

# THE BALDONS NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**MADE VERSION SEPTEMBER 2019**

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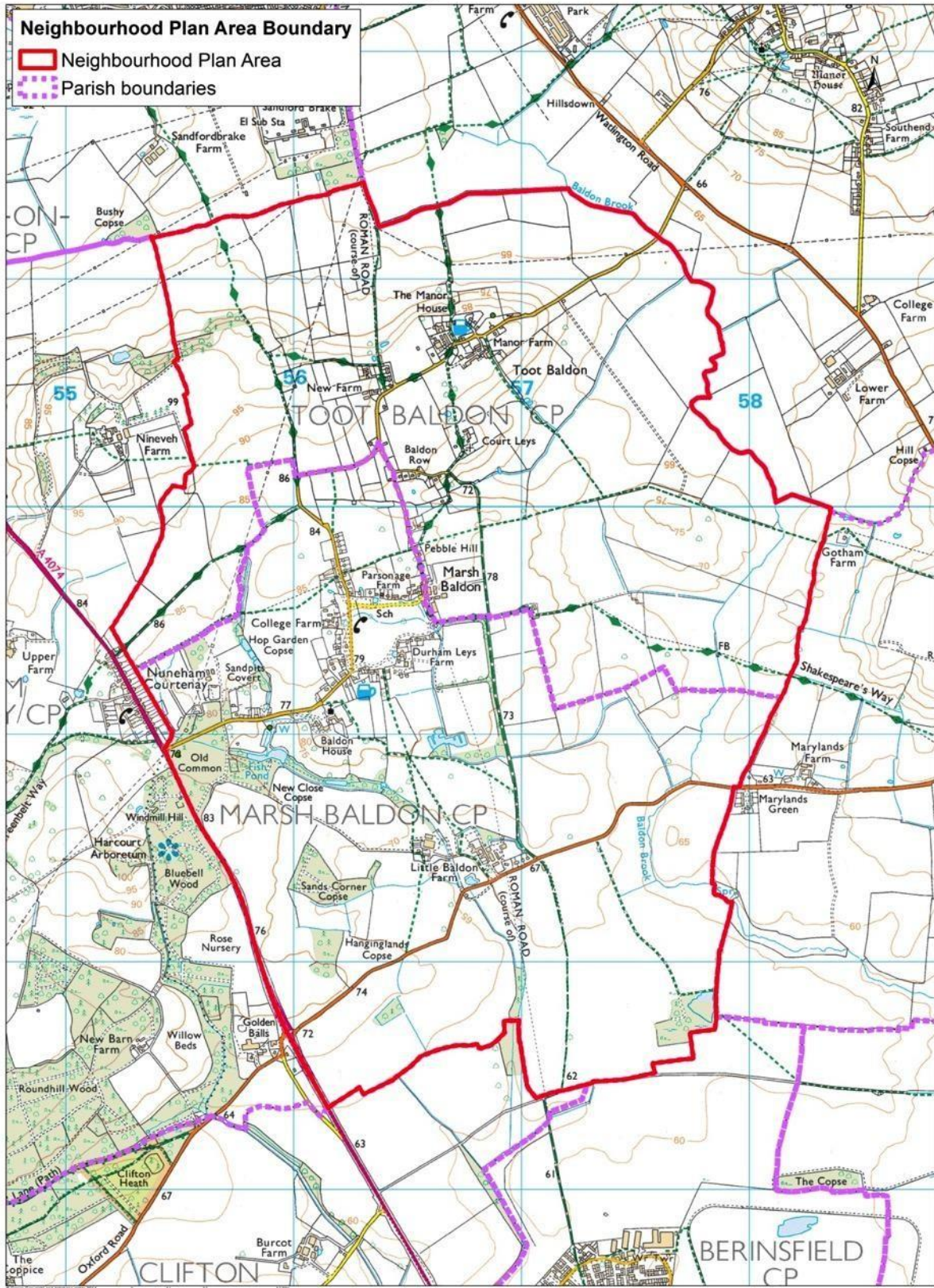
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### The Baldons Neighbourhood Plan Area



## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Location**

The Baldons are situated some 3 miles south of the Oxford ring road, immediately to the east of Nuneham Courtenay, west of Garsington and north of Berinsfield. The Plan area, 970 hectares (ha) in total, comprises two parishes – Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon, which for some time have operated a combined Parish Council. The Baldons Neighbourhood Plan area is shown in Figure 1.1

### **1.2 Background**

The Localism Act 2011 introduced Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders which enable local communities to influence development taking place in their area. Once passed by more than 50% of people in a referendum of residents, these spatial development tools become part of the statutory planning framework.

At the meeting of 14th July 2015 the Baldons Parish Council (BPC), following an informal meeting with Rona Knott from the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), resolved to go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan and nominated a working party of Parish Councillors to progress this. Subsequently a draft proposal was presented to the BPC at the next Council meeting (8<sup>th</sup> September) at which it was adopted and agreed that it would be distributed to all Baldon residents. In this document residents were asked whether or not they were in favour of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and whether or not they would like to be involved in the Plan preparation. The response was strongly in favour (93 positive response against 7 negative) with 15 residents expressing a wish to participate. These volunteers were invited to an initial meeting at which those attending agreed to form an Advisory Group.

On the strength of these preliminary steps the parish council decided to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for the combined parish area.

### **1.3 The South Oxfordshire Local Plan**

SODC is in the process of finalising a new Local Plan. The policies developed in this Neighbourhood Plan are designed to comply with both the adopted Development Plan and the emerging Local Plan.

### **1.4 The Baldons Parish Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan is complementary to The Baldons Parish Plan which was produced in 2011. The Parish Plan, which provides invaluable background material, covered the following topics:

- Social facilities and events
- Village services
- Transport: cycling, buses and voluntary schemes have been addressed
- Community safety
- Young people
- The Church
- Charities
- Communications
- Housing

Since 2011 there has been much activity and some progress, specifically:

- The Marsh Baldon pub, The Seven Stars has been saved from permanent closure by village action and is now community owned
- Plans are being drawn up for the improvement of the Village Hall
- Plans are being drawn up for the re-ordering of St Peters Church to enable it to be used more widely as a community facility
- Marsh Baldon School is going from strength to strength under a new governing body and staff.
- The parking problems associated with the school are being addressed

The Parish Plan was however essentially an aspirational document seeking to address a wide range of mainly social questions but could not – nor was it originally intended to - tackle developmental issues: this is the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is clear, at both a national and regional level, that more housing is required to accommodate a growing population. The Baldons cannot escape their share of this and neither do they wish to do so. However, it is highly desirable that The Baldons have a say in the extent, the size, the location and the design of new housing so that our priceless heritage – built environment and landscape character as well as our social cohesion – can be preserved and enhanced.

## 1.5 Process

The personnel, all Baldon residents, involved with the preparation of the Baldons Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

### **Parish Council**

Dorothy Tonge  
Charles Barclay  
John Maskell  
Elizabeth Gillespie  
Stephen Dance  
Laurence Attewill

### **NP Steering Group**

Elizabeth Gillespie  
Stephen Dance  
Laurence Attewill

### **Advisory Group**

Peter Cave  
Natasha Eliot  
Rachel Fallon  
Graham Hilton  
Beth McCloughlin  
Ralph Slaney  
Steve Wardell

A grant from SODC enabled us to engage Community First Oxford to advise on the preparation of the Scoping Report and to carry out the Housing Survey.

A further grant from the Locality organisation enabled us to commission a Landscape Character Assessment of The Baldons from Hankinson Duckett Associates and the Basic Conditions Statement from Nexus Planning.

## 1.6 Consultation

### **1.6.1 Community Engagement**

As perhaps is natural in two such small villages, community engagement has been ongoing and informal. However, there have also been (or will have been by the time we have finished), 5 specific public engagements events, as follows:



1. The residents were invited to vote for or against a Baldons Neighbourhood Plan in a paper, delivered to each household, which described the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, its cost and its benefits (October 2015) We received 101 responses, 93 of which were in favour.

2. The views of all residents were sought in a Residents Consultation Paper distributed in February 2016. We received 140 responses, which are summarised in section 1.7.2 below. This consultation was followed by a public meeting in The Seven Stars public house (itself community owned) at which we presented an analysis of the responses received. This meeting was also attended by Charlotte Colyer of SODC.

3. A housing needs survey was conducted by Community First Oxfordshire by a questionnaire distributed to all households. A summary of the responses is presented in section 1.7.3 below.

4. A public meeting held as part of the Baldon Feast in August 2016, in which we called for potential building sites within the Baldons and exhibited:

- The results of the March consultation
- The results of the Housing Survey
- The draft policies by which housing development proposals will be evaluated
- The criteria by which potential building sites would be assessed

5. Public consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan from 20<sup>th</sup> August to 8<sup>th</sup> October 2017. For this consultation, the draft Plan was distributed to each household inviting comments. Towards the end of the 7 week consultation a public meeting was held to discuss the plan and to answer queries- over 100 residents attended this meeting ( 30% of the adult population) At the end of the consultation written comments were received from 34 residents.



*A view of the Baldon Feast (2015)*

### **1.6.2 Statutory Consultees – Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report**

The draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was produced in September 2016 and the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England, as statutory consultees, were invited to comment.

Neighbouring parish councils: Nuneham Courtenay, Garsington and Berinsfield were also invited to comment.

The following comments were received:

#### Natural England

- Baseline Evidence: reference to Agricultural Land Classification should be included
- Sustainability Issues and Challenges: this section should include the possibility of restoration and enhancement of biodiversity in The Baldons and the issues of public access to nature
- Sustainability Objectives: should include the objective of avoiding the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

#### Historic England

- Baseline Evidence: should include a review of The Baldons archaeological heritage identifying previous records of archaeological remains.

All the comments received from Nature England and Historic England have been addressed.

### **1.6.3 Statutory Consultees – The Draft Plan**

A list of statutory consultees was provided by SODC and these bodies were invited to comment on the draft Plan and all the accompanying documents by accessing the Baldons website. Comments were received from SODC, OCC, Natural England and Historic England.

Full details of these comments and our responses to them are presented in the Consultation Statement.

## **1.7 Surveys**

### **1.7.1 General**

Two surveys have been carried out:

1. A residents consultation paper, distributed to all Baldon Residents in February 2016, requesting residents views on a range of topics:
  - The extent of future development
  - The nature of future development
  - Infrastructure issues
  - Environmental protection
2. A Housing Needs survey, carried out by Community First Oxfordshire

Details of both surveys are provided in Appendix A and are summarised as follows:

### 1.7.2 Residents Consultation

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Response</b>
Population	80% respondents either accept or welcome some growth in The Baldons population over the next 10 years.
Housing Development	Most people would accept between 5 and 15 new houses in The Baldons.
Siting of new developments	A large majority of respondents favour infilling, either as single houses or small clusters of houses, over green field development.
Social Housing	90% of 135 responses were in favour of some social housing, with many supporting a local preference.
Design Guidelines	There was a significant majority in favour of having enhanced building design guidelines specifically for The Baldons.
Green Belt	A very large majority of responses were strongly in favour of the Green Belt which they saw as a protection against urban encroachment.

### 1.7.3 Housing Needs Survey

- 24% of respondents would like to downsize within The Baldons
- 23% of respondents either intend to move or would like to move within The Baldons during the next 5 years but are inhibited by the lack of suitable housing
- 74% of respondents would like future housing development to comprise:
  - Semi detached houses
  - Terraced houses
  - Affordable houses

## 2 The Baldons

### 2.1 An Overview of Our Villages

Comprehensive baseline information is presented in Appendix B. A summary of key points are as follows:

#### 2.1.1 Population and Housing

At the 2011 census the population of the Baldons was 458, of which 148 lived in the parish of Toot Baldon and 310 in that of Marsh Baldon.

The total number of houses was 176 of which 58 were in Toot and 118 in Marsh. Housing was heavily skewed towards the upper council tax bands.

### **2.1.2 Health and Education**

The population was healthy, with a smaller percentage of residents incapacitated compared with that in South Oxfordshire as a whole. There are no health facilities in The Baldons.

The Baldons are served by Marsh Baldon Primary School, situated on the north side of Marsh Baldon Green. The capacity of the school is 84, with 63 children enrolled (May 2017) of which about 30% of the children are from The Baldons and the remainder from neighbouring villages and south Oxford.

For secondary education, the Baldons are within the Wheatley Park School catchment, although the Oxford Academy is also close. At present both are served by school buses.

### **2.1.3 Community Life**

#### Churches

The ancient churches in both Marsh and Toot Baldon, both part of the Dorchester Team Ministry, remain active with services on alternate Sundays. Marsh Baldon has a ring of 5 bells which are rung regularly, with enthusiasm.

#### The Seven Stars

The Seven Stars in Marsh Baldon had a troubled recent history with frequent closure and changes of ownership and landlords. In 2013 the pub again came up for sale and a community society - The Baldons and Nuneham Community Society - was formed to purchase the pub and run it as a community venture. The Society has over 150 shareholders and the pub is now thriving as never before.



**March 2013 – the day the Seven Stars reopened under community ownership**

#### Baldon Feast

The Baldon Feast is held on Marsh Baldon Green annually on a Saturday towards the end of August, close to the feast day of St Lawrence, the patronal saint of Toot Baldon - another reminder of the antiquity of the bonds between the two villages.

### Baldon Events Committee

The Baldon Events Committee organises a range of social activities, the most prominent of which is a lavish annual bonfire night firework display on Marsh Baldon Green.

### Other clubs

Club activity in The Baldons ebbs and flows, with clubs devoted to cricket, gardening, wine and running. There are several book clubs and an occasional dramatic society.

## **2.2 History of the Baldons**

The history of the Baldons is presented in full in Appendix B.6, and is summarised as follows:

### **2.2.1 Origins**

*Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon, Baldon on the Green, Little Baldon, Big Baldon, Baldon-in-between*

This old rhyme is a reminder that there are a number of ancient settlements in the area known as the Baldons. Toot Baldon is probably the earliest settlement dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. The area was not inhabited in the Roman period, although the Dorchester – Bicester roman road passes through the area. The Anglo-Saxons liked to settle on high ground and reference can be found to “Bealda’s Hill”, while Toot is the Saxon word for a look-out. “Marsh” is thought to be a corruption of “De la Mare’s” an early Lord of the Manor. The Domesday Book refers to Baldedone and does not differentiate between the various hamlets, which shared a common field system with strip farming. It is possible that there were Anglo-Saxon chapels both at Toot and at Marsh Baldon.

### **2.2.2 Medieval Baldons**

By 1279 the land was mainly divided between 3 or 4 manors with a total of 124 taxpayers with 10 in Baldon St. Lawrence (now known as Baldon Row), 22 in Toot Baldon, 25 in Little Baldon and 67 in Marsh Baldon.

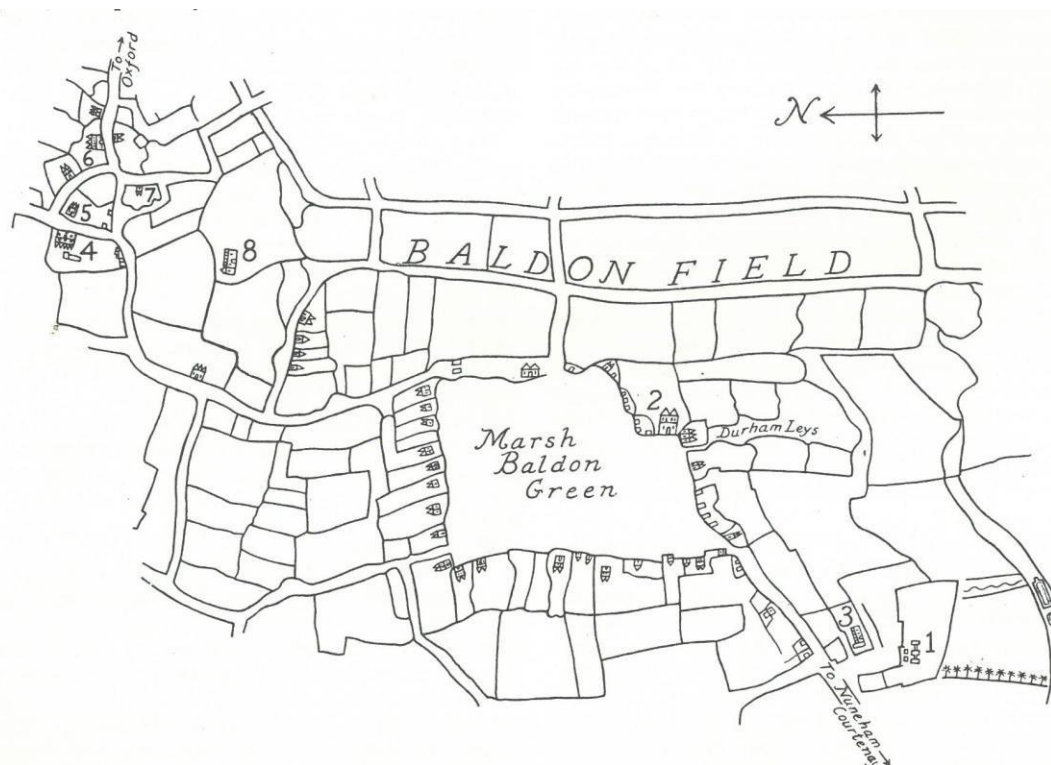
Enclosure of the land was the main cause of a decrease in population and by the 16th century much land had been enclosed. However, the common field system which was shared by all the hamlets continued on a 3 year rotation until the 18th century.

By the mid-sixteenth century a large part of four Domesday estates had been acquired by The Queen’s College. In Tudor times fellows and students used to withdraw to the college’s properties in the village when there was plague in Oxford. In 1519, for example, the whole college was in residence at Toot Baldon. It is likely that the manorial courts were held at Court House Farm.

### **2.2.3 Land Use**

Looking at the old maps (see Figure 2.1) it is remarkable how little the form of the old villages has actually changed over the last four hundred years. The old open fields finally disappeared with the Enclosure Act of 1836 but the 24-acre village green, which was specifically excluded from enclosure, is still carefully preserved and is perhaps rather tidier than it was when cows, pigs, sheep and horses were grazing on it. Many interesting old buildings remain and there are plenty of historical clues to be found on a walk around the villages.





**Figure 2.1: The 1730 Map of the Baldons**

### 2.2.4 Employment and population

The Baldons were self-supporting to a large extent: in the 16th, 17th and 18th century mention is made of a tailor, two butchers, a slaughter house, a currier, a maltster, a sawyer, a carpenter and more unusually, a bone-setter. In the latter half of the 19th century there was a blacksmith, a grocer, a baker, a butcher, a wheelwright and a beer-retailer. There were also 3 pubs.

The population in 1801 was 208 in Marsh Baldon and 223 in Toot Baldon. In 1901 the figures were 280 in Marsh Baldon and 228 in Toot Baldon. The 2001 census shows 289 in Marsh Baldon and 136 in Toot Baldon: remarkably little overall change in two hundred years.

### 2.2.5 Churches

Although both Churches have been altered over the centuries, Toot Baldon Church is essentially a good example of a small early thirteenth century church and Marsh Baldon Church is mainly fourteenth or early fifteenth century. The present north aisle at Marsh Baldon was built in 1890. At various times both the congregations and the buildings were neglected but both have had times when the energy and enthusiasm of an incumbent have restored order in the Parish. In 1954 the benefices of Toot and Marsh Baldon were united and patronage passed to The Queen's College which was already patron of Toot Baldon.

### 2.2.6 Schools

Marsh Baldon School was started as a result of a bequest by Elizabeth Lane, the Lady of Marsh Baldon Manor, in 1771 for the education of 6 poor boys and 6 poor girls. Other children could be educated at the expense of their parents. By 1866 the numbers had risen to 56 and the curriculum included reading, writing and arithmetic. By 1815 Toot Baldon also had a school which was enlarged in 1886 to cater for 60 children. It survived until 1920 when the managers closed it and the children were transferred to Marsh Baldon School.

## 3 Village Character Assessment

### 3.1 Introduction

#### 3.1.1 Authorship

The prime author of this Village Character Assessment (VCA) is a Chartered Architect, Peter J Cave AADipl RIBA, with 40 years in practice in London, New York, Wales & Oxford. Mr Cave is a member of the Advisory Board (see section 1.5 above) and a resident of the Baldons for over 30 years.

#### 3.1.2 Summary

The three settlements - Marsh Baldon, Toot Baldon and Little Baldon – are situated at 200 feet above sea level about 5 miles south of Oxford and half a mile to the east of Nuneham Courtenay which is on the A4074 (Oxford to Reading road). Remarkably, the current layout of building development remains recognisably similar to that which existed in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and that shown in Figure 2.1 above. The 24-acre Green is the 'geographical' heart of Marsh Baldon but there is little or no formalised structure to the layout of roads and buildings, no real centre and no main street. Although there has been development in the last 150 years, the form of settlement and the general character of the village have remained substantially unchanged.

The overall scale of residential development is modest with an open and spacious feel everywhere and an absence of enclosed or intimate public spaces. Conversely, there are abundant views into the open surrounding countryside. The landscape quality is enhanced by the absence of high, dominant or crowded buildings with the vernacular and built form being of a simple and understated character.



*View looking southwest from The Green: towards the Seven Stars & St Peter's*

Building in The Baldons has throughout its existence been random and disparate, with the surrounding countryside frequently breaking through the various sections of ribbon development. Some of the larger and more architecturally important buildings are in settings away from the principal routes through the village and the perceived built form, when passing through, is typically modest in scale and predominantly only one building deep. There are no dense clusters of housing, no housing estates, no high-rise and no large-scale development. This has resulted in a settlement form and village landscape of special character with many gaps between buildings offering a rich and varied heritage of vistas between the buildings to fields, woodland and open countryside, as well as towards important distant landscape features like Garsington, the Chiltern Hills and the Wittenham Clumps. This characteristic is apparent in all sections of The Baldons and is a critical element contributing to the special charm of these spread-out villages that together form The Baldons.



*Baldon House barns, stables with St Peter's beyond*



*Victorian decorative brick & tile cottage*

Most of the housing stock in The Baldons is owner-occupied but there are significant numbers of rented properties as well. The non-developed land in and around The Baldons consists of farms, estates and woodland with three landowners controlling the majority of that land. Queens College own several farms plus Marsh Baldon Green, with the other two owners being private individuals or families.

There are groups of significant Listed buildings in all sections of The Baldons together with many fine examples of other vernacular buildings in Toot Baldon and around Marsh Baldon Green and its settlement offshoots. Even where the buildings might not be of notable architectural merit, the scale and feel of the development is typically gentle, never overbearing or oppressive.

### **3.2 Building Types**

Apart from farm buildings, a few workshop units and the one new office building, the settlement areas largely comprise of residential properties, mostly single-family dwellings (some semi-detached). Modern farm sheds aside there are few large buildings, the biggest of which are Baldon House, Toot Manor, the two churches and their respective vicarages.





*Victorian terraced cottages, now extended*

Housing types in the area have ranged from 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-frame with stone, brick or render walling and thatched roofs, through stone houses & cottages, and then brick cottages with tiled roofs in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are a number of decoratively patterned brick houses and cottages built between the late Victorian period up to the 1930's and 1940's. Since the war, styles and building forms have been more varied (and include many farm building conversions) but recent development has remained compatible with the modest scale and open landscape character of the Baldons.



*Timber-framed thatched cottage*



*Timber-framed brick & tile cottages*



*Late Victorian brick & tile houses*



*Timber-framed brick & render & tiled house*

### 3.3 The Green

The Green at Marsh Baldon extends to 24 acres of common land with the 'right to roam'. It is owned by Queens College Oxford and is a major asset much used and enjoyed by both villagers and visitors. An annual fair and many village and school events take place there throughout the year, including cricket matches in the summer and bonfire night in November. It is in constant use for everyday walking and recreation. There are rights and bylaws governing usage and activity on the Green and no new development is allowed there.

From the Green there are many similar gaps into that countryside and one is always conscious of being in a very rural setting. Meandering west to east across the middle of the Green there is a willow-lined brook with some informal footbridges connecting paths from either side. From all sections of the Green picturesque views abound with the attractive fringe of houses around its edge and the fine countryside beyond. Marsh Baldon Green is a hugely valuable asset to The Baldons and its residents.



*South side of the Green: Parsonage Farm*



*North side of the Green: No 19 The Green*

### 3.4 Post 19<sup>th</sup> century development

#### 3.4.1 Toot and Marsh Baldon

Development since 1900 in Toot and Marsh Baldon includes the Wilmots area west of Toot Baldon, the buildings at Hillfield Farm and New Farm, post-war houses in the Croft, some new-build houses in a variety of locations including around Marsh Baldon Green, a number of conversions of redundant farm buildings, and the new office building in Baldon Lane. Of this post 1900 building, farm-building conversions can sometimes be seen behind other buildings: following the pattern of previous barns and sheds associated in those locations. However, the modern Rectory off Baldon Lane and Meadowbank behind No 34 The Green are isolated examples of 'backland' development and the overwhelming pattern throughout this period has been just one-building deep. This is a key characteristic of Marsh and Toot Baldon.

Unlike Nuneham Courtenay and Little Baldon, Toot and Marsh Baldon are accessed by a winding minor road prohibited to through traffic. The limited vehicular access helps to protect the neighbourhood from fast and busy commuter traffic. Consequently, these sections of the Baldons remain to a great extent tranquil and quiet.

Much of the housing development in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was in the form of infill and ribbon development extending eastwards and westwards out of Toot Baldon. From Marsh Baldon Green development 'arms' extend in three directions: (a) south-westwards along Baldon Lane towards Nuneham Courtenay; (b) north-westwards via the Croft; and (c) north-eastwards via Pebble Hill. There are several mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses located in 'gaps' around The Green and also dotted in amongst the listed historic houses in Baldon Row.





*School House*



*Toot Baldon Manor*



*The Mole*



*Glebe Cottage*

### **3.4.2 More isolated development**

To the west of (and removed from) Toot Baldon, there is a one-sided street of homes at Wilmots that was built as council housing but the houses are now owner-occupied. Immediately to the west of Wilmots lie Hillfield Farm and New Farm where there has been residential and workshop development in the last 40 years. Further down the road towards Baldon Row and Marsh Baldon there are a few more isolated 20<sup>th</sup> century homes on both sides of the road. There is also a small group of houses and cottages to the west of Baldon House in Baldon Lane that could be said to be somewhat detached from the main settlement areas.

### **3.4.3 Little Baldon**

The hamlet of Little Baldon is quite separate from other parts of the Baldons although it does connect to the Green at Marsh Baldon via several public footpaths. It lies about half a mile east of Golden Balls roundabout on the B4015 road towards Chislehampton and everything at Little Baldon is under a single-family ownership. Little Baldon retains a significantly rural feel but it does not follow the development pattern that is apparent in Toot and Marsh Baldon.

With the exception of one pair of Listed cottages, everything at Little Baldon - including the farmhouse, farm buildings and cottages - has been built since 1900. Some of the residential buildings and many of the older farm buildings at Little Baldon have now been converted: providing nine rented-out workshop or office units with a total of about 1500 m<sup>2</sup> (15,000 sq ft) of accommodation.



*General View of Little Baldon*



*Typical thatched cottage in the corner of the Green with 'gap' to landscape beyond*

### **3.5 Settlement form**

Despite being the means by which the present settlement has so far evolved, there is a concern that further development extending the current ribbon 'arms' of housing would reduce the open feeling and tend to join up the existing village hamlets, thereby harming the character of the open settlement pattern and pastoral landscape as it exists today. There are many nearby Oxfordshire villages that have suffered greatly from that sort of unchecked, sprawling ribbon development, examples of which would include Steventon near Didcot and also Wootton Boars Hill, which now more or less joins Abingdon to Cumnor.

Similarly, the gaps between buildings – and the views that they afford - would seem to be important to the happy symbiotic relationship between the scattered rural development settlement and ever present surrounding countryside. If many of those gaps were to be filled by future development then the whole feel of the villages would become more enclosed and less connected with the open and rural environment.

## 3.6 Heritage Assessment

### 3.6.1 Introduction

The heritage assets - both listed buildings and heritage groupings described below - make a major contribution to the character of the Baldons and it is very important that no harm to those assets should result from any development proposals.

In addition to the heritage value of the built form of The Baldons, it is the unusual and special landscape character and value in The Baldons that is ever-present and all-important. This factor has been established elsewhere in this Village Character Assessment (VCA) and it is supported by the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) carried out by external consultants

### 3.6.2 Listed buildings and monuments

There are 55 listed buildings and monuments in the Baldons of which 22 are in Toot Baldon, 32 in Marsh Baldon, and 1 in Little Baldon.

Four of the listed buildings are grade II\*:

- St Lawrence's church Toot Baldon
- Toot Baldon Manor
- St Peter's church Marsh Baldon
- Baldon House (Marsh Baldon)

All the other 51 buildings and monuments are grade II. In Toot Baldon these comprise 13 houses, 1 barn and 6 other heritage features. In Marsh they comprise 20 houses, 4 barns and 6 other heritage features. The listed building in Little Baldon is a house.

The 12 heritage features include walls and gates at Toot Manor; tombs, memorials and a cross at St Lawrence's Church; tombs and memorials at St Peter's Church; and a memorial, coffin, dovecote, walled garden and causeway at Baldon House.

The English Heritage listing reference numbers and the location of all the listed buildings are given in Table 3.1 and shown in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below. There are however several buildings situated outside the two conservation areas. The formal listing descriptions can be found at the following website: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/> and then by entering the relevant village name. It should be noted that listing 1048055 for Wantills is wrongly located on the Historic England map, where it is shown as being in Baldon Lane west of Baldon House. It is in fact opposite St Peter's and near the Seven Stars pub. The correct location of this building is shown in Figure 3.2 below.



**Table 3.1: Listed Buildings and Monuments**

	Listing:	Listed Building:		Listing:	Listed Building:
		<b>Toot Baldon:</b>			
1	1047999	Manor House Garden Wall	28	1193224	11 The Green
2	1047998	The Manor House 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> century	29	1193192	Queens College Cottage
3	1048000	Manor House Pair of Gate Piers (north)	30	1048064	37 The Green
4	1285931	Manor House Gate Piers (south)	31	1193201	38 & 39 The Green
5	1193978	Manor House Granary	32	1048065	Stuart House 18 <sup>th</sup> century
6	1047997	Court House 16 <sup>th</sup> century	33	1193207	Leys Cottage
7	1285927	The Crown Public House	34	1048066	Orchard Cottage
8	1368730	Barn Court 17 <sup>th</sup> century	35	1368726	46 The Green
9	1047995	4 Toot Baldon	36	1193220	47 The Green
10	1285919	5 Toot Baldon & Pump	37	1048067	48 The Green
11	1193940	1 & 3 Toot Baldon, incl Outbuildings	38	1368727	Willoughbys
12	1193957	St Lawrence's Church 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup> C	39	1193225	6 The Green
13	1047996	St Lawrence's Church – 3 Chest Tombs	40	1048068	Glebe Cottage
14	1193964	St Lawrence's Church Yeat Memorial	41	1368722	Gateways
15	1368731	St Lawrence's Church Cross	42	1048055	Wantills
16	1193990	31 Baldon Row	43	1048056	St Peter's Church 14 <sup>th</sup> 15 <sup>th</sup> C
17	1048002	29 Baldon Row	44	1368723	St Peter's - Gihon Memorial & Railings
18	1193989	Nos 27 & 28 Baldon Row	45	1048057	St Peter's Church - Pair of Chest Tombs
19	1048001	Purlin House	46	1048059	Baldon House – Stables 18 <sup>th</sup> century
20	1048003	Yew Tree Cottage	47	1366113	Baldon House - Barn & Stable Range
21	1368732	Thurfield Cottage	48	1368725	Baldon Ho: – Elizabeth Lane Memorial
22	1193991	Hunter's Gap	49	1048058	Baldon Ho: E & W 16 <sup>th</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> C
		<b>Marsh Baldon:</b>	50	1366109	Court & Baldon Cottages, Outbuildings
23	1048061	Fairoak	51	1368724	Baldon House – Dovecote
24	1048062	Parsonage Farmhouse 17 <sup>th</sup> & 19 <sup>th</sup> C	52	1193161	Baldon House Walled Garden
25	1193178	Parsonage Farm Barns	53	1048060	Baldon House - Stone Coffin
26	1193186	The School House	54	1286272	Baldon House - Causeway
27	1048063	18 & 19 The Green			<b>Little Baldon:</b>
			55	1368721	Nos 1 & 2 Dairy Cottages

**Note:** the numbering in the first columns is only for the purposes of identifying the listed buildings on the various maps. The second column shows the Heritage Listing number.

### 3.6.3 Archaeological Assets

There is a scheduled monument (site of Roman kilns near Golden Balls roundabout, National Grid Reference: SU 56249 97785) but this is distant to any development sites An Archaeological Assessment of the parishes and village plan area is included in the Scoping Report.

### 3.6.4 Heritage Groupings - Non designated sites

As noted elsewhere in the **VCA**, there is no obvious centre to the Baldons and historically important buildings are widely dispersed over the two villages. There are, however, particular areas where listed buildings and notable vernacular buildings are grouped in a form that can be said to best characterise the built form of the Baldons. These significant 'heritage groupings' include:

Toot Baldon (A): the lane running north from the Crown (now Mole) Inn: this important grouping includes Court House, Toot Manor and its outbuildings and a group of non-designated former farm buildings recently converted to residential use.



**HERITAGE ASSET GROUP**

**A**

Toot Baldon: The Mole Inn & the lane to north:  
The Manor, Manor Farm Barns & Court House

The area of Baldon House (B) together with its listed barns and St Peter's Church, which includes Wantills and the Gateways (both listed) as well as the Old Rectory which is not designated, forms an important heritage grouping.



**HERITAGE ASSET GROUP**

**B**

Baldon House & St Peter's Church:  
The Severn Stars corner,  
Wanthills & Gateways



North side of the Green at Marsh Baldon (C), from No 11 in the northwest corner to Parsonage Farm and its associated barns in the east. This group includes several (non-listed) matching Victorian cottages with notable diaper brickwork detailing.



The southwest corner of the Green (D: clockwise from No 37 and Stuart House in the east to Willoughbys in the west) a grouping which includes 11 listed buildings as well as the non-listed Seven Stars pub. These buildings form a picturesque grouping of buildings when seen from anywhere in the middle of the Green, with the ever-present pastoral countryside forming the landscape backdrop that is so characteristic of the Baldons.



### 3.6.5 Condition of Heritage Assets

The two churches, both grade II\*, have undergone recent restoration in which the recommendations of their latest respective quinquennial inspections were implemented in full. All the other listed buildings and monuments (with the exception of those associated with the churches) are in private ownership and their condition is generally very good.

### 3.7 Unsuitable development

There are examples of what might be described as ‘inappropriate development’ in The Baldons, mainly associated with the post-war period described in the “Post 19<sup>th</sup> C Development” section above. Those areas of The Baldons form part of the existing settlement and mostly fit the built form character insofar as scale, massing and design-modesty are concerned. However, and in order to enhance and preserve the heritage character of the villages, further development in that spreading and random pattern should not be allowed under Neighbourhood Plan policies. Furthermore, the Design Guide is intended to assist developers with regard to appropriate materials, form and design in The Baldons. In order to enhance and conserve heritage assets and areas of heritage value, appropriate care should be taken with regard to any potential development.

### 3.8 Conservation Areas in Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon

There are 55 listed buildings in the Baldons and two Conservation Areas as shown on the following three illustrations: Most of the listed buildings are located within the Conservation Areas of Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon. However, there are several listed buildings that lie scattered outside those areas. Therefore some of those isolated listed buildings might not appear on Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below. Note that there is no currently adopted Local Authority Character Appraisal or Management Plan for the two Conservation Areas. The two Conservation Areas were both designated on the 11th December 1984.

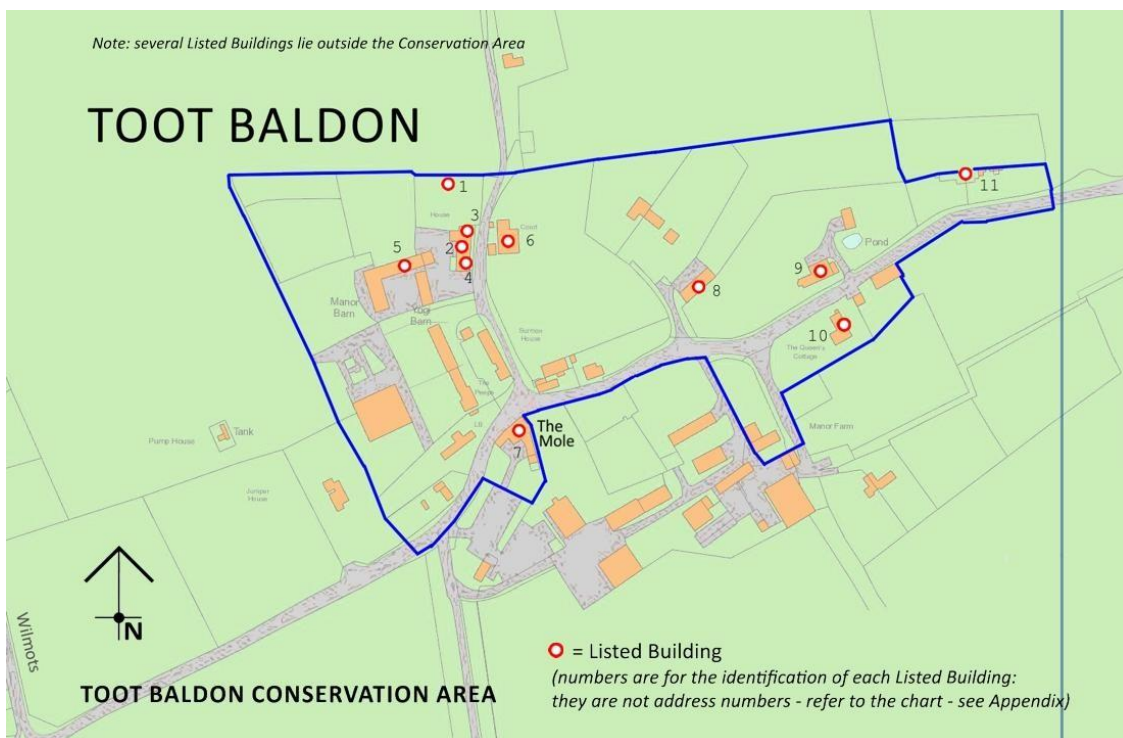


Figure 3.1 Toot Baldon Conservation Area





Figure 3.2 Marsh Baldon Conservation Area

### 3.9 Open Spaces and Gaps

In consideration of the open nature of the settlement pattern in The Baldons, a clear understanding of the meaning and terminology of various open spaces and gaps would be useful. The purpose of this section is therefore to clarify that terminology and to consider the relevance to development potential of the various types of 'gap' we see in the villages.

**Marsh Baldon Green** is common land with the right to roam. It cannot be built on.

**Open Countryside** is open countryside and agricultural land. It is part of the Green Belt and lies outside and distinct from the established settlement areas of The Baldons. The BNP will not allow development in Open Green Space land. Development proposals in the open countryside should be necessary or suitable for a countryside location and consistent with national Green Belt policies.

**Brownfield Land and Sites** - previously developed land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the development land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure

**Backland Development** - development of "land-locked" sites behind existing buildings, such as rear gardens and private open space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages. The BNP discourages backland development.

**Infill Development** - the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.

**Acceptable Infill Development** is acceptable Infill Development

**Unacceptable Infill Development** is unacceptable infill development.

The areas shaded as dark green along the principal routes through the village settlement areas, presented in Figure 3.3, are areas of open countryside that should be preserved between the various settlements.

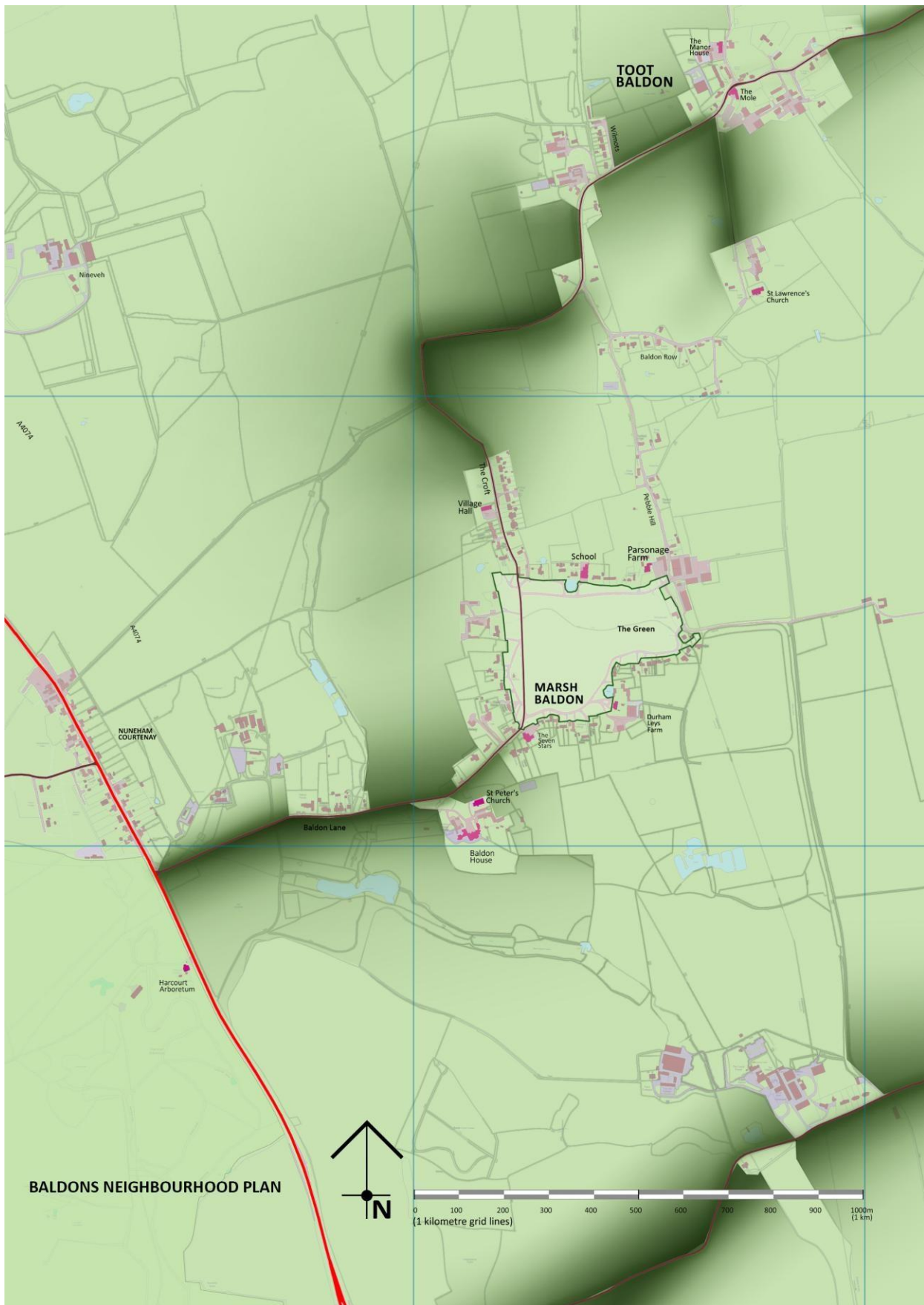


Figure 3.3 Gaps Plan – location of open green spaces in the Baldons



### 3.10 Village Landscape

Village landscape assets include Baldon House woods and ponds; Durham Leys ponds; the tree-lined avenue from Toot to St Lawrence's Church; the linking pathways around Baldon Row and Tinny Lane; the Roman Road (Ashen Copse) and Black Barns bridleways; Hop Garden Copse and the "Avenue" bridleway between Nuneham Courtenay and the Croft; and many other important rights of way & footpaths through all areas of parishes' surrounding countryside and woodland.

Generally throughout The Baldons, enclosures – walls, fences, gates and hedges – are of an open quality and are not overly shrouding or dominant. A reasonable level of visual transparency – rather than closing off – is undoubtedly beneficial to the overall enjoyment of The Baldons' connections with the countryside.



*Lych gate at St Lawrence's Church, Toot Baldon; views towards the Chilterns beyond*

### 3.11 The Baldons Design Guide

The key elements which contribute to the character of the villages are the

- Diversity of building styles
- Modest scale of buildings
- Openness and synthesis of buildings with surrounding countryside

These characteristics are well worth preserving and this will be achieved by the implementation of the Baldons Design Guide, which covers the following topics:

- General Introduction
- Siting
- Extensions, Conversions and Replacement
- Materials
- Scale
- Grouping
- Design Concept
- Detailed Design

The Baldons Design Guide is presented in Appendix C.

## 4 Landscape Character Summary

### 4.1 Introduction

A key quality that defines many rural settlements is the relationship between village settlement pattern and surrounding landscape. Both the settlement pattern and the landscape are particular to the Baldons and help to define its sense of place and its special character. Its landscape is a complex interrelationship between the scale and type of agricultural pattern, land use, field parcel sizes, variation in topography, the rich pattern of tree and hedgerow: all help to define the physical characteristics of the Baldons and make it special, unique. In particular the way in which landscape and open space typically flow around and between settlements - and the ever-present sense within the village of the connectivity to its rural landscape - is a defining quality of place.

The understanding of landscape is enriched by the visual experience of views across, through and over the immediate countryside, from the roads within the village and from well used footpaths. Many of these views and visual connections are well documented and much loved. The most significant of these views are identified on plan in Figure 4.1.

It is in order to retain and conserve the important qualities of landscape within and around the village that future development is sought to be contained within the existing settlement pattern. The plan therefore seeks to avoid the incursion of new development into the countryside gaps between existing settlement areas, and seeks to avoid any extension or further accretions to the ribbon development along the village road. A plan illustrating the existing gaps between settlements, where development will be excluded, is shown at figure 3.3. Gap sites *within* the existing settlement which were nominated for the evaluation of their suitability as development sites are described in section 6.

In support of the assessment of possible future development a Landscape Character Assessment has been carried out by a firm of landscape specialists, Hankinson Duckett Associates, whose report is presented in Appendix D. The following series of extracts provides an edited summary of the Assessment and its conclusions.

### 4.2 Broad landscape character and context

The Neighbourhood Plan Area is associated with a low ridge of limestone hills to the south of Oxford which overlook the low clay vales to the north, east and south. The high ground within the Study Area runs from Nineveh Farm in the west, to Toot Baldon in the east. The land slopes away sharply to the north towards Oxford, and more gently to the south and east, where it drains to Baldon Brook in the east. Toot Baldon is located on the high ground to the north-east of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, whereas Marsh Baldon is located on the flat ridge top and gentle southern slopes, with Little Baldon to the south of the Neighbourhood Plan Area at the foot of the hill.

The landscape surrounding the villages is large scale and predominantly arable. The internal fieldscapes of the villages and their immediate surroundings are fields in pasture, frequently horse paddocks, with a high degree of enclosure. These fields in pasture are smaller scale than the arable fields, which are large, open and expansive.

The settlement pattern of the Baldons is unusual in that it is extremely low density, consisting of loose linear arrangements of housing, located along lanes or tracks and often positioned around a central field or open space. The depth of housing is generally only one plot deep. A network of public rights of way connects the villages and includes the two long distance routes: 'Oxford Greenbelt Way', which connects Nuneham Courtenay to Garsington through Marsh and Toot Baldon, and 'Shakespeare's Way', which runs south from Oxford, through the study area and then east to Chiselhampton and Stadhampton.

Toot Baldon lies to the north of the Neighbourhood Plan Area and is centred on a winding lane, which enters the village from the B480 to the north-east, runs west through the village, before turning west and then south, connecting to Marsh Baldon. The village is formed of two loose aggregations of housing and farmsteads and includes the Mole public house. The north-eastern part of the village is located on high ground, which slopes away sharply to the north and east and properties and public rights of way associated with this part of the village often allow long panoramic views to Oxford in the north and Garsington to the north-east. This area is the core of the village and is almost entirely covered by Toot Baldon Conservation Area. To the west lies a second settlement area, which includes the line of semi-detached housing, called Wilmots and two farmsteads, New Farm and Hillfield Farm. The two settlement areas are separated by an open field in pasture, overlooked by dwellings on both sides.

To the south, the settlement pattern disperses, but remains loosely associated with a large, central arable field, which forms a spatial connection between all areas of settlement within the village, with Toot Baldon Conservation Area to the north-east of the field, Wilmots and the buildings at New Farm to the north-west, occasional dwellings along the lane to the west, Baldon Row to the south and St Lawrence Church to the south-east. There is a strong association between the village and the church, accessed by an avenue of trees, which follows the eastern boundary of the central field. The landscape is much flatter to the south of the village and is enclosed by hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Views from footpaths remain open, however they are limited to the field boundaries which surround them. In contrast the lane which runs through the village is highly enclosed.

Marsh Baldon is centred on the Green, a large area of informal open space and grass pitches, surrounded on all sides by housing, which front onto the space. A ditch line with associated trees runs across The Green east-west. The Seven Stars public house is located to the south-west of the Green and the local school lies to the north-west. From the Green, the village extends north in two linear developments along The Croft and the bridleway to the north-east of the Green. Small scale fields in pasture lie between the two ribbons of housing. The village also extends south-west along Baldon Lane, which terminates at the A4074, where it connects to Nuneham Courtney. Public rights of way connect internal spaces within the village, to the wider landscape. Views from the rights of way are generally open, but are curtailed by the hedgerows and tree belts which form field boundaries. Some long views are available from the footpaths to the east of the village, which look out over the low lying landscape to the east. The lanes and tracks connecting housing within the village, with the notable exception of those surrounding the Green, are enclosed by dwellings and high hedgerows and have a high level of intimacy.

Little Baldon is located further to the south, along the B4015 and consists of a line of semi-detached dwellings associated with a farmstead. Many of the farm buildings have now been converted to business use. This hamlet is not directly connected to Marsh Baldon by road, however there are footpaths and a bridleway connecting the two settlements. Woodland and tree belts physically and visually separate Little Baldon from Marsh Baldon to the north. The hamlet is located within the low lying landscape to the south of the high ground associated with Toot Baldon, Marsh Baldon and Nuneham Park. While the landscape surrounding the village is large scale and open, the relatively flat topography and structure of woodlands and tree belts, contains long distance views.

### **4.3 Key Views**

One of the key characteristics of The Baldons is the differentiation between the internal agricultural land and open space, which has been absorbed into the settlement pattern and the wider landscape. The difference is often marked by a smaller scale pastoral landscape and an interrelationship with the built form of the villages, such that the internal spaces have an association with the villages and form an integral part of their structure, as noted in section 3.10 above. In contrast the wider landscape is open and exposed. The interface between the village landscape and the wider landscape to the north and east is emphasised by a dramatic change in topography, which affords long distance views over the rural landscape from the edges of the villages. Locations of the key views are shown in Figure 4.1 and in the Local Designations Map (HDA2) of Appendix D, which also shows the location of footpaths. A schedule and photographs of the key views are detailed in Appendix E.

### **4.4 The Baldons – Key Elements**

- Settlement pattern: low density loose linear arrangements of housing, generally only one plot deep. The exception is Little Baldon, which is a line of semi-detached dwellings associated with a farmstead.
- Heritage: There is a considerable amount of historic interest within the settlements as part of the built form. The built heritage is reflected in the local vernacular and the materials used in construction.
- Location and character: each village has a character that is intrinsically linked to topography and land use. Toot Baldon has long views from properties and footpaths and is visually prominent within views from land to the north and east. Marsh Baldon is formed by a series of linear developments arranged around a central field or open space. The Green is a key component to the character of the village. There is a strong connection with the wider rural landscape. Little Baldon is located on lower ground, but retains strong visual links with the surrounding rural landscape. The settlements are linked by a series of lanes and enclosed bridleways, which maintain the sense of separation between the hamlets.
- Views: the open nature of the landscape surrounding the settlements, combined with changes in topography, create important views from the village edges out to the surrounding landscape.

## **4.5 Landscape Character Areas**

The Landscape Assessment divides the landscape of the Plan Area into areas of common landscape character, listing the key landscape characteristics visual sensitivities of each area both in terms of character and visibility. In its assessment it highlights areas of the Plan Area which are sensitive and where future development would be inappropriate.

In the Assessment the Landscape Character Study describes and evaluates the characteristics of each area against a set of criteria: character area name, policies and designations attaching to each, the local landscape character, its landscape and visual sensitivity and the landscape value of each. The study also analyses the status, in landscape terms, of those development sites which appear in any of the character areas. Based upon field assessment and analysis, the report goes on to provide development guidelines based upon the landscape character assessment.

## **4.6 Landscape guidelines and future development in the NDP area**

The assessment defines landscape capacity as the extent to which the landscape is able to accommodate change without significant effects on landscape character, reflecting the inherent sensitivity and value of the landscape. A landscape of high sensitivity or value therefore has a low landscape capacity. The assessment concludes that the entire Neighbourhood Plan Area has a low capacity for development, and that a number of small sites is more suitable for the Neighbourhood Plan Area than one site that would provide for the entire allocation.

The study conclusions also note that development should focus on conserving and enhancing the vernacular character of the existing settlements; loose linear grouping of settlement, one dwelling deep. New ribbon development linking areas of settlement should be avoided and the open spaces between areas of settlement should be maintained and protected. Development should be focussed within existing settlement areas, which include: Marsh Baldon Settlement Area (M1), Toot Baldon Settlement Area (T1), Wilmots and New Farm Settlement Area (T4) and, to a lesser extent, Baldon Row Settlement Area (M3) and Little Baldon Settlement Area (L1).

The Neighbourhood Development Plan proposes a number of potential development sites and relative merits of each site are discussed within the Character Area descriptions. Of the 25 sites put forward, 17 lie within existing settlement areas. The capacity of these sites in landscape terms relates to the effect that development within each site would have on the overall settlement pattern and character of the village. In selecting suitable sites for development, the report advises that the final development designations will need to balance the landscape capacity of proposed sites with other factors including access, services etc., which may affect the viability of particular sites.



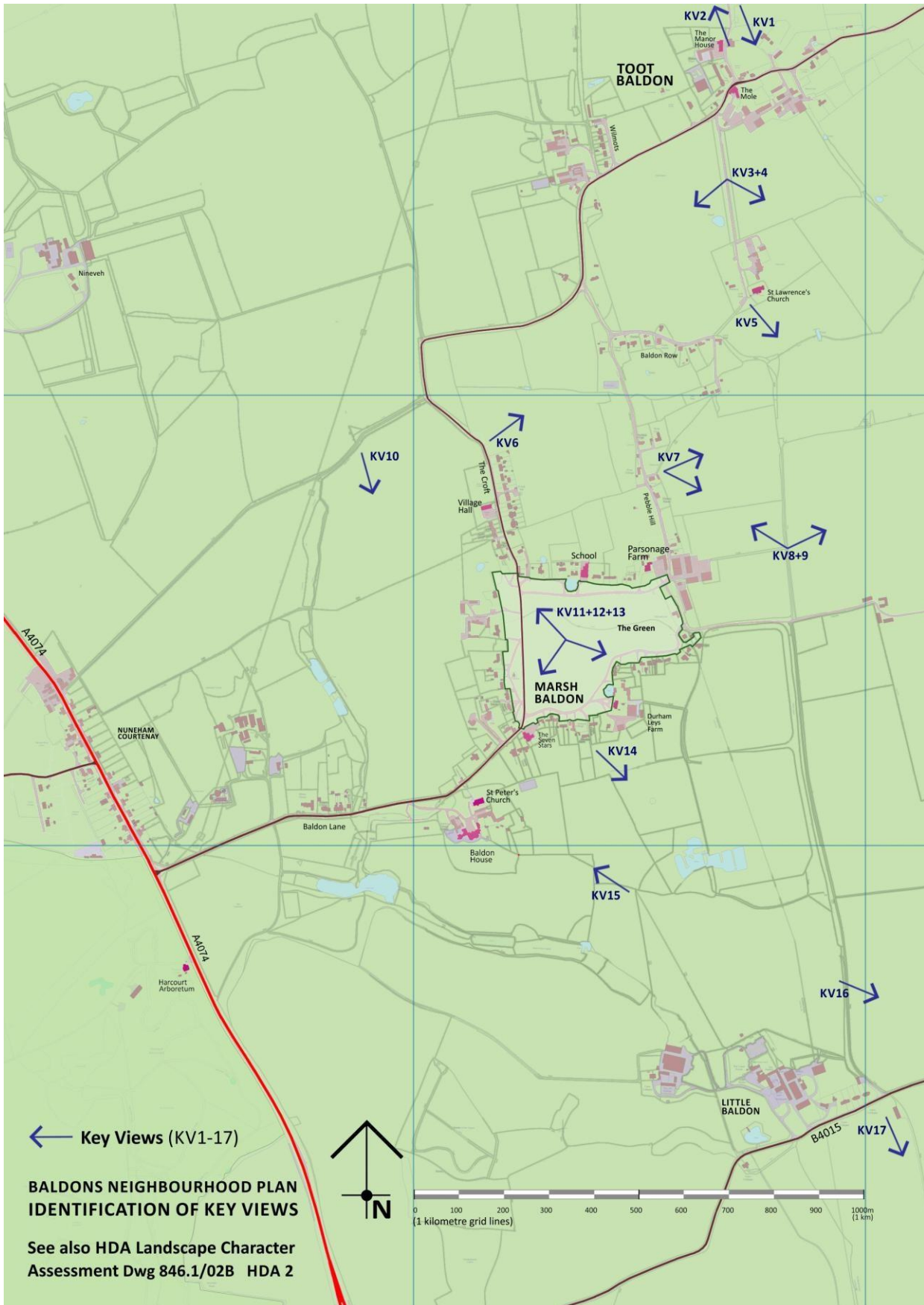


Figure 4.1 Key Views

## 5 The Baldons NP Vision, Objectives and Strategies

### 5.1 Vision

The salient characteristics of The Baldons are identified as a small but cohesive community in a rural setting, rich in its heritage and landscape quality and with active social institutions including pub, church and school.

The Baldons is already an outstanding place to live. Our collective vision is that its character should be conserved and even improved for the present and future generations of its inhabitants by means of the following positive actions by the community:

- Conserve and enhance our heritage and the rural character of the villages
- Enable the sustainable growth of our population through the modest growth of housing numbers in the villages
- Encourage a mix of size, tenure and style of housing to enable diversity in the population
- Improve and support the provision of community facilities, infrastructure and small scale business
- Maintain, nurture and enhance our environmental assets particularly the Green and the intimate setting of the villages in the surrounding countryside.

### 5.2 Sustainability Issues and Challenges

The issues and challenges were developed and are fully detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal and are summarised in this section.

Based on the policy context, baseline evidence, and an analysis of our strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (SWOT analysis), the steering group identified the key sustainability issues and problems that the NP could address in the pursuit of sustainable development. These are summarised as follows:

#### 5.2.1 Environmental

Evidence presented in the Scoping Report shows that environmental sustainability issues are of paramount concern, in particular:

- The importance of the sustainability and traditional appearance of future housing
- the preservation of the landscape character of the villages
- The need to restore and enhance biodiversity, recognising the vulnerability of biodiversity in general and woodland in particular to the effects of climate change. This vulnerability must not be exacerbated by any negative impacts attendant on future building development
- The Baldons is privileged to possess a rich cultural and natural heritage which also must not be jeopardised by insensitive development. The conservation areas and in particular the unique tranquillity of Marsh Baldon Green must be preserved. The Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS) sets out the features of “Wooded Estatelands” and “Lowland Village Farmlands” which make up the Baldons and. provides guidelines regarding the conservation of such areas: (<http://owls.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/OWLS/Home/>)”
- The need to conserve the benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land

The Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report identified the vulnerability of biodiversity to the effects of Climate Change, indicating a need to prioritise green Infrastructure. This could, for example, be in the form of enhanced footpath provision or new hedgerows, ponds or trees. Advice on appropriate Green Infrastructure can be obtained from Natural England.

### **5.2.2 Social**

- Baldons identity: the community consultation identified a strong desire to maintain the identity of Toot and Marsh Baldons as separate villages, both separate from Oxford City expansion.
- Quality of design of new houses to enhance rather than detract from the village character
- Social facilities: The Baldons have no shop, no public transport and no off street public parking: facilities should be supported and where possible enhanced.
- Traffic and road safety: new development must ease rather than exacerbate present conditions.
- Access: improve people's access to nature and the countryside.
- Drainage: new development must not overload the existing drainage system.
- Affordable Housing: The Questionnaire responses and Public Meeting demonstrated that the community would like to see some affordable housing in the Baldons. Our ambition therefore, through and beyond this Plan, is to provide more opportunities for people living in the villages to stay by supporting the provision of houses of the type needed and that they can afford. We intend to investigate community owned housing as one of the means of making this happen.

### **5.2.3 Economic**

It is clear that a thriving rural economy is highly desirable for a sustainable community. As is typical in Oxfordshire, homeworking is an important sector in the local economy: the arrival of superfast broadband and changes to business practice means that many more people are conducting a proportion of their business from home. This ranges from professionals undertaking occasional home working through to consultants who might administer their entire business from the home computer and new enterprises that start up using the Internet and can be operated from anywhere.

Traditional economic activity in The Baldons is principally farming – there are three farms and several smallholdings. In addition to agriculture the other businesses comprise the two pubs and one office.

## **5.3 Sustainability Objectives**

The objectives of The Baldons Neighbourhood Plan are based on sustainability objectives set out in the Sustainability Appraisal, which in turn were based on those adopted in the Local Plan. The Baldons NDP objectives are:

### **5.3.1 Approach to development**

All development must be conceived, designed and built to respect and if possible enhance the landscape and village character of The Baldons.



### **5.3.2 Housing**

Encourage the construction of approximately 15 new houses over the currency of the Plan to satisfy the sustainable growth of villages and as required by the latest evidence of housing need forming part of the evidence base of the Emerging Local Plan.

- Spread new housing development through the two villages in the Plan area.
- Encourage new housing development to be sited within the built-up area so that they minimise the adverse landscape and enhance rather than detract from the village character.
- Encourage the development of 2 or 3 bedroom houses built either singly or as semidetached or as terraced houses as such houses are in critically short supply in the Baldons.
- Ensure that new development complements and enhances the village character by conforming to the Baldons Building Design Guide.

### **5.3.3 Community facilities**

Adequate community facilities are essential to support sustainable development. With no shop or public transport it is all the more important that the existing facilities are supported and if possible improved. Future opportunities and initiatives for improvement of community facilities are:

1. Plans already drawn up to provide St Peters Church in Marsh Baldon with toilets and basic cooking and meeting facilities so as to encourage the wider use of the church for concerts, exhibitions, lectures etc
2. The possible improvement, extension or rebuilding of the Village Hall to create a more attractive hall for a variety of uses.

### **5.3.4 Infrastructure**

Similarly adequate infrastructure is a requirement for sustainable development. The Baldons Neighbourhood Plan's objectives are:

1. To improve the provision of parking at various locations, most critically for Marsh Baldon Primary School. This could increase the attractiveness of the school to parents of prospective pupils living outside The Baldons (on whom the viability of the school depends) and would help preserve and protect the perimeter of the Green.
2. To support the ongoing proposal to supply main drainage to Toot Baldon and the future need to increase the capacity of the Marsh Baldon sewerage system.
3. To support villagers in the maintenance of the un-adopted roads, especially the perimeter road around the Green.
4. To continue to maintain the existing footpaths and create new paths identified in both this Plan and in the Parish Plan.
5. To create and enhance habitats.

### **5.3.5 Business**

A thriving local economy is a key factor in a sustainable community and every effort should be made to support and foster local businesses. In the case of The Baldons this can be done by supporting homeworking by encouraging the provision of adequate internet services and liaison between Baldon homeworkers.

## 6 Development Policies

### 6.1 General

The Policies set out in this chapter are necessary for us to realise our vision for the future of the Baldons. Policy 1 deals with the overall approach to the conception, design and realisation of future developments. It links this approach with the general precepts set out in the Village Character and the Landscape Character Assessments, in order that the proposed development preserves the existing character and landscape for the enjoyment of future generations.

#### POLICY 1 – GENERAL PRINCIPLES

New development must conform to the following general principles:

- The development should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of The Baldons and its landscape setting, as detailed in the Village Character Assessment (chapter 3) and the Landscape Assessment ( Appendix D)
- The development should preserve or enhance the important and valuable aspects of key views either of or from the villages, as identified and detailed in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix D) and Figure 4.1
- The development should complement, enhance and reinforce local distinctiveness as described in Chapter 3 of this Plan
- Development should not have a significant adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining residents whether by reason of loss of light, privacy or overbearing impact.
- Development should result in a biodiversity net gain for the parish through design including the provision of green infrastructure. The design of the development should enhance habitats for protected and notable species, i.e. bats, birds and pond dwelling animals and should be in accordance with the OWLS landscape and biodiversity guidelines as described in section 5.2.1
- Development should protect priority habitats and priority woodland habitats in particular
- Development should result in the conservation and enhancement of the villages character and the historic environment .
- Development within the conservation areas or their settings shall be of a sensitive design that conserves or enhances their special interest, character and appearance.

## 6.2 Housing Growth

### 6.2.1 Growth Strategy

The growth strategy is based on:

1. The latest evidence of housing need in the district forming part of the evidence base of the Emerging Local Plan, which requires small villages such as The Baldons to accommodate a 5% to 10% increase in housing numbers. In the case of the Baldons this would be between 9 and 17 houses.
2. The Plan area being situated in the green belt: In terms of new housing development, only infill, replacement dwellings or re-development of brownfield land that does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt is considered appropriate.
3. The response to Consultation Paper: 80% of respondents either accept or welcome some population growth over the currency of this Plan. Furthermore 85% of respondents would accept between 5 and 15 new houses.
4. The Housing Needs Survey: 24% of respondents would like to downsize in The Baldons but are unable to do so for lack of suitable houses. This is the basis for Policy 4.

### 6.2.2 Siting of newhouses

A preliminary to the selection of suitable sites, alternative development strategies were considered:

1. Building in one or possibly two development sites outside the present built up area.
2. Building in a number of infill sites within the present built up area.

The analysis of these options is presented in the Sustainability Appraisal, in which the first was rejected and the second selected.

The site selection process, also detailed in the Sustainability Appraisal, comprised the following steps:

- A call for potential sites made at the public consultation held as part of the Baldon Feast in August 2016: this provided the basis for establishing a long list of 25 sites, as shown in Figure 6.1
- Establishing criteria by which the longlisted sites would be assessed: these are set out in Table 6.1 below
- A comparative appraisal of the long-listed sites, the object of which was to identify the preferred sites which could accommodate approximately 15 dwellings. The preferred sites situated in Toot and Marsh Baldon and are shown in Figures 6.2 and 6.3 below

These preferred sites best meet the criteria listed in Table 6.1 and all generally enhance the character of the villages in a way that other assessed sites, and in particular backland or ribbon development sites would not.



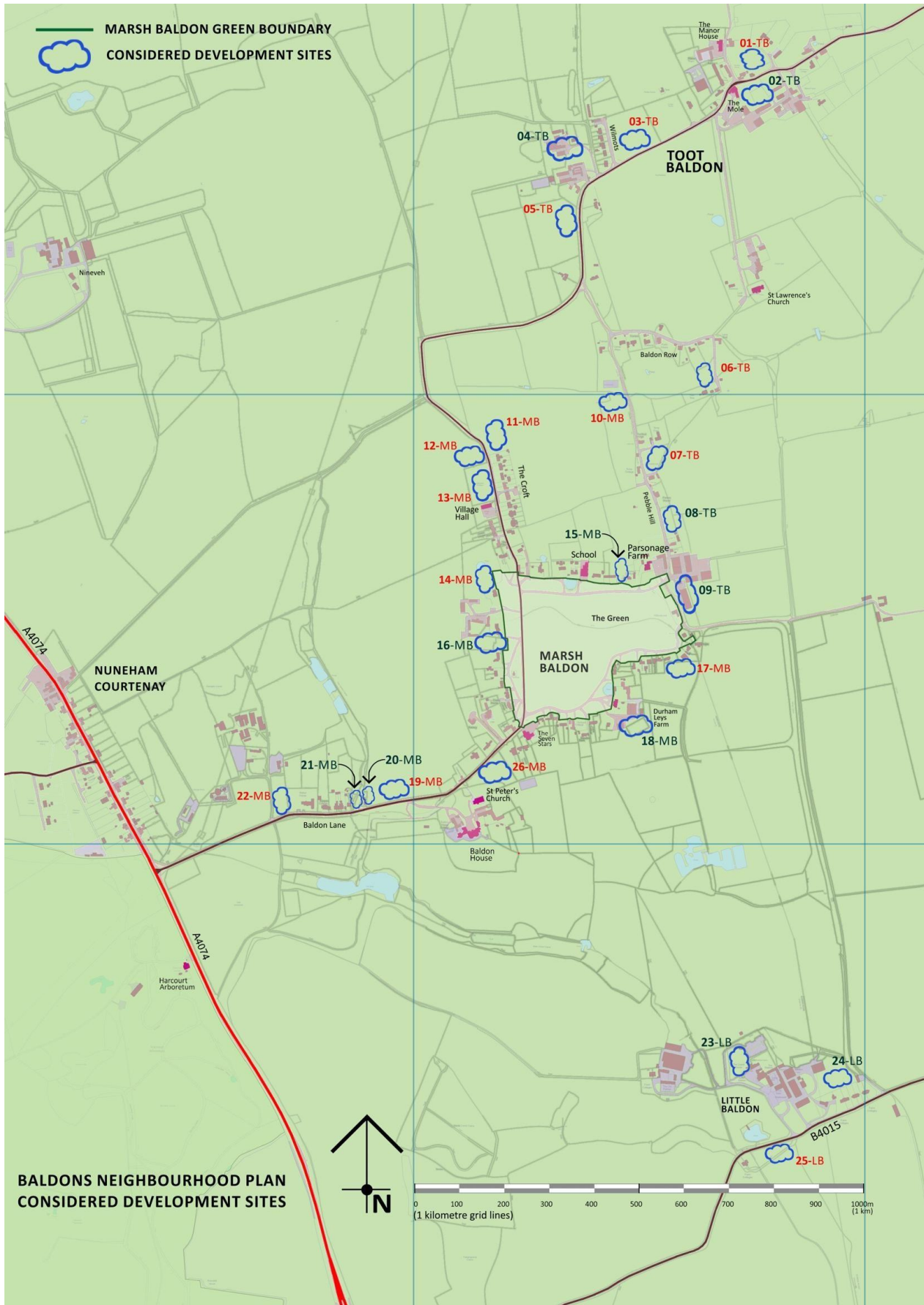


Figure 6.1: Assessed Sites in The Baldons

**Table 6.1 Site Appraisal Criteria**

<p>Social Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The impact of a development on its immediate neighbours</li><li>- The potential of a development to benefit the village community</li><li>- The impact of a development on existing buildings</li></ul> <p>Environmental Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Visual impact of the development on views of and from the villages</li><li>- Impact of the development on village character</li><li>- Impact on biodiversity</li><li>- Impact on heritage</li></ul> <p>Economic Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Impact of a development on jobs and economic production</li></ul>
---

### 6.2.3 Development Policy for Housing Growth

<p><b>POLICY 2 - NEW HOUSES</b></p> <p>Approximately 15 new houses should be constructed in the Baldons during the Plan period 2011 – 2033</p> <p>Residential development for single dwellings or clusters of 1-3 dwellings in Toot Baldon or clusters of not more than 6 houses in Marsh Baldon in the preferred sites shown in Figures 6.2–6.3 and listed below will be supported.</p> <p>02-TB 04-TB 08- TB 09- TB 15- MB 16- MB 18-MB 20- MB 21- MB</p> <p>Any other infill development proposed will need to comply with the infill policies set out for the wider district in the Development Plan.</p>
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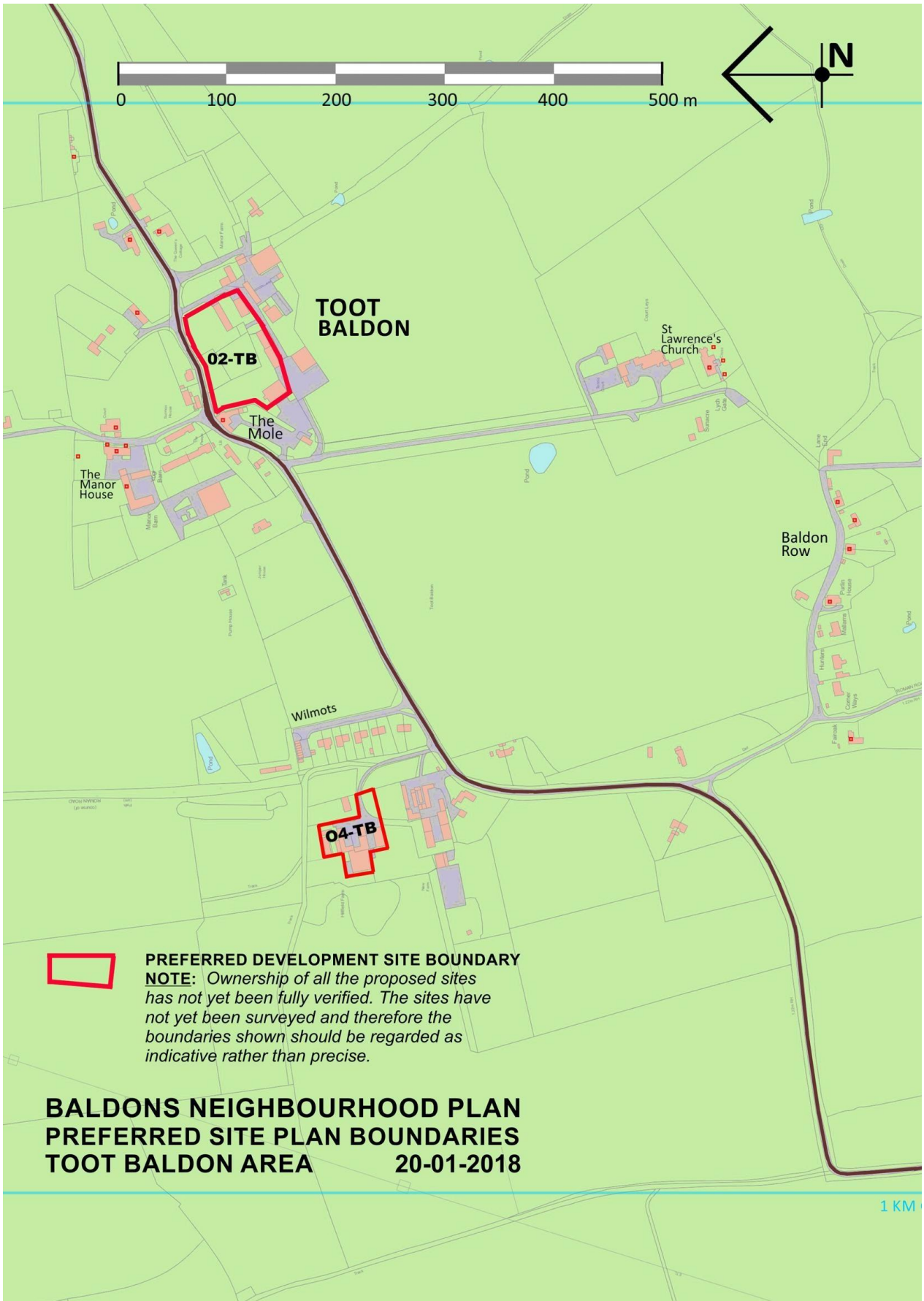


Figure 6.2 Toot Baldon Preferred Sites



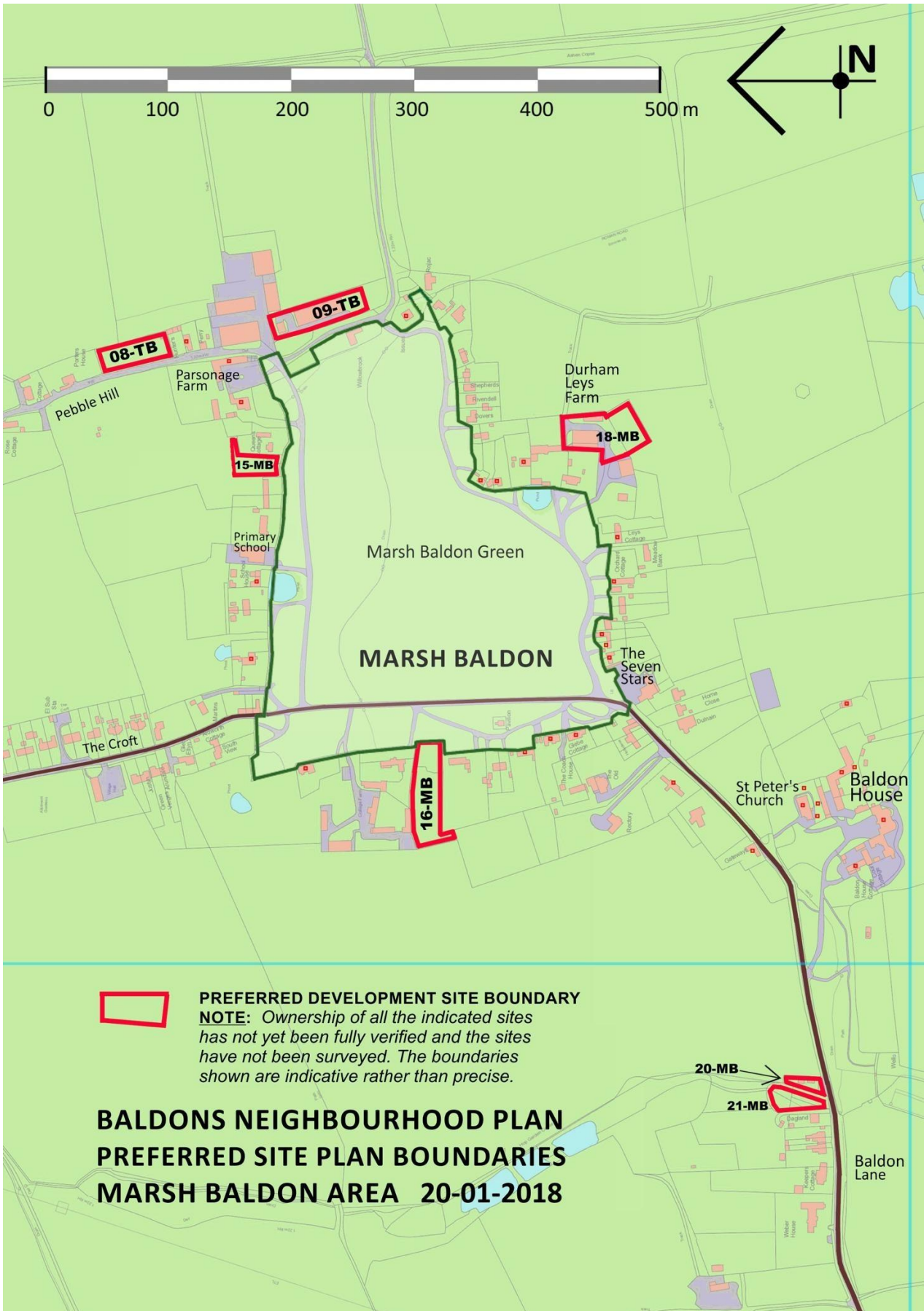


Figure 6.3 Marsh Baldon Preferred Sites

## 6.3 Local Gaps

### 6.3.1 Justification

This Policy seeks to preserve the overall landscape character of The Baldons and in particular, the essential rural character of the land between adjacent settlements within The Baldons and the individuality of these settlements. These Gaps between individual settlements within The Baldons have been identified as:

- Between Marsh Baldon and Nuneham Courtenay
- Between Marsh Baldon and Toot Baldon
- Between New Farm and Potland cottages
- Between Wilmots and Juniper House on the north side of the road and the equivalent space on the south side

The locations of these gaps are shown on the maps in Figure 3.3

### 6.3.2 Policy

#### POLICY 3 – LOCAL GAPS

New development or the re-use of rural buildings should preserve and where possible enhance:

- the landscape character of the Baldons;
- the existing settlement pattern;
- significant internal open spaces;
- the green and leafy character of the villages;
- the gaps between the settlements;

As detailed in the Landscape Character Assessment (Appendix D), proposals for the re-use of rural buildings, agricultural or forestry related development and minor extensions to dwellings will be supported where they:

- meet the requirements of development in the Green Belt;
- retain the valued qualities of the separation between settlements; and
- retain the individual identities of settlements.

## 6.4 Housing Mix

### 6.4.1 Introduction

The data presented in the Baseline data (Figure B.2, Appendix B) shows that the present housing mix is heavily skewed to high Council Tax Bands – in other words a high proportion of Baldons housing comprises large and expensive houses. The responses to both the Consultation Paper and the Housing Needs Survey show that future housing development should focus on small houses.

### 6.4.2 Housing Mix Policy

#### POLICY 4 – HOUSING MIX

Proposals for new residential development will be supported where the mix of dwelling types:

- is appropriate to the site in terms of character and size of dwelling;
- addresses the district-wide shortage of smaller houses and;
- considers the needs of current and future households in The Baldons.

Proposals that recognise the need for smaller dwellings and comprise single houses, terraced cottages or groups of small detached or semi-detached houses, with a maximum of 3 bedrooms are strongly encouraged.

## 6.5 Building Design

### 6.5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, Village Character Assessment, it was concluded that the key elements which contribute to the character of the villages are the:

- Diversity of building styles
- Modest scale of buildings
- Openness and synthesis of buildings with surrounding countryside

These characteristics will be preserved and enhanced by the implementation of the Baldons Design Guide, presented in Appendix C. In their responses to the questionnaire the majority of respondents agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan should include a building guide specific to the Baldons.

### 6.5.2 Building Design Policy

#### POLICY 5 - DESIGN GUIDE

Planning permission will only be granted where the proposals are designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development as set out in The Baldon Design Guide, shown in Appendix C, and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.<sup>1</sup>

## 6.6 Marsh Baldon Green

### 6.6.1 Introduction

Marsh Baldon Green is a 24 acre expanse of common land bordered by a single row of houses. Until the mid 1900's the Green was grazed but since that time it is cut for hay annually and otherwise is used for informal recreation and for hosting the Baldon Feast and an annual bonfire night event. Its importance in the community life of the villages is described in paragraph 2.1.3: its historic significance is discussed in

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/conservation-and-design/design/design-guide>

paragraphs 2.2.3 and Figure 2.1 while its contribution to village and landscape character are dealt with in paragraph 3.3. The boundary of the Green is shown in Figure 6.3

### **6.6.2 Local Green Space Designation**

This Plan designates Marsh Baldon Green as a Local Green Space as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out a number of criteria that must be met for such a designation. Marsh Baldon Green fully meets all the criteria:

- The Green is as old as the village itself and is specifically identified on the 1730 village map shown in Figure 2.1. It will certainly survive beyond the life of this Plan.
- The Green is in the centre of the community it serves, both Marsh Baldon, which surrounds the Green, but also that of Toot Baldon.
- It is clearly special to the local community: indeed it is fundamental to the Baldons character. As possibly the largest village green in England, it provides a haven of tranquillity and beauty. It is ecologically important as a wildflower meadow that has never been ploughed: it is just cut for hay once a year. It is also well used and much loved, by local residents and visitors alike, for cricket and informal recreation, as the perfect setting for the Seven Stars pub and for larger scale public events such as the Baldon Feast and bonfire night fireworks.

No other land suitable for Local Green Space Designation has been identified.

### **6.6.3 Policy**

**POLICY 6 - MARSH BALDON GREEN**  
The Baldons Neighbourhood Plan designates Marsh Baldon Green (shown in Figure 6.3) as a Local Green Space.  
Proposals for development on Marsh Baldon Green that would undermine its essential character openness and permanence will be resisted unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated.

## **6.7 Community Facilities**

### **6.7.1 Introduction**

It is clear that for development to be sustainable community facilities must be maintained and if possible improved. The main community facilities in the Baldons other than the two pubs (which are thriving) are the churches and the village hall. The bodies responsible for these have plans for their developments which include modifications to provide a toilet and basic cooking facilities and a meeting room for St Peters Church and renewal and extension to the Village Hall. It is the duty of the Parish Council to support these initiatives.

### **6.7.2 Policy**

**POLICY 7- COMMUNITY FACILITIES**  
The Baldons Parish Council will support the improvement, extension and renewal of existing community facilities provided that these developments conform to the policies of the Development Plan. Such facilities include:

- St Peters and St Lawrences churches
- The Village Hall
- Marsh Baldon Primary School
- The two village pubs – The Seven Stars (Marsh) and The Mole (Toot)



## 6.8 Infrastructure

### 6.8.1 Introduction

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will require some developments to contribute to the cost of the provision, improvement, replacement, operation and maintenance of local infrastructure. 25% of the charge levied on the development in the Baldons will be made available to the Parish Council to spend on Baldons infrastructure once the Plan is made. At present, only 15% of the CIL is made available to the Parish Council.

### 6.8.2 Infrastructure priorities

The present infrastructure priorities, based on the response to the questionnaire (Appendix A1) are:

1. Toot Baldon sewerage
2. Parking on the Marsh Baldon Green perimeter
3. Maintenance of un- adopted roads
4. Provision of new and maintenance of existing footpaths
5. Biodiversity protecting and enhancing projects

In addition, as mentioned in section 5.2.1, the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report identified the vulnerability of biodiversity to the effects of Climate Change, indicating a need to prioritise Green Infrastructure. This could, for example, be in the form of enhanced footpath provision or new hedgerows, ponds or trees. Advice on appropriate Green Infrastructure can be obtained from Natural England.

### 6.8.3 Infrastructure Policy

#### **POLICY 8- INFRASTRUCTURE**

Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from development will be used for the benefit of the community, including the priority projects listed in paragraph 6.8.2.

Infrastructure needs, and their priority level, will be reviewed each year by the Baldons Parish Council.

Development proposals which result in the need for off-site water supply and/or sewerage/wastewater infrastructure upgrades will be subject to phasing conditions where necessary to ensure that occupancy does not outpace delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.

## 6.9 Business

### 6.9.1 Introduction

It is clear that it is important to encourage and assist local employment opportunities in order to help build a sustainable community. The main sources of employment in the Baldons are probably home working, the pubs and agriculture.

### 6.9.2 Business Policy

#### **POLICY 9 – BUSINESS**

##### **Enhancement of Employment Facilities**

Planning proposals that generate new employment opportunities, support existing ones or provide opportunities for home working and that are within the built-up areas of the villages will be supported

subject to the following criteria:

- The proposals do not severely and negatively impact on traffic.
- The proposal respects the built character and landscape character of the villages.
- The proposal does not cause an unacceptable impact on the amenities of nearby residential properties; and
- The proposal provides adequate parking, servicing and access arrangements in accordance with the most recently published standards of Oxfordshire County Council <sup>2</sup>

Proposals located outside the built-up form of the village will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location and they are consistent with development plan policies.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://m.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/transport-development-control-tdc#Why>



*View from St Lawrence's churchyard, Toot Baldon: looking southeast, towards the Chiltern Hills*

## **Appendix C: The Baldons Design Guide**



## **Appendix D: Landscape Character Assessment**

## **Appendix E: Key Views**

