the Policies Map and detailed in Appendix I, are allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space:

PROS1: Playground, next to Walkern Stores, no 79 High Street

PROS2: Play Area, Aubries

PROS3: Sports field at Walkern Sports and Community Centre

PROS4: Midsummer Meadows

II. Development proposals that result in the loss of reduction of the Protected Recreational Open Space should be assessed against the criteria in Policy CFR1 part VI. Any enhanced, replacement provision should be as accessible to the local community as the current recreational open space.

Green Corridors

6.52 The WNPG has consulted with the District Council and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, and the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre with a view to establishing green infrastructure networks within the Parish. As a result, a network of green corridors has been devised in and around the village of Walkern – this includes the valley of the River Beane which flows north to south through the village. The asset is protected by the River Beane Catchment Management Plan. Water Voles were introduced into the river, upstream at Watton-at-Stone in July 2022. This was a joint venture by The River Beane Restoration Association (RBRA) and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT). The success of introduction is dependent on an adequate unpolluted water flow in the river.

6.53 Green corridors have many benefits including making connections between wildlife sites and providing attractive walking routes, such as the established long-distance footpath between Walkern and Hertford. The value of the river valley was emphasised by the local community in consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan.



Figure 12: Established Green Corridor, Walkern Hall Farm

6.54 In accordance with NPPF para 110, planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks. The river walk along the Beane through Walkern is a very popular green corridor which in part provides an attractive recreational space. Part of the river corridor is allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space in this Plan. It has been under pressure from development and requests for residential garden extensions which could introduce barriers to wildlife and reduce public access. The northern section of this corridor has been allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space in this Plan (see Policy WLK8).

Policy WLK9 Green Corridors

I. In accordance with the East Herts Green Infrastructure Plan, the network of Green Corridors in the Parish, as shown on the Policies Map, will be protected from the impact of harmful development, managed and where possible enhanced. These include:

- **The link extending to the north and west of the end of Froghall Lane to connect with Box Wood**
- **The network of small woodlands around Clay End and Bassus Green linking to the River Beane**
- **The River Beane Valley and in particularly the section through Walkern village.**

II. The River Beane is an endangered chalk stream, and the valley corridor has a strategic recreational value as well as being important for wildlife and a important landscape feature. Any development scheme adjacent to the River Beane should be designed with a naturalised buffer zone of at least 10m from the top of the bank to protect and enhance the conservation value of the watercourse and ensure access for flood defence maintenance.

Local Green Space (LGS)

6.55 Some of the green spaces in Walkern village contribute to the character of the conservation area, others represent important green infrastructure and are particularly valued by the community. The NPPF (paragraphs 105 - 107) provides guidance on the criteria for designating Local Green Spaces. They must be local in character; not an extensive tract of land; close to the community they serve; and hold a special and particular local significance such as beauty, historical significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness in wildlife.

6.56 Proposals for development within Local Green Spaces should be considered in a similar way to development proposal in the Green Belt. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Paragraph: 010 Reference ID: 37-010-20140306) tells us that Local Green Spaces can be designated on Green Belt land where the designation could help to identify areas of Green Belt that are of particular importance to the local community. PPG goes on to say that different designations serve different purposes. If, for example, a designation such as Scheduled Monument already exists on a potential LGS, then consideration should be given to the additional local benefit of the LGS designation. Land designated as LGS can also be nominated for listing by the local authority as an Asset of Community Value.

6.57 Two additional Local Green Spaces are designated in this revised Neighbourhood Plan. The graveyard at the URC, and a historical site which still contains gravestones on Froghall Lane.

Policy WLK10 Local Green Space

I. Nine areas of green space detailed in Appendix G Local Green Space, shown on the Policies Map and the detailed Policies Map extracts below this policy, have been designated as Local Green Space. These are:

LGS 1: Land west of the River Beane at the Ford, Church End

LGS 2: Land east of the River Beane at the Ford, Church End

LGS 3: Land adjacent to River Beane between Church End & Winters Lane

LGS 4: Land adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane

LGS 5: Allotments, Totts Lane

LGS 6: URC Graveyard, High Street

LGS 7: Graveyard, Froghall Lane

LGS 8: War Memorial, High Street/Benington Road

II. New development will only be allowed in designated Local Green Spaces where it is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and policy CFLR2 of East Herts District Plan, considering the characteristics of the Local Green Space as set out in this Plan.

6.58 **Appendix G** shows photographs and the assessment of the 8 sites chosen for designation as Local Green Space along with a table showing all sites considered and how each of the sites designated meet the prescribed criteria.

6.59 In order to provide an acurate image of the boundaries of the Local Green Spaces, large scale images are provided below.

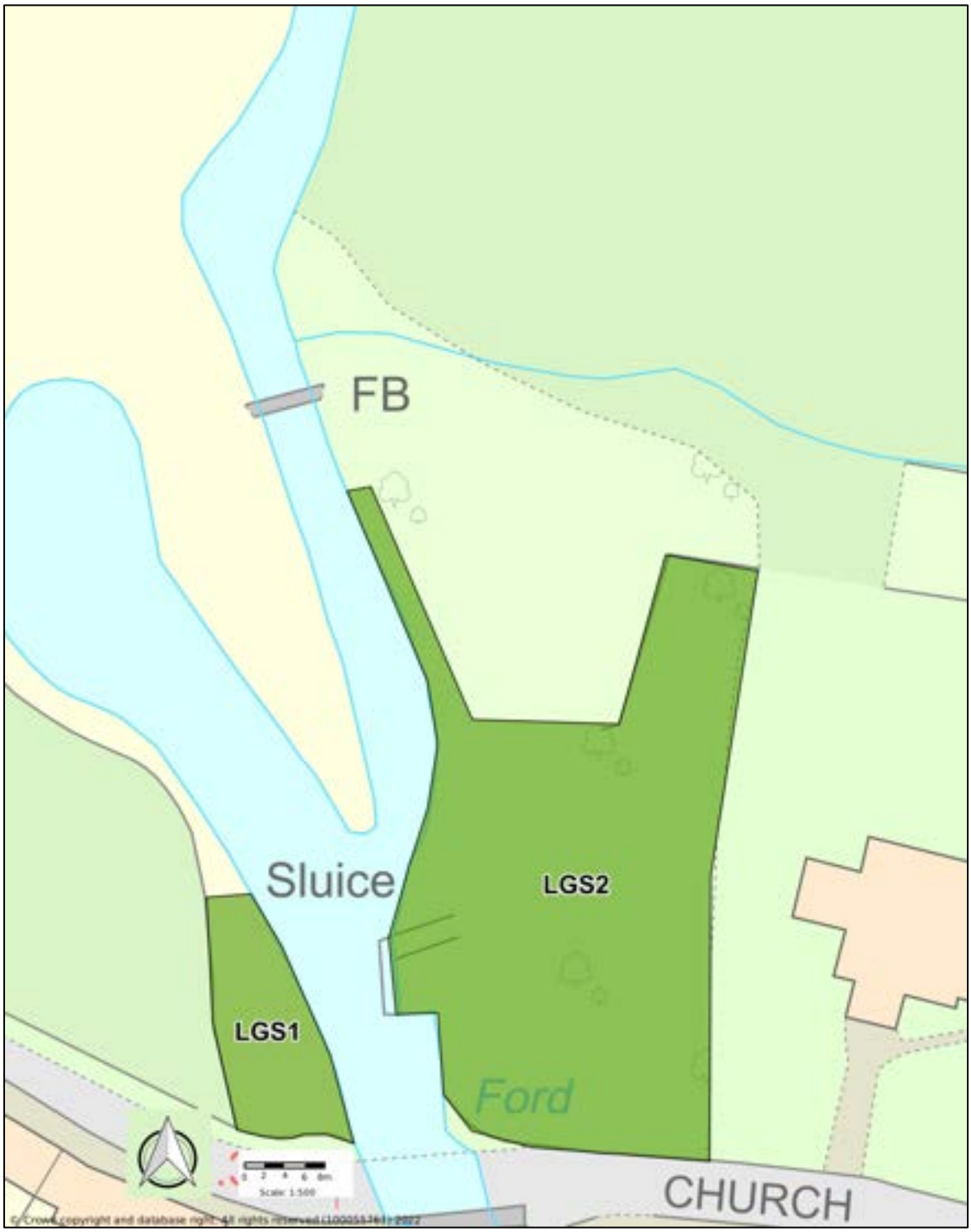


Figure 13: Map of LGS1 & LGS2



Figure 14: Map of LGS3

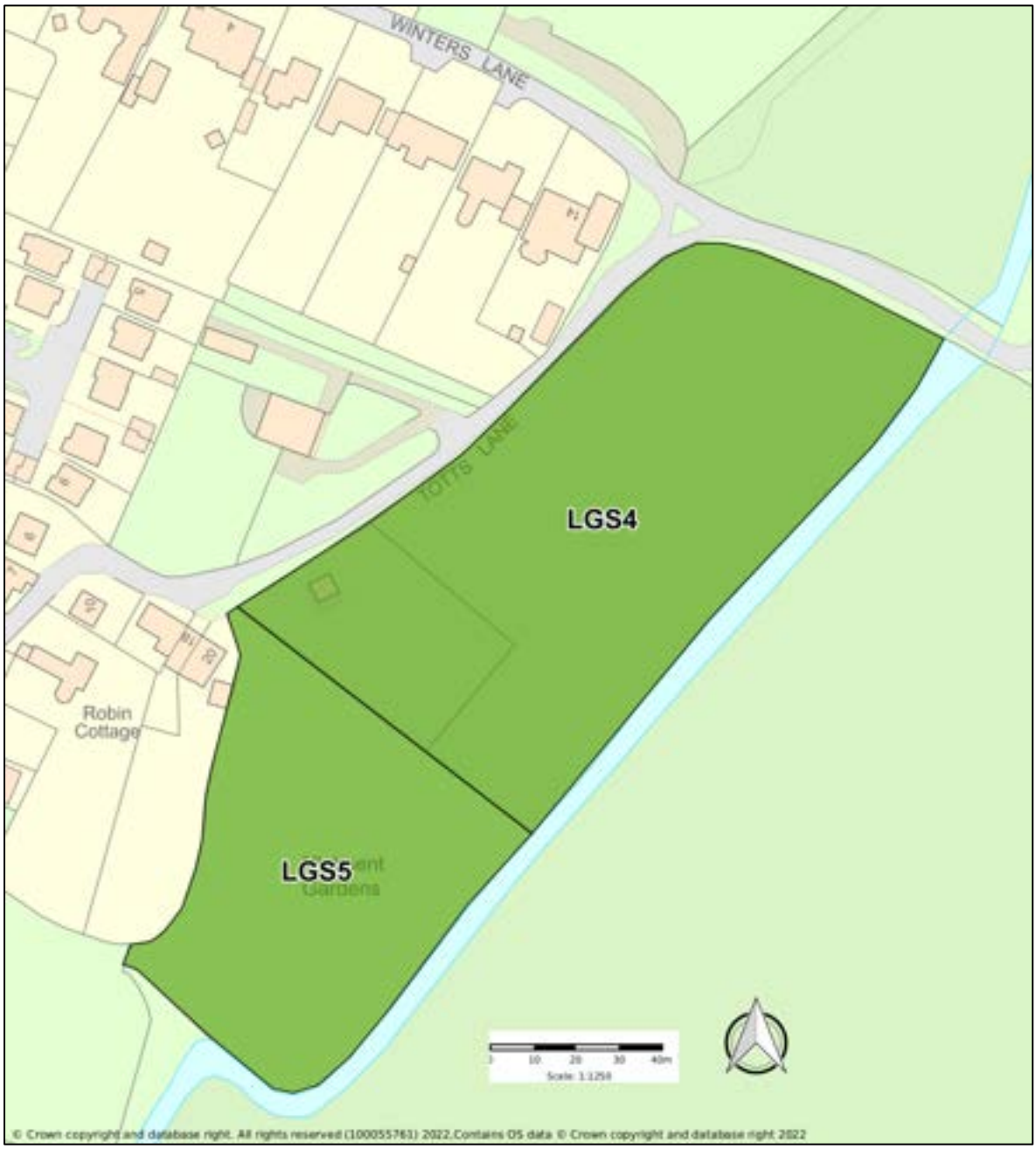


Figure 15: Maps of LGS4 & LGS5

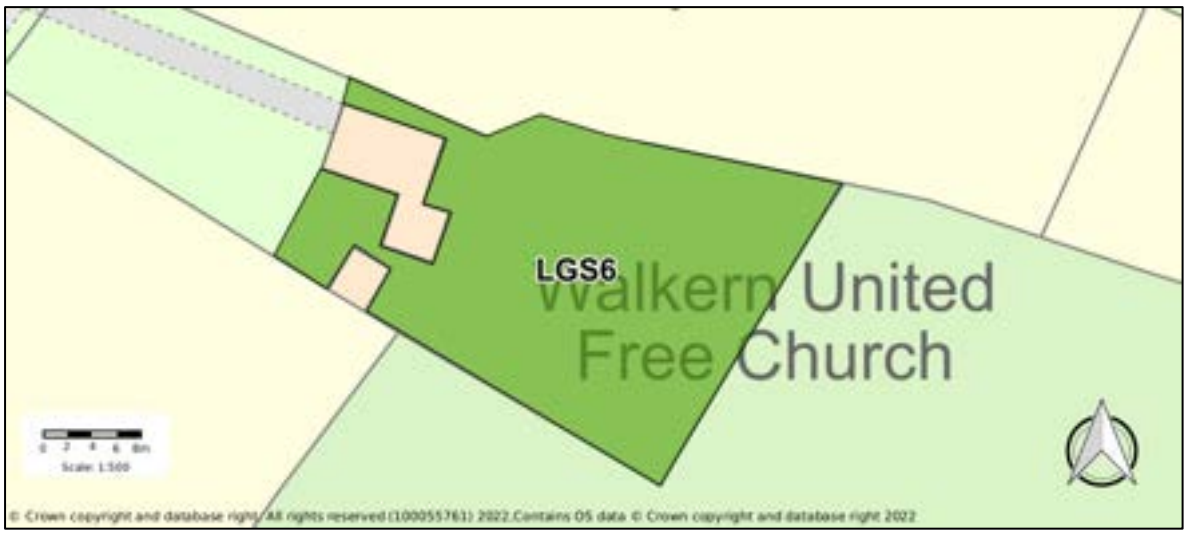


Figure 16: Map of LGS 6



Figure 17: Map of LGS 7



Figure 18: Map of LGS 8

Soils and Agricultural Land

6.60 Despite the development pressures affecting the rural areas of Hertfordshire, farming remains the principal land use in the Parish. The NPPF (paragraph 180 b)) states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. This is supported by the East Herts District Plan, which seeks to achieve the most effective use of land as a resource. Soil is identified as an important asset. In Walkern, the bulk of the land is designated under the national agricultural land classification (ALC) as Grades 2 or 3a. Wherever possible, this higher-grade land should be protected from development in the interests of the local farming infrastructure and its future viability.

Environmental Quality

6.61 Many representations were raised during consultation about general environmental pollution, and the possible effects of further development. This issue is covered throughout the NPPF and the East Herts District Plan (Chapter 24). The East Herts District Plan contains specific policies on contaminated land and land instability (Policy EQ1), noise pollution (Policy EQ2), light pollution (Policy EQ3), and air quality (Policy EQ4). Further detailed advice on dealing with aspects of environmental quality is provided in the on-line National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

6.62 In Walkern, there were concerns about the effects of traffic, causing noise and air pollution, and light pollution. Several policies in this Plan help to improve environmental quality over time. Protections against river pollution and river flooding are provided in Policies WLK 6 and WLK9 respectively. **Policy WLK14** includes criteria on minimising light pollution, whilst supporting micro scale renewable energy generation and charging points for electric vehicles. The Tree Charter in **Appendix E** encourages more tree planting to reduce carbon monoxide and the pollution in the air. Finally, sustainable transport **Policy WLK18** could help to reduce pollution and noise from vehicles travelling through the village.

Flooding and Climate Adaption

6.63 Walkern suffers from risk of flooding from both surface water run-off and river flooding associated with the floodplain of the River Beane. Surface water flooding is a particular problem on Midsummer Meadows and **Policy WLK11** guards against development or other impermeable hard surfacing in the most vulnerable areas, protecting both residents of the new development and existing residents in Moors Ley. **Policy WLK14** Design of New Development also seeks zero run-off from new built development.

6.64 The implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) is relevant to many policies within the Plan, namely WLK1 Sustainable Development, WLK2 Landscape Features, WLK6 Conserve and Enhance Biodiversity, WLK9 Green Corridors, WLK10 Local Green Space and WLK11 – WLK14 (housing and development policies). The benefits of multifunctional SuDS go far beyond a piped or artificial SuDS system. Well-designed multi-functional SuDS such as blue-green roofs, wet ponds, swales and rain gardens can be used to manage surface water sustainably while also providing blue-green infrastructure with biodiversity and amenity benefits.

6.65 Climate adaption is a theme running through the NPPF. Water environment constraints in Walkern include the River Beane, Flood Zones 2,3 and 3b, Groundwater Protection Zones and Principal Bedrock and Secondary Aquifers. No development should take place in Flood Zone 3b, which is a functional floodplain to safely store flood water. New development in Flood Zones 2 & 3a will be subject to a sequential test to consider whether development is appropriate in this location. A Flood risk assessment must be submitted with a planning application to demonstrate that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere or will reduce flood risk, in accordance with District Plan Policies in Chapter 23 and in particular Policy WAT1. The environment agencies River Flood risk Map for Walkern (May 2022) can be found in **Appendix H**.

Housing

6.66 New housing development should reflect the vision and objectives in the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, development should satisfy the need for new homes for residents in the Parish and at least meet current standards of sustainability, reflect the guidance in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016 and be well designed to improve the look and feel of the area.

Housing Land Supply

6.67 There is very little land considered suitable for housing development within the village boundary. In order to allow for expansion of the village population, to support existing facilities and services and to offer affordable accommodation and homes for existing residents in later life, a single site has been developed for housing on land south of Froghall Lane. The site is now within the village boundary to provide a new permanent and defensible limit to the further expansion of the settlement towards Stevenage. This is necessary to preserve the important gap between the two settlements. There are limited infill opportunities within the village that will allow the village to continue to grow gradually.

Land South of Froghall Lane (Midsummer Meadows)

6.68 The parameters that were set out in the 2018 Neighbourhood Plan for this development are still relevant. The layout and design of the scheme, including significant additional landscaping to create usable and manageable open space and buffers to soften the impact of the new development, are critical to its successful integration. To ensure the open space on the site is retained in perpetuity green space to the west and south of the housing area, will be preserved as Protected Recreational Open Space (see **Policy WLK8**). In the south west and north west corners of this space, no buildings or hard surfacing will be permitted unless it is permeable so as not to increase run-off in an area already susceptible to surface water flooding

6.69 Other parameters include a generous green corridor parallel to Froghall lane to provide an alternative safe route for walkers accessing the footpaths and open countryside to the west and no new vehicular access onto Froghall Lane, which is already too narrow for the existing homes on the northern side of the road. The development must retain sufficient parking spaces for residents and visitors to ensure that no additional pressure from overflow parking is put on the congested streets of Moors Ley and Aubries or Froghall Lane. Whilst the conversion of garages to residential accommodation is often permitted development, where planning permission is required, such conversions will be resisted.

6.70 Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and East Herts District Plan Policy TRA1 Sustainable Transport, recommend a focus on sustainable travel options, rather than higher car parking standards. Sustainable transport options are encouraged in Policy WLK18. However, higher car ownership figures for Walkern compared with East Herts as a whole justify slightly higher parking standards than in the East Herts District Plan, where these can be accommodated. The justification for this higher parking standard can be found in **Appendix J**.

Policy WLK11 Land South of Froghall Lane (Midsummer Meadows)

I. The development principles for Land South of Froghall Lane as set out below should apply to the site in perpetuity, to ensure that the development continues to respect the environment of Walkern:

(a) No buildings or impermeable hard surfaces will be constructed in the south-west or north-west corners of the site, which are susceptible to surface water flooding.

(b) A green corridor along the northern boundary of the sitewill be retained as a landscaped strip to preserve views into the village and maintain the rural character of Froghall lane.

(c) A generous green landscaped area and wetland habitat will be retained and managed to deal with excess run-off and to soften the impact of development on the countryside. This is allocated as Protected Recreational Open Space.

(d) Proposal should retain parking spaces in accordance with East Hertfordshire's Parking Standards to ensure that on street parking does not occur on surrounding streets.

(e) No vehicular access will be permitted on to Froghall Lane.

(f) All trees and hedges remaining on the site will be covered by the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Tree Charter.

(g) Any development proposal to raise the roof heights must not impinge on View 4 any more than they currently do.

Housing Infill and Rural Homes

6.71 New housing proposals should be for infill development within the Walkern village boundary. The use of brownfield land will be encouraged. Gardens contribute to the character of the village and development on residential gardens will be resisted unless they can be proven not to cause harm to the local area, in accordance with the NPPF paragraph 72.

6.72 Development along the High Street is a mix of back of pavement buildings or homes with small front gardens and small 'close' style clusters of dwellings. Backland or tandem development, where the housing development is set back behind existing properties can be successful, provided it small in scale, and reflects village development patterns, particularly north of Froghall Lane to the west of the High Street and south of Stevenage Road to the west of the High Street.

Policy WLK12 Housing Infill Sites

I. Within the village boundary on the Policies Map, small-scale infill developments will be supported subject to meeting the criteria below and Design should be in accordance with Policy WLK14:

- **(a) There is no unacceptable impact on the amenities of adjacent residential properties.**
- **(b) Appropriate access, car parking provision and turning arrangements are provided.**
- **(c) Important views and open spaces that contribute to the enjoyment of residents of the village and are important to the character or appearance of the conservation area are retained.**
- **(d) Use of gardens should ensure private amenity space is in scale with the size of existing and new homes.**
- **(e) Backland or tandem development should reflect existing village development patterns.**
- **(f) Density should make the best and most efficient use of land whilst improving biodiversity.**

II. Brownfield sites are preferred to greenfield sites. Site redevelopment should respect existing building lines, scale and massing of surrounding buildings.

III. Private gardens contribute to the character of the village and inappropriate development of garden land will be resisted.

6.73 District Plan Policy GBR2 permits development in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt provided that it is compatible with the character and appearance of that rural area. Proposals for housing must comply with criteria (d), (e), (f) and (g), or be development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. No housing development sites are identified in this Plan. Walkern has exceeded its target of 55 new homes within the Plan period of 2017-2033, as set out in District Plan Policy VILL1. Other single rural homes in the countryside will be supported where development proposals are in accordance with national policy or the policies contained within the District Plan. The Parish Council considered the issue of local housing need, and a Housing Needs Survey was conducted by Community Development Action Hertfordshire (CDA) to support this policy. It was evident from the consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan that there were specific requirements for housing for local people, which is affordable and for bungalows or suitable housing for older people, so that they can remain in the village in later life. In the East Herts District Plan, the type, tenure and mix of housing will be identified. However, the CDA report has supported the Parish Council's assertion that priority should be given to residents.

Policy WLK13 Rural Homes

I. Outside the village boundary of Walkern, high quality conversions to single rural homes of Local Needs Affordable Housing, will be supported where development proposals are in accordance with national policy or the policies contained within the District Plan.

II. Rural Exception Affordable Housing schemes in the two small settlements of Clay End and Bassus Green will be supported, provided that they do not impinge on important views and do not conflict with other policies in this Plan or the District Plan.

III. For the purposes of the Neighbourhood Plan, Local Needs Affordable Housing on rural exception sites will be allocated to persons who:

(a) have been ordinarily resident in the Parish of Walkern for the 12 months immediately preceding the date of application for the affordable housing unit or who have at any time previously resided in the Parish for at least five years, or

(b) have a strong local connection with the Parish of Walkern through a close family connection or being employed within the Parish.

If no applicant qualifies under the first set of criteria, those who are resident in, or have a strong local connection with neighbouring parishes will be eligible. If there are no nominations from the rural parishes within East Herts, then nominations from those in greatest need from within the district will be acceptable.

IV. Other single rural homes in the countryside will be supported where development proposals are in accordance with national policy or the policies contained within the District Plan.

Design of New Development

6.74 The design of new housing development should reflect local style and building materials and the traditional and historic character within Walkern Conservation Area. (Detailed guidance on design is contained in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan 2016). Where practical, homes should be designed to increase biodiversity, particularly where natural habitat is lost through the development; reduce surface water run-off, so as not to compound issues of flooding in Walkern; and be as energy efficient as possible.

6.75 Design guidance for all new development and new homes in particular is provided in **Policy WLK14** Design of New Development.

Policy WLK14: Design of New Development

I. The scale and design of all new development will reflect the character of Walkern, and its historic Conservation Area as detailed in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2016. In particular, the following guidelines will apply:

(a) Building materials and detailing should be complementary to the existing character of Walkern as set out in the Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal (2016), and sympathetic to the form, style and materiality of traditional village properties, particularly those that surround the build.

(b) New buildings should respect neighbouring roof profiles, heights and pitches, the characteristic spacing between buildings, historic building lines, density of development in the village and important views and vistas.

(c) Redevelopment, extensions, or alterations to historic farmsteads, agricultural buildings or residential properties should be sensitive to their distinctive character, materials, and form.

(d) Site topography should be taken into account to ensure no loss of amenity to surrounding homes, including overlooking.

(e) Sufficient off-road parking should be provided in accordance with East Herts District Council parking standards.

(f) Hardstanding should be minimised and constructed of porous material assisting natural drainage and achieving at least greenfield run-off rates and preferably zero run-off achieved through infiltration. Run-off should be minimised using SuDS which are designed to be multifunctional, providing new blue-green infrastructure and improving biodiversity.

(g) Layout of new roads, where appropriate, will include parking bays to accommodate delivery and utility vehicles without constricting traffic flow.

(h) Street lighting should be sensitively designed to reflect the rural nature of the parish and minimise impact on bats and other nocturnal wildlife.

(i) Bat boxes, swift bricks and planting to encourage biodiversity and provide wildlife corridors will be commended

Residential Properties

(j) East Herts Parking Standards should be adhered to in new developments so that overflow parking does not occur on surrounding streets. A minimum of 2 spaces for all new homes would be welcomed, where it can be accommodated.

(k) Enclosures to accommodate storage of refuse bins should be provided within the curtilage of each new home.

(l) All homes should have access to a modest garden space where appropriate, characteristic of village living and easy access to public open space.

(m) Boundaries, particularly to front gardens, should preferably be marked with hedges of appropriate native species.

(n) Homes should be energy efficient and include the most up to date technology where appropriate.

II. Modern, innovative design will be welcomed provided that the above criteria are met.

6.76 Eighty five percent of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire thought that all homes should have their own garages/parking. Acute parking problems occur in the evenings and at weekends when cars are parked on pavements forcing pedestrians to walk in the road and parking on the High Street blocks through traffic. New homes with small gardens were a popular choice of residents, rather than large gardens or communal garden space.

6.77 Due to the severe problems caused by on-street parking on narrow main roads and residential streets, East Herts Parking Standards should be adhered to whilst exceeding the targets will be welcomed. Additional information is provided to evidence the need for a slightly increased standard in **Appendix J**.

Employment and Business

6.78 The NPPF supports sustainable economic growth; local planning authorities are required to plan proactively to meet the development needs of businesses. In paragraph 88, the NPPF states specifically that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity. Thus, neighbourhood plans should support the growth and expansion of business in rural areas and support the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses. Support is also given to rural tourism and leisure developments, as well as the retention and development of local services and community facilities. This approach is mirrored in the East Herts District Plan (Policy ED2) which encourages development, subject to set criteria.

6.79 The parish of Walkern consists mainly of agricultural land, with a number of working farms. Yet, according to the 2011 Census only eight people were working in agriculture, just over 1% of the working population of 816. Few residents actually work in the parish. The main centres for employment are Stevenage, Hertford, Cambridge, Greater London and at Stansted Airport.

6.80 Within the parish, the main employers are the school and a number of small businesses, some of which operate from units at Walkern Hall Farm, the Piggeries and the Magic of Christmas. A growing number of people now work at home (82 in 2011). Feedback from the Open Day (April 2015) showed support for local existing businesses and creative industries. This support has continued and so is reflected in the following policies. In addition, support for facilities for homeworking, and encouragement for new employment opportunities for residents has increased due to the Covid epidemic.

6.81 Manor Farm, on High Street, Walkern provides employment in the village. The Farmhouse at Manor Farm is Grade II* listed and the walls, pond and dovecot adjacent to the High Street form part of the curtilage of the farmhouse. Access is via a narrow lane.

Policy WLK15 New Businesses

I. **New businesses and employment will be permitted, provided that new or expanded enterprises are of a scale and type appropriate to the rural setting of Walkern and its Conservation Area and comply with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Further development at Manor Farm would be supported provided that suitable and safe vehicular access is provided.**



Figure 19: The narrow lane to Manor Farm is adjacent to this wall and pond

Policy WLK16 Diversification of Farm Businesses

I. Proposals for the diversification of farm businesses will be supported provided:

(a) The development is ancillary to the agricultural business or

(b) The development supports the viability of the existing farm holding

(c) The development does not include domestic housing for sale.

II. The potential impact on rural lanes must be assessed and measures put in place to mitigate the impact of increased traffic in the rural area.

Home Working

6.82 Proposals for new homes should include the provision of a home-work area. In addition, Walkern is poorly served by access to electronic communications infrastructure, including high speed broadband and mobile telephone networks. Development of new technology has generated changes in working patterns, enabling businesses and individuals to work in more flexible ways, including working from home. Support for better quality communications infrastructure is set out in the NPPF (paragraphs 118-122) and in the East Herts District Plan. It is also an objective of this Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy WLK17 Home Businesses

I. Proposals for new homes should include space for homeworking.

II. Support will be given to the installation of new infrastructure including high-speed broadband and mobile networks to facilitate home working where:

- **Infrastructure is fully integrated into the design of future development proposals;**
- **Where new masts or structures are required, they should be sympathetic to their surroundings;**
- **Infrastructure should consider safety precautions for wildlife.**

Sustainable Transport

Roads and Traffic

6.83 The B1037 is the only classified road running eastwards out of Stevenage. When reaching Walkern village it turns sharply left and becomes Walkern High Street. The level of traffic at peak times caused by commuters into and out of Stevenage through the narrow High Street causes acute traffic congestion. Parking in the High Street and side roads near the school exacerbates this problem. Limited infill housing development throughout the village should not exacerbate this situation and the impact of disruption caused by construction in the tight confines of the village streets must be assessed in any development proposal.

6.84 Responses of residents to public consultation expressed serious concerns about increased traffic through the village including traffic noise, pollution, pedestrian safety, and the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles ignoring the weight limit restriction.



Figure 20: Congestion in the High Street

Vehicle Parking

6.85 Car ownership is high in Walkern with 66% of households owning 2 or more cars compared with an average of 46.5% for East Herts as a whole (Source: 2011 Census). Parking on street for homes with no private parking and cars parked to use the services in the High Street contribute to the congestion problem. Any additional houses in the High Street must provide off-street parking to ensure that this problem does not get worse. Opportunities to provide parking for residents and visitors to the village off the High Street will be sought.

Public Transport

6.86 Public transport facilities are particularly poor considering that there is a main-line railway station with fast trains to London only 8 km away in Stevenage. The bus service is of limited use to commuters since it finishes before 6pm.

6.87 Footpaths are narrow and, in some cases, non-existent. New developments should be integrated into the village through adequate footpath and cycle links to village facilities. A comprehensive survey of footpaths in Walkern was carried out by the WNPG, a summary of which is contained in the Consultation Statement. Issues arising from the survey along with other issues are included as projects in **Appendix K**.

6.88 Safe outdoor exercise improves health and wellbeing. The roads in Walkern are narrow with long stretches of cars parked on the roadside and rural roads are winding and dangerous for cyclists. The local community supports the long-held aspiration for a new cycle and footpath link to Stevenage.

6.89 The 2016 Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Walkern specifically identifies high levels of vehicular traffic as a negative and detractive element, harming its rural character. It describes the junction of the High Street with Stevenage Road being a busy junction and traffic through the village being “incessant”. This situation has worsened since the Conservation Area Appraisal was written and will worsen still once the eastern extension to Stevenage is built and occupied. Providing secure and accessible cycle storage provision in new developments and at community facilities would encourage active transport and reduce traffic impact. This would support HCC’s LTP4 and in turn would help to reduce the negative impact of traffic on the conservation area.

Policy WLK18 Sustainable Transport Provision

I. **Major development proposals in the village must provide a traffic impact assessment, proportional to the scale of the development proposed, which assesses the potential impact of increased traffic on pedestrians, cyclists, road safety, parking and congestion and any measures designed to mitigate such impacts.**

II. **Further expansion of the school should include mitigation for any impact of additional traffic congestion and school-related parking at peak times.**

III. **Proposals to increase off-street car-parking provision and relieve traffic congestion in Walkern will be supported in principle if they comply with other policies in this Plan.**

IV. **Development proposals should help to maintain or improve public transport provision to Stevenage and throughout the parish of Walkern. Other proposals to increase the use of sustainable transport such as off-street charging points for electric cars will be supported.**

V. **Secure and accessible cycle storage should be provided as part of any new development and, where funding is available, at community, health and education facilities.**

6.90 Secondary and further education facilities are in Stevenage, and at Edwinstree School and Ward Freeman College in Buntingford, although some students travel further afield. Hertfordshire County Council provides primary education locally at the Walkern Primary school, located on the High Street. The school has been extended to cope with anticipated increase in demand, but any significant increase in housing numbers would require further expansion. The site is tightly constrained by residential development and the River Beane. Traffic associated with the school is heavy and causes considerable congestion on the High Street and nearby side roads at peak times.

Facilities And Services

6.91 Walkern has a range of public facilities and services. From the responses to public consultation, it is evident that these are highly valued by the local community. Support for the safeguarding of key community facilities is embodied in several Neighbourhood Plan objectives. Community facilities are marked on the **Policies Map**.

Community and Recreational Facilities

6.92 The Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire highlighted that the village shop, pubs and churches were the most used community facilities. 26% of those answering the question used the village shop and post office. Some of the shops have changed but all commercial premises still exist as such. The United Reformed Church, the two public houses in the High Street and the village shop/post office were listed as Assets of Community Value. The Parish Council re-applied to East Herts Council for these designations after five years, to continue to recognise their importance for the village.

6.93 Outdoor sports and leisure facilities are important features in Walkern. These include the Playground in the centre of the village, a small children's play area at the Aubries, and a sports field (with two football pitches and a cricket pitch). Community consultations for the original Neighbourhood Plan revealed that play facilities for young children were inadequate and required improvement.

6.94 The Playground now has a focus for young children with a greater and safer range of equipment. Seating has been introduced and planting of a native species garden. Further planting of trees and hedges is planned in accordance with the Walkern Tree Charter, with fruit trees for the community at the rear of the site. The Playground now feels more like the focal point of the village.

6.95 Many residents expressed an interest in extending the range of sports and leisure facilities, especially at the Sports Field. An outdoor keep fit trail has been installed and further improvements are planned.



Figure 21: Walkern Sports and Community Centre

6.96 Existing community and recreation facilities must be retained, protected and enhanced. Loss of facilities will only be acceptable where alternative provision is of a scale and standard equivalent to, or superior to, the existing facilities. Alternative provision must be provided within the Parish.

Health and Wellbeing

6.97 Main hospital facilities and health clinics are in Stevenage. A GP surgery that ran four times a week at 80 High Street, Walkern is a much-missed asset, especially for elderly patients, families with young children, and those without personal transport.The surgery was held in privately owned premises, which were leased to the Health Trust. The Parish Council supports the reprovision of the surgery in Walkern at an accessible location.

Walkern School

6.98 Walkern Primary. School is a popular community asset and has some capacity to take more children. The Parish Council fully supports the current and future provision for primary and pre-school education in Walkern. It will liaise with the County Council to ensure that facilities continue to serve the needs of the local community in the future.

Clark's Garage

6.99 The garage is a local family run business which provides repairs, servicing, sales of parts and a forecourt with fuel and tyre pump, plus a recovery service and even gas bottle refills. It is well used and reviewed by residents.

St Mary's Church and St Mary's Church Car Park

6.100 The church is not only a heritage asset but is also used as a community venue for the village. It hosts concerts, community events and is home for Walkern's food bank. In addition, the church car park is frequently used as a safe place to park for walking from Walkern.

Policy WLK19 Valued Community Assets

I. The proposed loss of the valued community assets listed below will assessed, where appropriate, in accordance with District Plan Policies CFLR8, ED1 and ED2. New community assets will be considered against District Plan Policy CFLR7:

- **Clarks Garage, High Street**
- **Playground, High Street**
- **Play Area, Aubries**
- **Walkern Sports and Community Centre**
- **Walkern and Sandon United Reformed Church, High Street**
- **White Lion Public House, High Street**
- **Yew Tree Public House, High Street**
- **Budgens Village Store, High Street**
- **Walkern Primary School**
- **St Mary's Church, Church End**
- **St Mary's Church car park, Church End**
- **Brewery Tea Room, High Street**

II. The reprovision of health services in the village will be encouraged in accordance with District Plan Policy CFLR9.



Figure 22: Walkern Sports and Community Centre

Implementation

6.101 The Neighbourhood Plan will continue to be delivered and implemented over the period to 2033, providing a direction for change through its vision and objectives. The policies will guide the development of Walkern Parish and protect those assets most appreciated by the community. The policies may be amended at intervals to remain in line with the District Plan and any such review or update will be carried out in accordance with the process and procedures in place at that time. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan in its aims and objectives in protecting Walkern's historic character and strong rural identity whilst ensuring the village develops sustainably.

6.102 In accordance with Objective K, the Project List appended to this Plan will channel resources and volunteer activity into improving leisure facilities for parish residents, reducing the impact of traffic on the village and making the village more accessible.

Policy WLK20 Funding Priorities

I. Walkern Parish Council will maintain and update the Action Plan as a schedule of priorities to receive the benefit of funding from S106 agreements and any other funding streams such as a Community Infrastructure Levy.



Figure 23: The Beane Valley

Appendix A Policies Mapped to Objectives

Ref	Objective	Policies
A	Ensure the River Beane, a rare chalk stream that runs through Walkern Parish, is preserved, protected from over-abstraction and public access is maintained	WLK1, WLK6, WLK8, WLK9, WLK10
B	Enhance and improve the environment and environmental quality of the Parish, minimising noise, air and water pollution	WLK1, WLK2, WLK3, WLK4, WLK5, WLK6, WLK7, WLK9, WLK10, WLK11, WLK14, WLK18
C	Ensure the mix, size and type of new housing meets local needs, including a sufficient supply of affordable housing for sale and rent and preferential access to some new homes for people with a strong local connection	WLK1, WLK11, WLK12, WLK13,
D	Require new development to be of high-quality design, built to a high sustainability standard and to be sympathetic to, and improve, the look and feel of the Parish	WLK1, WLK3, WLK11, WLK14
E	Ensure that new development is phased and located to minimise the impact on the already limited road infrastructure in the village	WLK1, WLK14
F	Ensure the design and location of new developments are resilient to the effects of climate change and flooding	WLK1, WLK14
G	Support existing businesses, creative industries and home working, and encourage new local employment opportunities for residents	WLK1, WLK15, WLK16, WLK18
H	Preserve and enhance public transport services to and from the village for residents who do not have use of a car, and encourage safe walking and cycling options	WLK1, WLK18
I	Ensure that community facilities and services enhance the health and wellbeing of residents	WLK1, WLK19, WLK20
J	Ensure the village has recreational facilities that meet the needs of young children, teenagers and adults, and strengthen the sense of community	WLK1, WLK8, WLK9, WLK19. WLK20
K	Make the best possible use of funding through Section 106, a Community Infrastructure Levy or other funding related to development in the parish, to improve parish facilities.	WLK1, WLK20

Appendix B Views, Vistas and Landscape Features



View 1: West from opposite the United Reformed Church (High Street) through Manor Farm paddock

This view westward from the High Street opposite the URC, looks through Manor Farm paddock and across a gentle green rise towards Churchend Common. it is an important gap in built form at the northern end of the High Street and a rare remaining transverse view giving a sense of space and a glimpse of the rural setting of the village. It is identified as an important open space to be protected in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). The paddock and land behind is outside the village boundary and the view should not be interrupted by buildings within the space or impacting on the openness of the space.



View 2: East along Church End over the ford

The view along Church End over the ford around a gentle bend revealing little by little the picturesque grade 1 listed Church of St Mary the Virgin is probably the most characterful in the Parish. The road is narrow and bounded by mature trees and hedges, overlooked by an established rookery. The view is part of an identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). it is important to retain the features of the lane, its boundaries and the ford itself and to ensure an uninterrupted view to the church.



View 3: North from the meadows to St Mary the Virgin Church

As you look northward along the River Beane, towards the ford on Church End, the Church of St Mary the Virgin is clearly visible above the trees. This view is much appreciated by the many local walkers that use the area on a regular basis. The meadow has been designated local green Space (where only development appropriate in the green belt will be permitted), however the view should remain uninterrupted to maintain its openness.



View 4: East from Box Wood towards Walkern

This view, on the road from Stevenage to Walkern, from the corner by Box Wood, looking east over the valley of unspoilt countryside dotted with farm buildings. Walkern lies on the west bank of the River Beane in the Middle Beane Valley. From this viewpoint, the village nestles into the landscape without breaking the skyline although the iconic Wrights tower is visible to the right of the view. In order to maintain this view of the village, from every vantage point, new development should not be more prominent in the landscape than the existing built form of the village and should blend into the river valley.



View 5: East of the River Beane to Wrights Tower House above the Finches

Views from the east of the River Beane looking west over the village all feature Wrights Tower house. The iconic Victorian tower, previously part of Wrights brewery is an important non-listed building now converted to a home. It is the only building which can be seen above the village and should remain the only reference point on the skyline. New development should respect the very low impact of the built form of the village on the surrounding valley and blend into the existing views.



View 6: North from the entrance to Walkern along Benington Road

Entering Walkern where Bennington Road gently bends over the River Beane into the High Street a stunning view is unveiled. The historical context of the War Memorial, Pearman's Mill and Mill Cottage, contrasts with the River Beane flowing under the brick bridge, and the fields beyond. These features make up an identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016). This view at the entrance to the village is an important focal point in the conservation area that should be preserved or enhanced.



View 7: South west from Froghall Lane towards Stevenage

This view is looking from Froghall Lane, southwest towards Stevenage shows the Middle Beane Valley. Box Wood is to the right of the picture and the landscape buffer tree line is in front of Gresley Way to the left of the picture. The view is interrupted only in the small gap where Stevenage Road joins the roundabout on Gresley Way. All the land in this picture is in the Parish of Walkern. This unspoilt view of traditional farmland and ancient woodland is precious green belt land which should be retained, both for its purpose of separating the village of Walkern from the town of Stevenage and for its intrinsic beauty.



View 8: East from High Street opposite Glebe View

The view from the footpath at the junction of High Street and Glebe View encompasses the paddock in the foreground, and gently undulating fields and woodland in the distance. The Old Rectory is mentioned in the Conservation and Heritage Section in relation to non-designated heritage assets. Hertfordshire Gardens Trust hope to undertake further research on grounds of the house to establish their heritage value. In the meantime, this special view acknowledges the importance of the view across this landscape.

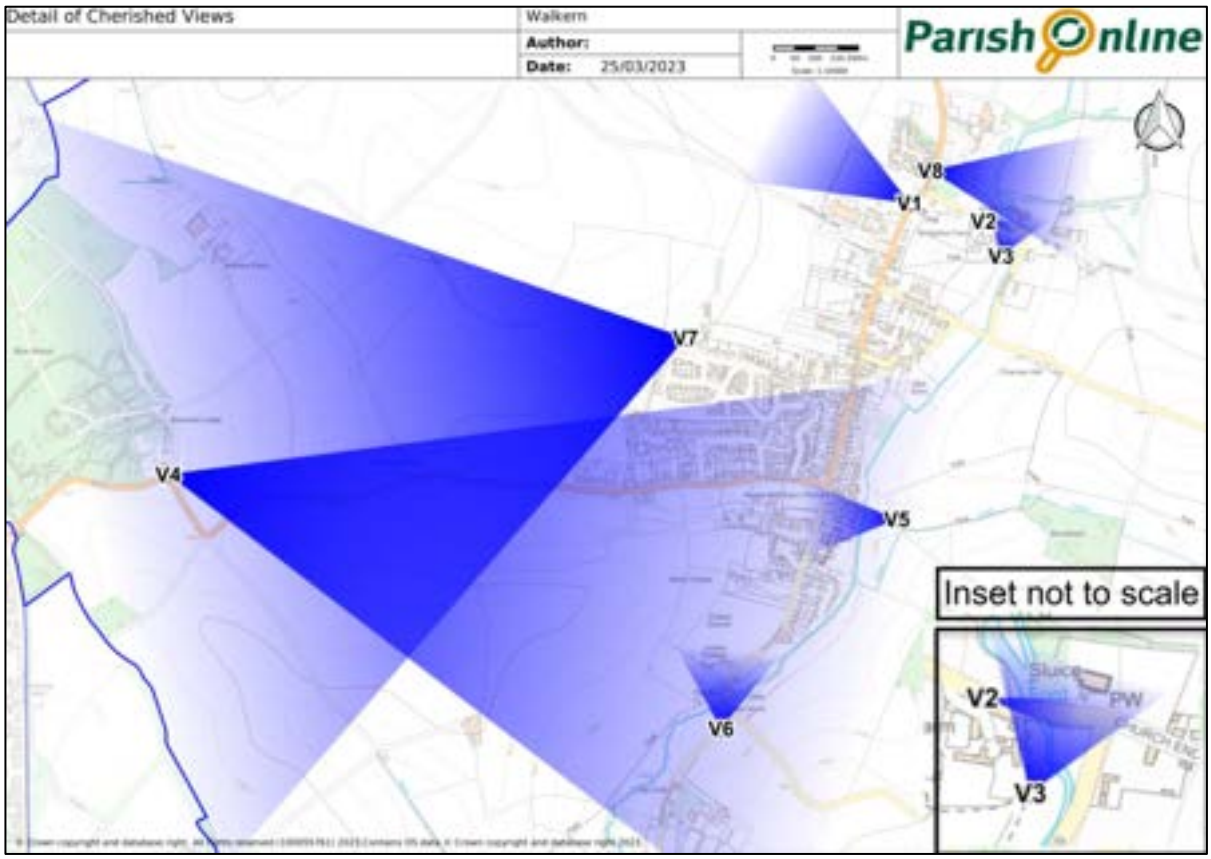


Figure 24 Detail of All Important Views

Queen Elizabeth II pole mounted post box, Clay End (TL305251)

Poor condition. Located on small green in historic hamlet of Clay End. Significance enhanced by proximity of decorative cast iron lamp column.

Decorative cast iron lamp column, Clay End (TL3305251)

Poor condition. Located on small green in historic hamlet of Clay End. Significance enhanced by proximity of Queen Elizabeth II pole mounded post box.



Figure 25: Post Box (left) and Lamp Column (right), Clay End

Pair of decorative cast iron lamp columns, High Street, Walkern (TL288262) and (TL288262)

Replica Victorian lamps on old decorative columns.



Figure 26: Decorative Lamp Columns (High Street)

Decorative cast iron lamp column in front of St Mary the Virgin (Grade I listed church), Church End (TL292265)



Figure 27: Decorative Lamp Column, St Mary's Church

Bridge and Weir, High Street, Walkern

One mile downstream from the church and ford, on the River Beane lies the old water powered flour mill.

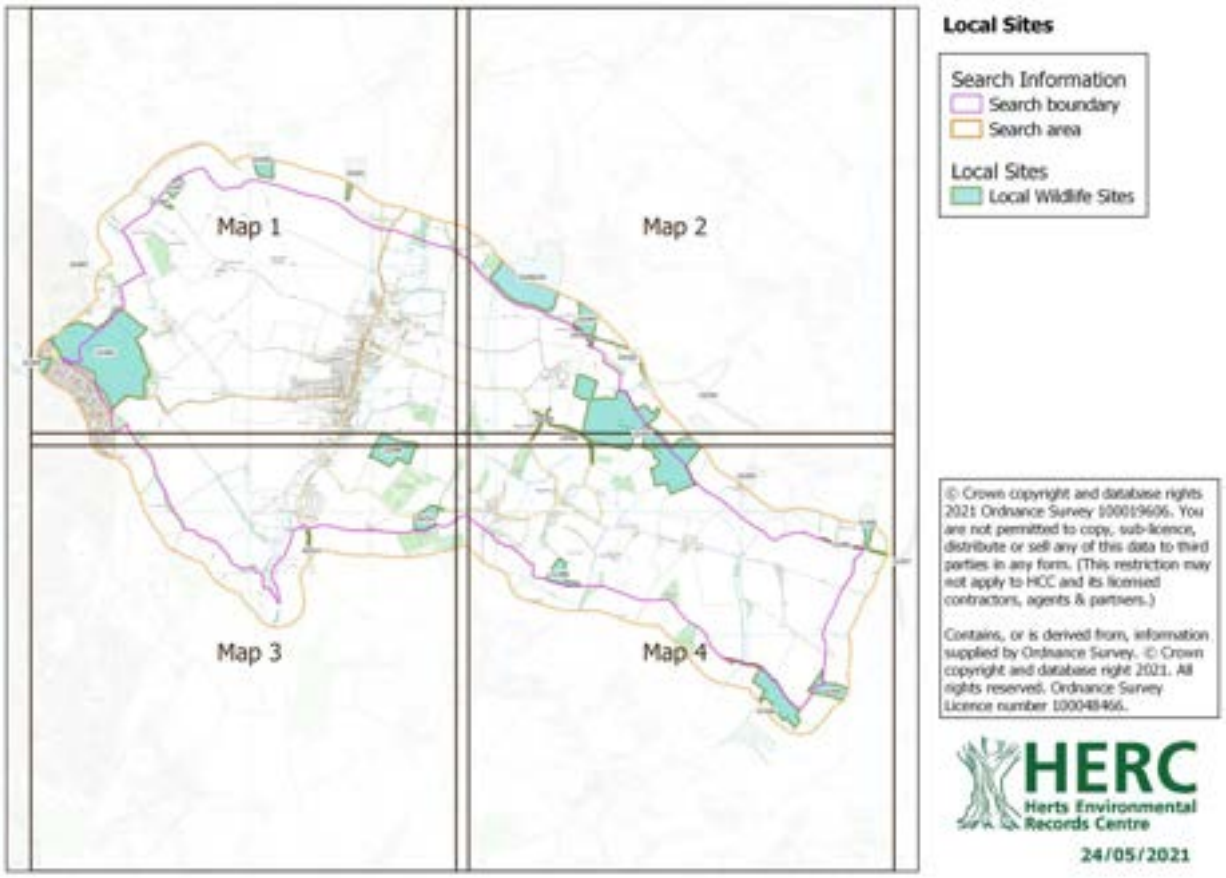
The bridge comprises red brick arches with capping stones, rebuilt and strengthened several times in its history to withstand road traffic into Walkern. Metal workings and paraphernalia remain in situ.

https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/places/rivers-and-canals/aspects-of-watton-at-stone-1



Figure 28: Weir (left) and Bridge (right), High Street

Appendix D Designated Wildlife Sites



Extract from Wildlife Site inventory – Data Supplied by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust

22/006 Pryor's Wood/Box Wood TL270263
Ancient Hornbeam coppice with Pedunculate Oak standards woodland plus some Ash, Wild Cherry, and Hawthorn. The wood has been extensively cleared and replanted with Larch, Corsican Pine, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, and Beech. Pryor's Wood is the nature reserve consisting of mostly old secondary woodland grown up on the site over the past 150 years. It is dominated by Pedunculate Oak with Silver Birch, Wild Cherry, Hawthorn, and some Hazel. There is an area of ancient Hornbeam coppice. a diverse assemblage of flowering plant species has been recorded including the local species Green Hellebore and Violet Helleborine. Pryor's Wood contains many woodland indicator species including Wood Anemone, Yellow Archangel, Primrose, Dog-violets, Bluebell, and the very local species Great Woodrush has been recorded here. Other records include the nationally notable beetle Platycis Minutus and the local White-Letter Hairstreak. The bird fauna is particularly rich with numerous breeding species including past records for Hawfinch and Wood Warbler. 17 species of mammal have been recorded including the hazel dormouse. At the eastern edge of Box Wood, within rough ground, is a disused chalk pit. other earthworks within the site add further habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: ancient Woodland inventory site; woodland indicators.

22/047 The Warren (n.e. of Stevenage) TL273277
Ancient semi-natural Hornbeam coppice woodland with Pedunculate Oak and Ash standards. The understorey supports Hawthorn and Elder with Hazel and the ground flora contains woodland indicators, mainly Bluebell, with Bramble and Common Nettle. Wildlife Site criteria: Ancient Woodland with a semi-natural canopy and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin; shown on Bryant 1822): > 1 ha

22/049 Coble's Spring and The Bushes Tl292255
Woodland divided into three compartments by rides, which partly support species-rich neutral grass. Coble's Spring in the east is an ancient woodland site and is mainly composed of planted Ash and Sycamore with some Scots Pine and European Larch. The ground flora supports ancient woodland indicators including Dog's Mercury in the west is divided into a northern section of secondary broadleaf woodland and a southern section of mainly of dense scrub with a large clearing. The broadleaved woodland is predominantly secondary Pedunculate Oak with a dense sub-canopy of Elder and Hawthorn and a ground flora dominated by Dog's Mercury. The grassy ride is the best area and supports herb-rich flora. The wood is used by protected species. Wildlife Site criteria: Part ancient Woodland (Coble's Spring) with restorable elements of its previous semi-natural character including some semi-natural canopy, shown on Bryant (1822) part old secondary woodland with a semi-natural canopy and varied structure.

23/002 Bassus Green Road Verges Tl304257
Broad grassy road verges comprising species-rich neutral grassland with damp areas, ditches, old hedges and scrub. The sward supports grassland indicator species including lady's Smock Meadow Vetchling, Common knapweed Cowslip Meadow buttercup and Common Sorrel. The nationally rare Scarlet Malachite beetle has been recorded. Wildlife Site criteria: grassland indicators: species.

23/003 St. Johns Wood and Lords Wood Tl10256
Ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak Hornbeam woodland with mature Hornbeam coppice and frequent Pedunculate Oak standards. There are also Ash standards and Hazel coppice along with some Birch and Field Maple. The wood also comprises some secondary scrub woodland and areas which have been replanted. The ground flora is diverse, with records for numerous woodland indicators, including several Ferns Violets and Sedges, Bluebell, Yellow Pimpernel, Wood Sorrel, Wood Anemone Primrose and Violet Helleborine, an uncommon plant in Hertfordshire. There are numerous records for birds, including Nightingales. The Hazel Dormouse and Harvest Mouse are also present. Historically the site was well known for its diversity of butterfly species. External and internal wood banks, numerous small ditches and marshy/damp rides and habitat diversity. Wildlife Site criteria: ancient Woodland inventory site: Woodland indicators: species.

30/015 Baron's Grove Tl294249
Part ancient semi-natural Pedunculate Oak/Hornbeam and ash, Field Maple, Hazel woodland with some Beech. Mixed plantation to the south. Two small ponds recorded in the north of the wood near the boundary. The northern margin is bordered by a Hawthorn hedge. a ditch and grassy ride mark the southern edge of the ancient woodland area, following a parish boundary. The ground flora in the northern part of the wood is dominated by Bluebell and Dog's Mercury. Wildlife Site criteria: ancient Woodland inventory site; woodland indicators.

Appendix E Walkern Tree Charter

The Walkern Tree Charter will sustain landscapes rich in wildlife, whilst planting for the future. It is aimed at giving people the feeling of wellbeing, health and hope with the help of our trees.

The purpose of the Tree Charter is to:

- Protect irreplaceable trees and woodland
- Plan a greener local landscape and strengthen our existing landscapes
- Combat the threats to our habitats from flooding and climate change
- Improve accessibility for the community to the benefits of trees.

This will be achieved through the protection, management and enhancement of trees, woodland, and hedges. Of particular importance will be the scarce resource of ancient woodland and veteran trees. Box Wood is particularly at risk due to the subdivision of the woodland in to separate leaseholds. More details on Box Wood can be found as an addendum to this charter.

Benefits of Trees

- Trees offer us health and wellbeing, by walking and viewing.
- There are many aspects of wildlife, colour and sounds that are within their canopy throughout the seasons.
- Trees give our fields and roadsides a definition, specifically in the rural parish of Walkern where they break up boundaries and can denote ancient sites.
- Trees absorb carbon monoxide and pollution from the increasing traffic through the village and in particular at the primary school where children play near to the road.

Tree Care and Management Guidelines

- Residents should ensure that any trees and hedges within their curtilage are maintained. Annual pruning will be the householder's responsibility e.g. root, height and width and disposing of detritus.
- Tree Preservation Orders will be sought from East Herts Council where urgent and/or long-term protection of important trees is identified.
- The Parish Council will be responsible for adhering to the Charter on land that they own or manage, by ensuring maintenance and pruning as and when necessary, e.g. at Walkern Sports and Community Centre and the Playground in the High Street.
- Landowners should ensure that there is safe access to their woodland on accessible and maintained public paths.
- Landowners/leaseholders should manage and maintain their woodlands.
- The Parish Council will carry out a bi-annual walkabout to note any overhanging branches or other necessary work to ensure safety to the public as well as open reach cables etc, also noting any tree seedlings that have grown or are growing inappropriately and will act accordingly to rectify the problems.

- Highways will be responsible for maintenance to any existing tree/hedge that is deemed in need of work that does not belong to a householder and notified by the Parish Clerk.

- The landscape management contract for the 'Midsummer Vale' site will ensure the maintenance, care, pruning and replanting of all boundaries and native trees planted in accordance with planning conditions. The contract should include replanting as it is known a good percentage of new planting does not survive until established.

Key Contacts for Enquiries and Issues

- Local Tree Warden (to be appointed by the Parish Council) in the interim contact Councillor Michele Rist michele.rist@walkernparishcouncil.org
- Tree Officer (Arboriculturist) at East Herts Council on 01279 655261
- Trusted Local Arborists and Nurseries
    - RR trees, rowan@rrtrees.co.uk or 07792 129669
    - Andy Gardner, Specialist Tree Care & Landscapes, 18 Stevenage Road, Walkern, Herts SG2 7NN or 01438 860368
    - Van Hage Garden Centre, Pepper Hill, Great Amwell, Herts, SG12 9RP or 01920 870811

Inventory of Trees and Woodland

An inventory of trees and woodland will be held by the Parish Council to include:

- Ancient and veteran trees
- Mature Woodland
- Established hedgerows
- New planting
- Woodland Walks
- Memorial trees

The outcome of this charter will be to make the air cleaner, to prevent flooding, to preserve the views and vistas in the Beane Valley and maintain the green corridors to enhance biodiversity.

Walkern Tree Charter Addendum – Box Wood

- It is roughly 60 acres of ancient woodland in the Green Belt.
- The wood is covered by a Tree Preservation Order TPO639.
- It is a Local Wildlife Site.
- An Article 4 Direction was served on Box Wood on 22 July 2020 by East Herts Council. The Article 4 Direction removed permitted development rights in relation to means of access, gates, walls and fences and temporary uses of land. A permanent Article 4 Direction will be sought by the Parish Council.
- Metal detecting is illegal on the site due to its status as a Scheduled Monument.
- Box Wood is mentioned in the Domesday Book.
- The Freehold of the site is still in the hands of a private single owner, but conditional leasehold plots have been sold.

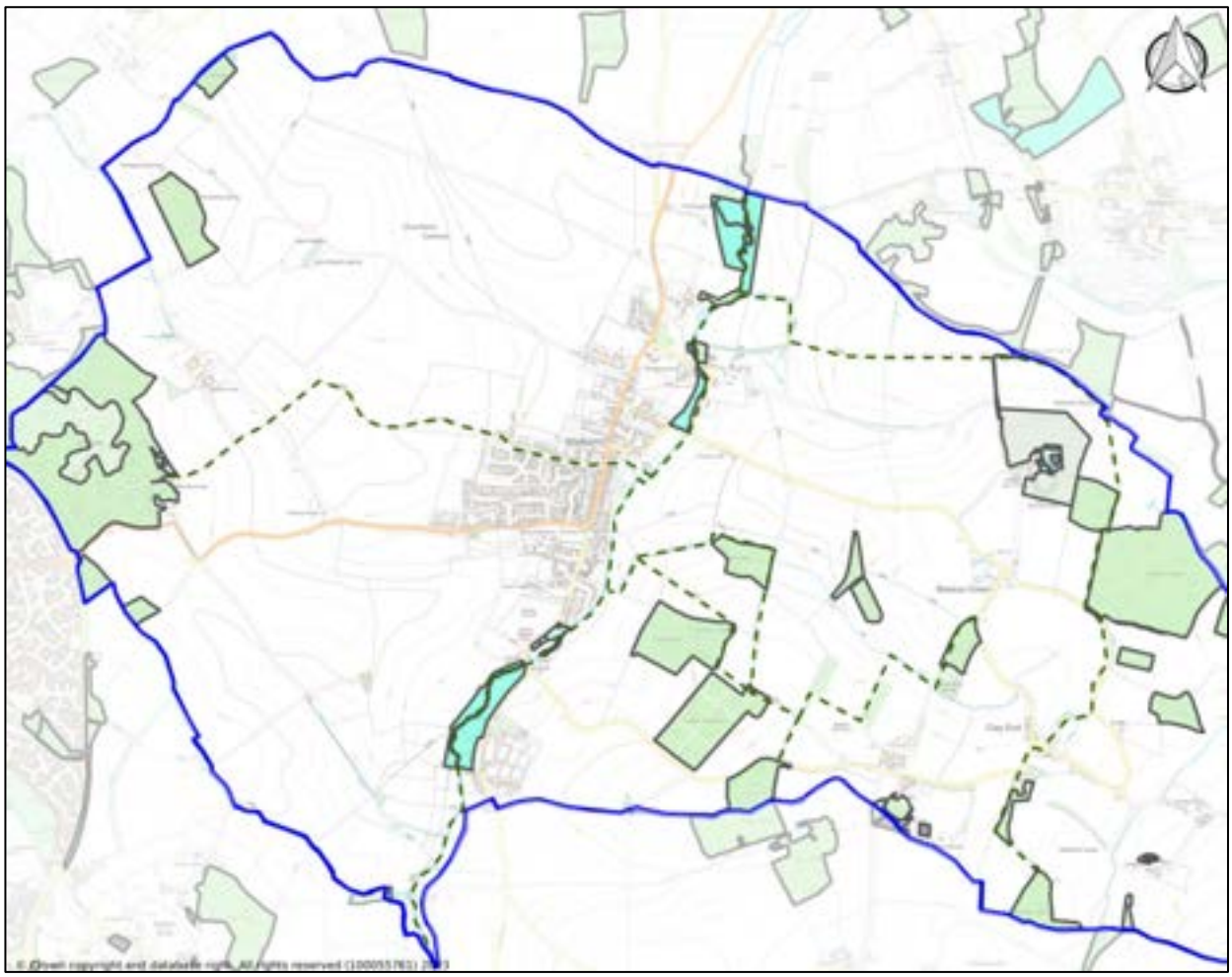
- The wood is well used and suffers from footfall and motorcycle use.
- A few ancient trees, from the remains of an ancient cemetery are still in existence in the garden of Box Wood House, including a veteran yew.
- Species of tree include Beech, Hornbeam, Oak, Douglas Fir, Red Cedar and European Larch, Grand Fir, Western Hemlock, Birch, Ash and Sycamore.



Figure 29 Veteran Yew, Box Wood

Appendix F Green Corridors

This map shows the Priority Habitat Inventory published by Natural England (Source: Parish Online) overlain with the Green Corridors in this Neighbourhood Plan.







LGS 1 & 2: Land west of the River Beane north of the Ford, Church End



LGS 1 & 2: Land east of the River Beane north of the Ford, Church End

There are views into both areas from the ford over the River Beane on Church End. These combine with other features to make this area a favourite meeting place and an area for informal recreation by residents and visitors. It is part of an identified 'Focal Point' in Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) and lies adjacent to the grade I listed St Mary the Virgin Church. Both sites are rich in wildlife, particularly birds; LGS 1 contains an established rookery.



LGS 3: Land adjacent to River Beane between Church End and Winters Lane

This attractive meadow affords extensive views into, across and out of the site to the ford and church, and over the River Beane to the countryside beyond. The riverside hedgerow is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. Two well-used public footpaths (35 & 18) crisscross the site. The thistle rich meadow adjacent to the river supports birds, butterflies & moths.



LGS 4: Land adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane

This land next to the allotments contains a riverside hedgerow, which is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. The site also contributes to the rural setting of the village. It is used for grazing but has the potential to be managed to increase biodiversity along the river.





LGS 5: Allotments, Totts Lane

The village allotment site adjoins LGS4 and is adjacent to the River Beane, with views out across surrounding farmland. It includes well-tended allotment plots and a riverside hedgerow, which is highlighted in the Walkern Conservation area Character appraisal (2016) as making a positive contribution to the conservation area. It was previously recreation land but is now rich in wildlife, indicated by a record held at Hertfordshire Environmental Records Office of 600 species of butterflies & moths recorded by a former occupier of an adjacent house.



LGS 6: URC Graveyard, High Street

The graveyard is a tranquil spot on the edge of the village behind the URC church. This space has views out of it to the open countryside beyond. Its heritage value includes the gravestones and the setting the area provides for the Grade II listed church. It also includes a Box tree that is over 200 years old. The tranquillity of the space encourages wildlife. This space is being managed as a space where wildlife and visitors seeking quiet reflection time can co-exist.



LGS 7: Graveyard, Froghall Lane

This area on Froghall Lane is consecrated land owned by East Herts Council. At the Council's suggestion, the Parish Council are considering how they could best use the space as an asset for the village, possibly as a memorial garden. In the meatime, the area adds to the character of Froghall Lane. Historically it was occupied by a Baptist Chapel which is shown on an OS map of 1924 (see Walkern Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan page 16). The graves lined up against the wall on the left hand side appear in a photograph held by Walkern History Society.



LGS 8: War Memorial, High Street/Benington Road

The War Memorial and small grass triangle is part of an important 'Focal Point' in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2106). It marks the entrance to the village from the south. A memorial service with the laying of wreaths is held here on Remembrance Day. This is a well preserved and important architectural feature and the green and its setting should be preserved.

Local Green Space Assessment – Basic Criteria

Site description	No	Potential development site	Other designation	Common or Village Green	Garden	Owner known	Planning Application
Land west of River Beane at ford, Church End	1	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Land east of River Beane at ford, Church End	2	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Land adj River Beane between Church End and Winters Lane	3	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Field adj to Allotments, Totts Lane	4	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Allotments, Totts Lane	5	N	N	N	N	Y	N
URC Graveyard, High Street	6	N	N	N	N	Y	N
Graveyard, Froghall Ln	7	N	N	N	N	Y	N
War Memorial, High Street	8	N	N	N	N	Y	N

*SM is the abbreviation for Scheduled Monument (a national heritage designation)

Site description	No	Size (ha)	Local in Character	Extensive Tract of Land	Very Special to the local Community	Close to the community it Serves
Land west of River Beane at the Ford, Church End	1	0.02	Y	N	Y	Y
Land east of River Beane at the Ford, Church End	2	0.15	Y	N	Y	Y
Land adj River Beane between Church End and Winters Lane	3	2.97	y	N	Y	Y
Field adj to Allotments, Totts Lane	4	1.03	Y	N	Y	Y
Allotments, Totts Lane	5	0.53	Y	N	Y	Y
URC Graveyard, High Street	6	0.07	Y	N	Y	Y
Graveyard, Froghall Ln	7	0.04	Y	N	Y	Y
War Memorial, High Street	8	0.01	Y	N	Y	Y

Local Green Space Assessment – Special Features

Site description	No	Attractiveness of Site	Historical Significance	Recreation Use	Tranquil	Wildlife
Land east & west of River Beane at the Ford, Church End	1 & 2	Views into these green spaces from the ford over River Beane are important and combine with other features, to make this area a favourite meeting place	Part of noted 'Focal Point' in Walkern CACC 2016*[1], adj to grade I listed church	No public access	yes	Supports bird life (LGS 1 contains established Rookery) adjacent to River Beane
Land adj to River Beane between Church End and Winters Lane	3	Attractive meadow with important hedgerow along River Beane, affording extensive views into/across and out of the site to the ford & church	no	Crossed by two footpaths (35 & 18), well used by walkers	yes	Thistle rich meadow supports birds, butterflies & moths
Field adjacent to Allotments, Totts Lane	4	The continuation of LGS 3 with an important hedgerow along the River Beane contributing to the setting of the village and conservation area	no	No public access	yes	no
Allotments, Totts Lane	5	Site adjoins LGS4 and the River Beane with views out across surrounding farmland, includes well-tended allotment plots with important hedgerow	no	Previous recreation site now well-used allotments	yes	Former occupier of adj house recorded 600 species of moths & butterflies*[2]
URC Graveyard, High Street	6	Pretty church garden with views out into open countryside beyond village through trees and hedges on boundary	Setting of Grade II listed Chapel, mentioned in CACA 2016	Available for public use as a quiet space	yes	Quiet place animals, birds, butterflies and insects
Graveyard, Froghall Lane		A small green space near the centre of the village containing gravestones from Baptist Chapel	Consecrated Graveyard Mentioned in CACA 2016	Publicly owned community space	yes	No information
War Memorial, High Street	8	Part of an important 'Focal Point' in the Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2106) and marks entrance to village from south	Remembranc e Day memorial service & laying of wreaths held here. Well preserved architectural feature	no	no	no

*[1]Walkern Conservation Area and Character Appraisal 2016

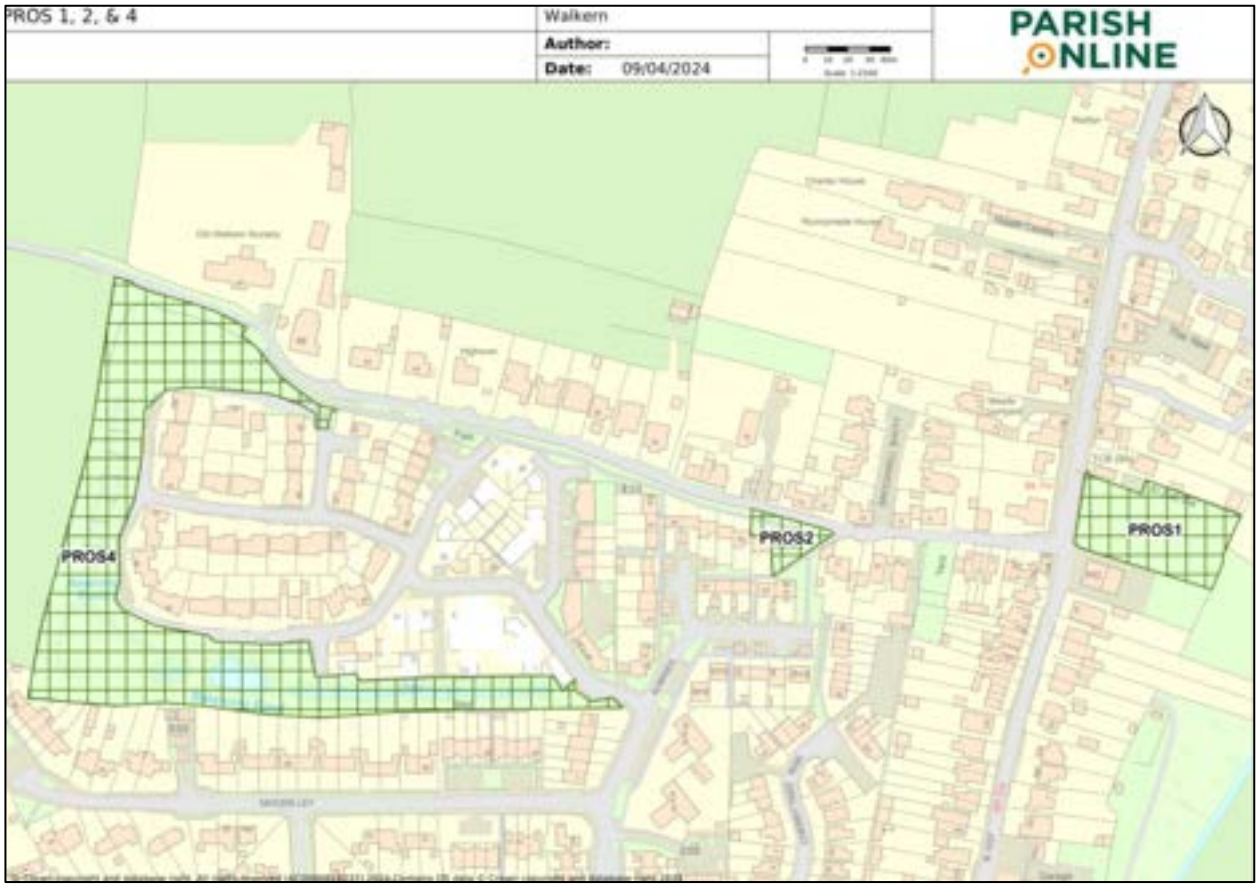
*[2]List held at Hertfordshire Environmental Records Office

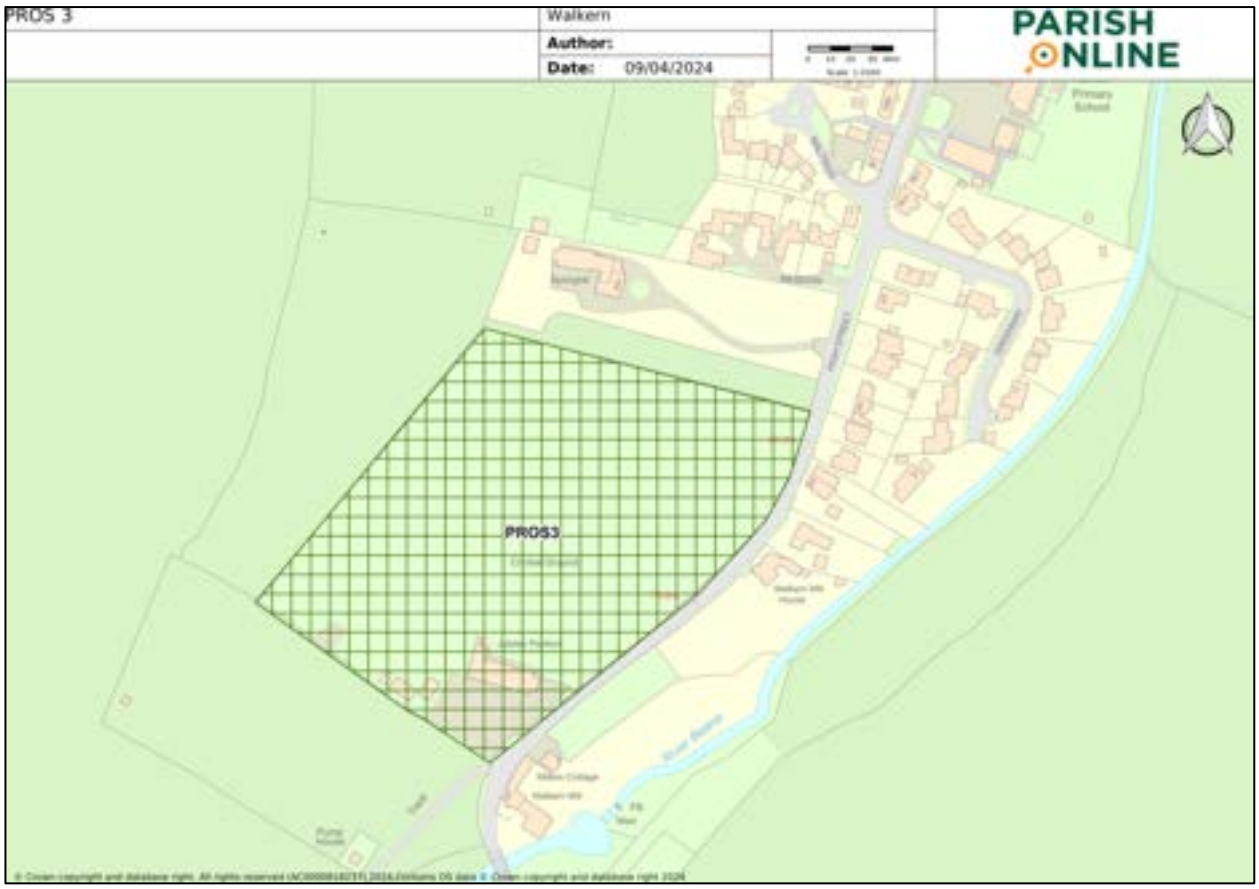
Appendix H Walkern Flood Plain Map



Source:
[Flood Risk Information]

Appendix I Detail of Protected Recreational Open Spaces







PROS1: Recreation Ground, High Street

The recreation ground is a safe fenced space in the centre of the village with a range of play equipment. There is a funded project to update the whole site including a greater range of equipment for all ages. More seating will be introduced with further planting of native trees and hedges to attract wildlife. There are views out of the site over large gardens to the River Beane. The site is identified as an important open space that should be protected in the Walkern Conservation area Character appraisal (2016).



PROS2: Play Area Aubries

This is a small safe site within the Aubries development with play equipment for smaller children. it is the only play area available without having to cross the high Street to the recreation ground.



PROS3: Sports Field, High Street

This is the main sports and social club field, which is used for football in the winter and cricket in the summer. The annual village fete is held here. The field is well used by residents for picnics, dog walking and exercising. it is a valuable asset for the village.



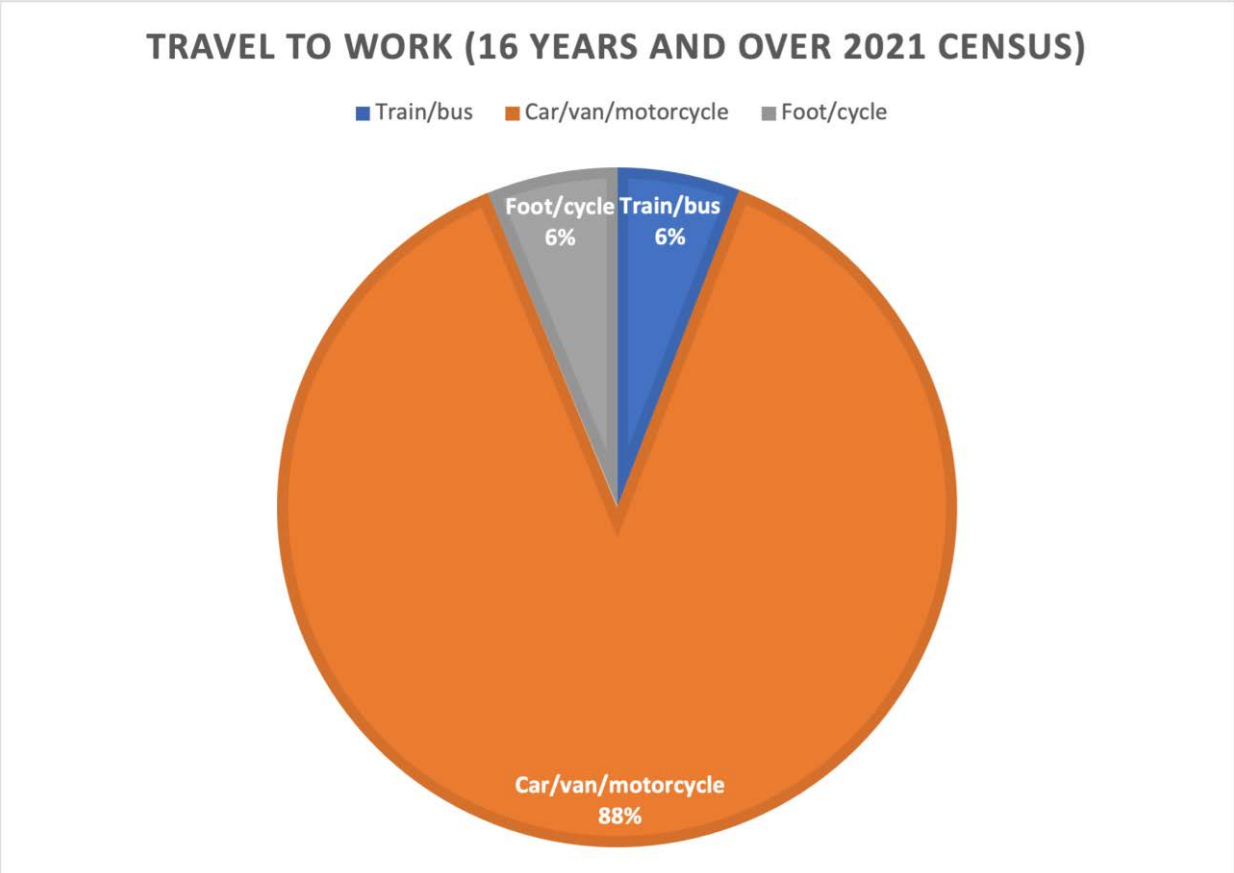
PROS4: Midsummer Meadows

This space is an integral part of the Midsummer Meadows housing development. Doubling as an area of biodiversity and incorporating SUDs, it is also an important walking link through to Froghall Lane.

Appendix J Car Parking Standards

On-street parking in Walkern High Street and in the residential roads of Aubries and Moors Ley causes traffic congestion and issues with access for the emergency services. In Aubries and Moors Ley in particular, where insufficient private parking spaces were provided when the development was built, cars are parked on pavements to avoid blocking the narrow roads. This also creates a safety issue for pedestrians.

The lack of adequate public transport forces villagers to use their own vehicles to travel to work. Preliminary 2021 census figures for the Parish of Walkern show that only 6 % of those who travel by train of bus. It is likely that those travelling by train also use their car to travel to the train station.

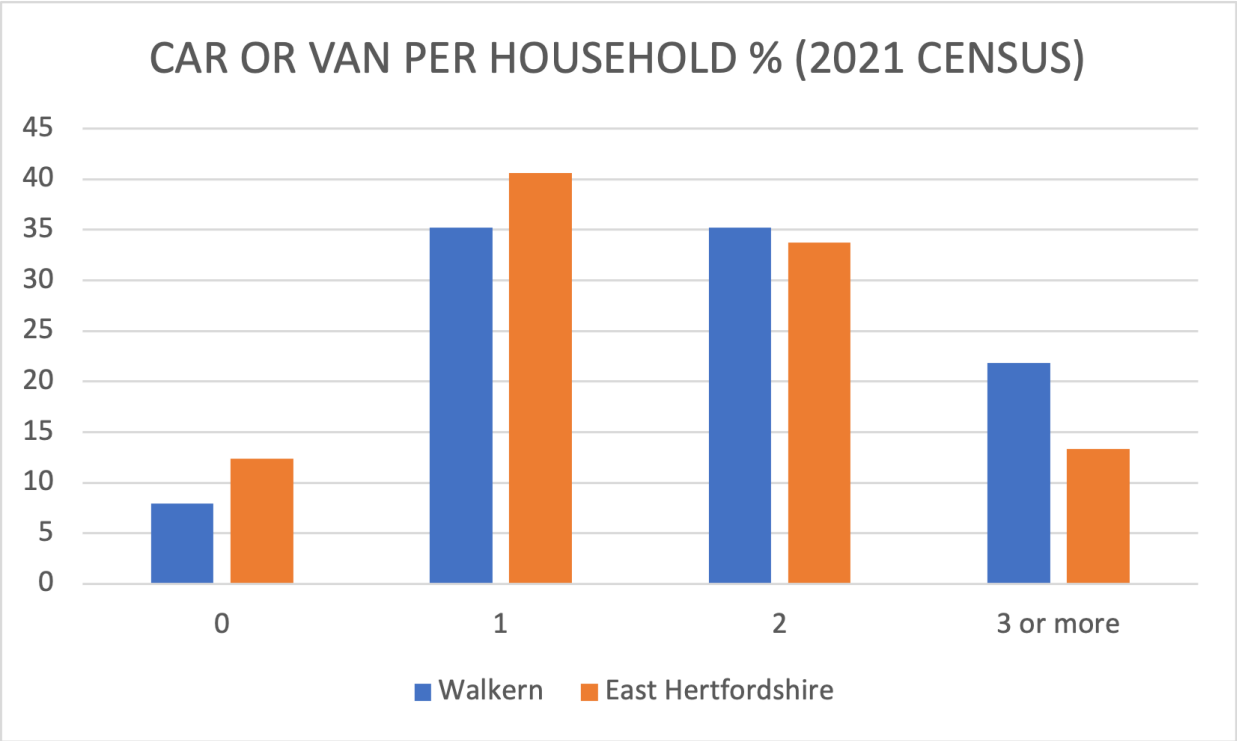


This pie chart represents those aged 16 and over, in employment, travelling to work (when the census was taken 41% of residents were recorded as working mainly from home) and shows the overwhelmingly large percentage of workers who use their car to get to work.

Source: ONS Census 2021 Walkern Profile Preview
(https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/build/)

In the building and development section of the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire residents were asked what facilities should be included in new housing developments. 80% of respondents said that all new builds must have parking spaces or garages.

East Herts District Plan minimum residential parking standards are 1.5 off-street spaces for a one-bed home. However, car ownership is different in Walkern, with significantly more households owning either 2 cars or 3 or more cars compare to East Herts (see chart below).



In addition, recent applications for residential development in East Herts have seen developers arguing that on-street parking spaces should be allowable to satisfy parking standards. This would not be acceptable in Walkern where problems caused by on-street parking are already acute.

Appendix K Action Plan

Issues were identified through consultation with residents. The Parish Council will resolve the issues in the Action Plan using developer contributions and other funding mechanisms.

Issue	Outcome sought	Measures sought	Progress
Walkern Playground needs updated play equipment, planting and more seating.	To enable the area to be better used and encourage more wildlife.	Funding to be sought via Biffa and other possible grant schemes. S106 money also to be used.	Improvements inc. tree surgery, bin and replacement w/chair accessible seat/table.
Height and weight restrictions to be enforced for through traffic.	To prevent heavy vehicles driving through the village unless for business.	Lobby HCC Highways. Further measures being sought as signage is not effective.	Pending
Congestion in the High Street and speed of traffic.	To install traffic calming measures throughout village.	Lobby HCC and police and make them aware of the danger to residents	S106 for High Street parking Bays & yellow lines proposed.
Congestion from cars parked outside primary school and side roads.	To improve safety for residents, children and drivers negotiating parked cars.	Lobby for more enforcement by traffic wardens. Provide a drop-off area for school to reduce time cars wait in side roads with engines running.	None, and situation is worsening.
Lack of play/sporting facilities at WSCC.	To extend health and social activities for all ages	Direct S106 money and other grants towards achieving the outcome.	New fitness equipment, play equipment/picnic benches installed.
Lack of crossing points and entrances to public areas (Equalities Act 20120)	To create a safer and more accessible village, where ever reasonably possible.	S106 money to install lines by WSCC to enable w/chair users to use dropped kerb. Marking designated parking bay at shop. WPC to keep paths free from overgrowth.	Survey carried out and site plan drawn up showing areas of concern (see NP Consultation Statement).
Village signage dated and in poor condition.	To provide visual information and create safer driving conditions.	WPC to ensure signs are visible; cleaned and overhanging trees and shrubbery cleared.	Sign renewed at Clay End. Village signs cleaned annually. Seating to be installed Froghall Lane graveyard.
Lack of seating in public places.	To enhance the life of residents, particularly the elderly & disabled.	Used S106 and WPC funding to install seating at the Playground and benches at Froghall Lane graveyard.	Seating installed at WSCC.
Vehicle speeds too high.	To reduce vehicle speeding/use of the village as a rat run.	Liaise with HCC Highways and polices for traffic calming measures to be installed.	Pending
Impact of aircraft noise/pollution.	To ensure aircraft fly at correct height and on flight paths.	Lobby London Luton Airport and gain support from LADCAN.	WPC has sent an objection to holding area over village. WPC has now subscribed to LADACAN
Height and weight of vehicles using Totts Lane/Winters Lane	To eliminate oversized vehicles on narrow lanes.	Signage, weight restrictions and width restrictions needed.	Road layout changed at Winters Lane/Bockings to prevent HGV use.
Future lack of burial spaces in St Mary's churchyard.	To create further space for residents who wish to rest in the churchyard.	Extension of garden of remembrance. Permission to be sought from Diocese.	Vicar supports this and has given permission.
No public electric vehicle charging points in the village.	To provide public charging facilities for hybrids and electric cars.	A suitable space would be on Clark's garage forecourt.	Owner agreed to consider installation, but costs would need to be investigated.
Negative aspects of conservation area.	Improve environment in conservation area.	Use S106 funding to action the conservation area management plan	Pending

Appendix L Abbreviations & Glossary

ACV	Asset of Community Value
Affordable Housing	Housing for sale or rent at below market prices
Ancient Woodland	Woodland known to have existed continuously since 1600
Brownfield	Land that has been previously developed
Conservation Area	Designated under Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning Act as being of special architectural or historical interest
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Designated Area	The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan
EHDC	East Hertfordshire District Council
Flood Plain	Land liable to flood from a watercourse
Green Corridor	An area of habitat connecting wildlife populations
HCC	Hertfordshire County Council
HER	Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record
HERC	Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
Infrastructure	Services necessary for development to take place, e.g., roads
LADCAN	Luton and District Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise
LGS	Local Green Space
Local Plan	East Herts District Plan (2018)
Locality	A national membership network supporting local community organisations See www.locality.org.uk
Mitigation	Measures taken to lessen the effects of development
Neighbourhood Area	Area to which the Neighbourhood Plan relates
Neighbourhood Plan	Walkern Neighbourhood Plan
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework December 2023
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance
Objective	A goal to assist in achieving the overall vision for an area
Open Space	Space of public value e.g., land, rivers and lakes
Section 106	Developer contributions under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Sequential Test	Methodology ensuring development is sited in the best location
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
Sustainable Development	Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising future generations to meet their own needs
URC	United Reformed Church
Vernacular	A local style of architecture for homes and domestic buildings
View/Vista	Pleasing sight from a place/ or a long narrow view
Walkern	Refers to the village rather than the parish
WPC	Walkern Parish Council
WSCC	Walkern Sports and Community Centre

Appendix M References and Resources

Buntingford Community Area Neighbourhood Plan Examination Report 8 November 2016

East Hertfordshire Green Infrastructure Plan. Land Use Consultants, March 2011

East Herts District Plan 2011-2033. October 2018

Great Horwood Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014 – 2031. March 2015

Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Hertfordshire ecological network Mapping. HERC, 2022

Landscape Character assessment SPD. East Herts Council, 2007

Local green Space designation. Open Spaces Society, 2015

Local green Space Methodology. Bedford borough Council, 2015

Neighbourhood Planning guidance note. East Herts Council, December 2019

Neighbourhood Statistics, ONS 2001 and 2011 Census (NOMIS), 2021 Census

Planning Practice guidance

Locality

Walkern housing needs Survey. Community Development Action Hertfordshire, Feb 2017

River Beane Catchment Management Plan. River Lea Catchment Partnership,

Stevenage to Walkern Multi-use Path Feasibility. Groundwork Hertfordshire, 2009

Thame neighbourhood Plan. Thame Town Council, examination Version November 2012

The localism act 2011

The National Planning Policy Framework December 2023

The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and updates

East Herts Council Parking Standards SPD

Walkern Conservation Area Character Appraisal. East Herts Council, December 2016

North Herts Museum report published by Keith J Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2020

Historic England Research Report Series 17-2019. January 2021

Landscape Issues in your Neighbourhood Plan (CPRE)

Appendix N Acknowledgements

Walkern Parish Council would like to thank all the people and organisations involved in preparing the original Neighbourhood Plan. A special thank you goes to Michele Rist who has worked tirelessly with our planning consultant to update information, photographs, references, and text, inputting new ideas to make the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan First Revision the best it can be.

Chris Birt – analysis of village survey data
Heidi Broady – Parish Clerk
Ray Carter – landowner
Paul and Anne Collis – ornithological knowledge in and around Walkern Parish
The late David de Boinville – landowner
Graphix – printers
Hertfordshire Mercury – printing articles & photographs
Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust – wildlife data & mapping data
Philip Hewitt - Photographs
The late Dr John Hill – historical evidence in and around Walkern Parish
Gerri Hudson – photos of slow worms and newts in and around Froghall site
The late Derek Jackson – historical knowledge of Walkern
Steve Jenner – former chair of Walkern Parish Council
Peter Lincoln – landowner
The late Stephen Lowe – art materials and loan of display boards
Paradigm Housing – housing association
John Pearson – detailed collection of moth species within Parish
Andy Phillips - geological advice
Jo Ransom – Funding
Michele Rist – Photographs
Mae Standing – pledge tree
Dave Standing - original maps and new cover design
John Stinchcombe – details of trees in Froghall and wider area
Dan Taylor – photos
United Reformed Church – use of meeting hall
Jacqueline Veater (Govresources) – consultant to Walkern Parish Council
The late Brian Wakeley – landowner
James Wakeley – landowner
Walkern Action – enabling communication with the village
Walkern History Society – historic information and use of Walkern history boards
Walkern Journal – printing information and communication with the village
Walkern Parish Council – notice board availability for communication
Walkern Stores (Now Budgens)– posters and collecting box for questionnaires
Mrs Robin Warner-Smith – landowner
Mr And Mrs Wilson – landowner
The late Chris Windebank – logo, banner and badges