

# Membury Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2031



Final Submission Version 4.07

February 2018

## Without which and whom ..

In 2013 Membury Parish Council applied for the whole parish [see parish map on page 51 and back cover] to be designated as a "Neighbourhood" under the Localism Act. This was granted by East Devon District Council. In 2014 the Parish Council then joined with nine other councils in East Devon and the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (BHAONB) to work together to each prepare their own Neighbourhood Plan.

This Plan has then been four years in the making. Many people have contributed and deserve special thanks. First among them are the parishioners who have regularly actively supported and contributed to the formation of the plan. They have freely given of their views, attended meetings, consultations, exhibitions and responded to all our questionnaires. Thank you for your support. Genuinely, without it then the Steering Group would have lost heart long before reaching this stage.

Next, I must mention our Steering Group. Everyone has contributed and, importantly, we have been able to disagree and argue through all the feedback and the interpretation of it. Particularly I would like to mention Beryl Griffin, who passed away as we reached our final drafts. Somehow she was able to listen to our ramblings, take shorthand notes and prepare Minutes which made us all look half-way intelligent! Thank you Beryl. You are and will be missed by us all. The other full time members were (in alphabetical order) Mark Burrough, Samantha Dare, Jason Hawkes, Heather Pearse, Jeremy Wallace, John Watkins and Nick Yool. We were supported for part of the time by Bryan Drew and Mike Bell. At the start, Nick and I were Parish Councillors and were assured that there would be minimal work required. Gradually we were sucked in to producing this Plan (following on from the earlier Parish Plan and Design Statement). All I can say to the others is that at that time we genuinely did think this would be quick and, hopefully, easy! Sorry!

When we started this exercise Harry Tennant was Chairman of the Parish Council. Sadly he passed away in September 2016 as we finalised our plan. Even after retiring as Chair he gave us his support and studiously proof-read all bar the final draft. Thank you for your support, Harry. Debbie Burrough took over from Harry and has been equally supportive.

Our village school and the pupils have been involved in all that we have done - thank you to the staff and we hope that our plan will satisfy the pupils as they grow up. Behind the scenes our MP, Neil Parish, has been very supportive while Claire Rodway and Tim Spurway both at EDDC have always willingly helped where they can. Claire must be getting fed up with Membury producing parish plans as she is always our first port of call! When I get stuck with software way beyond my knowledge base, my first point of reference is usually Keith Rockett of Axminster Printers. Everyone there has put up with our strange requests, thanks.

A special thanks to all the distributors of the parish magazine *The Membury Mercury* as they literally went the extra mile for us and ensured that every household received copies of our various questionnaires.

Finally, it is amazing how many errors are within a written text - especially mine. The whole team have done their best to keep me on the straight and narrow with what was said and written, especially Nick Yool who, if possible, has read more of this plan in its various drafts than me. We then created our own team of junior pedants - Janet Andrew and Harry Tennant (with advice from Mike Capper) who proof-read it all. Thank you very much.

This has really been a team effort and, as is usual in this amazing parish, everyone has chipped in with their bit. Thank you all very much!

*Alex Tasker*

*[Steering Group Chairman]*

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# Vision, Aims and Objectives

**Membury** is a parish in east Devon on the Devon/Dorset/Somerset border [see page 4, *Our Neighbourhood - What and Where it is* for more specific details and back cover for parish map].

**Our Vision** for the parish represents our view of what we would like the parish to be like in the future by the time that the Plan reaches its end date in 2031. The Vision is a representation of the Aims of our Plan, the things we would like to achieve, which have been derived from local community consultation and other evidence.

## Our Vision Statement

*To maintain and enhance the unique character and sense of community within Membury parish whilst permitting small scale sustainable growth that is in line with the needs and wishes of the community.*

## Our Aims

The Aims of our Plan have been set following extensive community consultation and discussion. They are set out under a set of topic areas. These topics are:-

- Natural Environment
- Built and Historic Environment
- Housing and Population
- Community Facilities and Services
- Managing Flood Risk
- Transport and Access
- Economy and Employment
- Energy and Low Carbon

## Our Objectives and Policies

Our Objectives (how we are going to achieve the Aims) are set out in each topic section in the Plan. It is from these Objectives that our Policies specific to each topic have been developed.

## Community Actions and Projects

It became apparent during our consultations that there were items and actions of significant interest to the community which were outside the scope or remit of a Neighbourhood Plan but should not be lost. These have been collated under a single numerical sequence as Community Actions and Projects [CA].

# Our Neighbourhood – where and what it is

Membury is a rural parish nestled in the heart of the protected landscape of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in East Devon, close to the county of Dorset and adjoining South Somerset. There is a map of the parish on the back cover of this Plan.



*A celebration BBQ at the Meeting Place*

The parish lies some 3.5 miles (5.5km) NW from the nearest town (Axminster, Devon) and 6.5 miles (10.5km) south-west of Chard, Somerset. The parish is some 4½ miles (7.5 km) long (N to S) and is bordered by Somerset (to the North) and within 1½ miles (2.5km) of Dorset (to the East).

Membury is a rural parish of scattered farms, dating back to Anglo-Saxon times. There are some 500 inhabitants, 400 electors, 247 properties<sup>1)</sup> constituting the parish which consists of a main village, Membury, (with about half the total number of properties) and the hamlets of Furley, Longbridge, Rock and Webble Green - all relatively close to and supporting the village amenities. It was mentioned in

the Domesday Book, when there were just 7 taxable properties. It has not only survived but evolved through the Black Death 1348/9 (which halved the local population - the headcount not recovering for some 300 years), the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and Judge Jeffreys Bloody Assizes trials, two World Wars, changes in rulers and governments over the centuries. It still remains a close-knit community with the village of Membury at its heart. At the village centre are the Toddler, Pre-school and Primary school [part of Acorn Multi Academy Trust], Village Hall [with kitchen which provides school lunches, Harvest Festival lunches and evening community dinners], St. John Baptist C of E church and a licensed PO/shop (with a "Meeting Place", a covered and open-air café area and library, providing coffee, wines, snacks and special catered evenings. It forms a natural meeting place for locals.) - and some 11 clubs and societies mostly created and succoured under the auspices of the Membury MerryMakers.

The main village nestles in the valley below Membury Castle, an ancient British entrenchment comprised of local stone and earth, standing some 660ft (200m) above sea level.

Between the hamlets there is very little in-filling other than the occasional farm - which means that there are uncluttered views across the parish with rare intrusions on the skyline. The history and style of these developments has created the outward sense of what constitutes our parish and the human and wildlife communication between them has formed and maintained our network of lanes and tracks.

The parish has managed to evolve and survive over the centuries and the consistent feedback is that people wish to maintain both the environment and the ability to continue to evolve, embracing the changes presented by technology and its consequential impacts.



**Oak Apple Day (parade 2012)**

*The raising of an oak bough to the top of the church tower has been a Membury tradition since 1660*

<sup>1</sup> Reference ACRE/CCD Rural profile for Membury Parish Council p29 (data taken from 2011 Census)

## An Overview of our Plan

Feedback from our public consultations was consistent and overwhelming; there was a desire to:-

- protect the current views, natural environment, ecology, tranquillity and dark skies
- control the siting, design and visual impact of new build and modifications to ensure that it is sympathetic to the character of the area
- allow the parish to continue to evolve through some level of new development and provision of lower cost housing thus improving parish self-sufficiency and longevity
- to prevent any new development, or an aggregation of new developments, to be larger than 6 units in Membury village or 3 units in any named hamlet to avoid spoiling the existing character of the community
- control & reduce flood risks especially in Membury village and Rock hamlet

There was a strong feeling that the parish was an entity which needed to be supported and as such had created and wished to continue its own degree of sustainability. In particular there was a desire to measure the parish as a whole and not be broken down into micro-sections; hence hamlets were as important as the village in sustaining the school and church and shop and local entertainment and were not to be measured as stand-alone communities.

There was also considerable interest expressed in local heritage sites and their protection, local facilities, new employment, the network of lanes, tracks and footpaths and some response to low carbon energy schemes.

Our Plan has attempted to bring all these interests together in a cohesive and integrated manner.

### **A typical view of the parish**

looking south-west from Bewley Down towards Membury village  
*and showing the openness of the countryside with occasional small hamlets*



# Natural Environment

Following extensive consultation with our community, we have agreed that the issues of most importance to us are those relating to our outstanding natural environment. Therefore, the Aims and Objectives that we have developed for our Plan relating to the natural environment and set out below are **our priorities** which should be given the highest consideration within the context of the other policies in this Plan.

Aims	Objectives
1. Protect and enhance the natural environment, including the distinctive landscape and ecology.	1a) Conserve and enhance the existing beauty of the parish by encouraging the planting of native trees and hedges that strengthen local landscape character along with the preservation of the existing Devon banks.
2. Protect the tranquillity of the environment and maintain the dark skies.	2a) Resist any development or road scheme likely to have an adverse effect on tranquillity or dark skies and seek ways to reduce any existing impact.

## Introduction

The parish is connected by a maze of narrow sunken lanes derived from original trackways and consists, in the main, of a steeply undulating patchwork of fields with small hamlets of low density housing. Other than the occasional farmstead there is little development between hamlets. The lanes are usually single track with passing places, lined by Devon raised banks. The area is liberally spread with native trees, some stands and copses. Both domestic and agricultural boundaries are mainly stone walls, hedges and banks freely interspersed with indigenous/native trees. These boundaries form interlinking biodiverse corridors.

There is an extremely well supported range of clubs (badminton to bridge, pantomime to local history) meeting in the village hall and/or the Meeting Place.

These distinctive qualities of the parish are characteristics highly valued by the people who live here and is one of the reasons that we choose to do so. This applies both to those of us who have moved into the parish and those who have grown up here and stayed (or moved away for a time and then returned). The well documented characteristics and the value of our natural environment as an asset to people, wildlife and biodiversity has been supported by the responses to our Neighbourhood Plan local consultation and community questionnaire.



## Conserving & Enhancing the Natural Beauty of our Parish

### Background, Reasoning and Policy NE1

We have already identified the importance of the high quality of the landscape and of the biodiversity in the parish as part of that landscape, to both the people who live here and

the wildlife which inhabits the natural environment. It is critical, therefore, that our natural environment is retained, conserved and enhanced where necessary now and in the future.

While there are other policies at national and district levels which afford some protection of our natural environment, there are a number of locally specific issues which we deem of sufficient importance to the community to require additional policy protection and guidance. At the present time there are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) [Furley Chalk Pit and Quarry Fields meadows] and other wildlife protected sites within the parish. We are also conscious that while the approved AONB Management Plan provides principles which should be applied to the natural environment in Membury, they do not have statutory weight in the decision making process even though they should be considered as a "material consideration" when planning proposals are considered by the local planning authority.

We feel a strong sense of need for our Plan to reinforce adequately some of the over-arching principles of protection for the environment to give us both the certainty that such policy coverage will remain and also to ensure that our Plan represents fully the weight of the issues raised by our community. In doing so it can fulfil its Aims and Objectives without relying solely on other policies set out elsewhere. Our Aims and Objectives, identified as important by the community, also show synergy with many of the agreed AONB Management Plan principles and policies.

We are clear that it is not the role of the Neighbourhood Plan to prevent development from taking place. However, we are equally clear that any development which is proposed within the parish, as part of the AONB, requires special consideration to ensure that its impact does not have adverse or negative impacts on our valued natural environment. We therefore require development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have any adverse impact on the existing state of the natural environment.

Our concern about potential adverse impact (and therefore our policy) extends to two specific issues, raised as particularly important by the community during consultation and supported by other evidence: a desire to see the existing countryside structure protected and promote the planting and re-stocking with native species; and the need to protect our traditional trees and ancient hedge banks and hedgerows.

Our preference is for appropriate development to be below the skyline and to be designed and located to fit within the landscape without having adverse impacts on its surroundings and the natural and built character of the area within which the proposal is located. In some cases, it may be acceptable for appropriate landscaping to play a role to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the setting of the proposal and where it will contribute to enhancing local character. Where the use of planting is considered to be an appropriate part of the proposal, native species of plants should be used.

#### Hedgerows and boundaries.

The network of lanes around the parish is an important part of its historic character. The lanes are now a mix of metalled roads and unmetalled tracks, the latter forming part of the access routes around the hamlets. Their character is defined by the low level of vehicle traffic, the lack of inappropriate signage, the mature/ancient mixed traditional indigenous species hedgerows on Devon banks and a profusion of wild flowers growing in the banks and verges providing a natural habitat for animals. All this gives a balance between nature and man which forms an intrinsic part of our parish and is identified as such by responses to the consultations.

There is a considerable concern about damage to wild flowers and hedgerows by oversized and carelessly driven vehicles. Further loss of hedges would not only have an adverse effect upon the landscape but also upon surface water flow and retention. However, being part of a farming community, it is recognised that it may be necessary for farmers and their contractors to use larger equipment to get greater efficiency, hence the occasional need to increase gateway sizes.

Devon hedges (commonly referred to as Devon Banks) are a common feature of the landscape in Membury parish. They are usually formed of an earth bank which is faced with either stone or turf and is often topped with bushes or shrubs often very old, biodiverse and very attractive. They play an important role as stock-proof barriers, shelters for livestock and crops, and encouraging growth of our native flora and fauna, in turn promoting habitat for insects, birds and wildlife growth. Our farming community and other local landowners have a key role in maintaining the integrity of these important features. The successful conservation of these hedges is critical to maintaining the special character of our natural, farmed and historic landscape.

The community values its footpaths and woodland as being of high importance to residents, with the majority also stating that Local Orchards and Trees require specific protection. Our landscape has the benefit of some specimen trees, stands and copses. We have a number of old, small orchards with mature trees that are particularly important because they provide both a link to our past and a variety of old fruit species that are no longer being planted. They, too, often provide regular favoured habitats and food for birds and animals and their continuity makes them particularly important.

## Policy NE1 - conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of our parish

- 1) Development proposals will only be supported where
  - a) they have demonstrated that any adverse impacts on the natural environment (landscape and biodiversity) have been avoided, and
  - b) they enhance the natural environment where there is the opportunity to do so.
- 2) Where mitigating measures are unavoidably required for development to be acceptable within its landscape setting, appropriate landscaping should be employed that is compatible with the local landscape character. Such measures should include the use of native species of trees and hedges (e.g. any of the ancient fruit trees, native trees [oak, ash, beech, field maple and hazel] plus hawthorn, blackthorn, holly, juniper, wild privet, dog rose and wild cherry).
- 3) Proposals for development\* which unavoidably affect traditional Devon hedges will only be supported where they have demonstrated that options have been assessed and, as a result, have proposed the least damaging option (to the hedgerow/bank, setting in the landscape, biodiversity and habitats).
- 4) There is a presumption of conservation of any existing natural features, i.e. orchards, trees, hedgerows, boundaries [even where they are not afforded specific protection by tree preservation orders or through being in a protected area (AONB), or as curtilage to a designated listed building] in any new development or redevelopment to both protect and enhance the existing character of the parish. Any removal must be justified in the planning application and new or replacements must be of traditional single or mixed species, e.g. any of the ancient fruit trees, native trees (oak, ash, beech, field maple and hazel) plus hawthorn and/or blackthorn, holly, juniper, wild privet, dog rose and wild cherry.

*\* For the avoidance of doubt, in this context, the definition of "development" includes changes to access to the highway where planning permission is required and in such cases the Devon County Council Highways Protocol for Protected Landscapes should be applied.*

# Preserving Tranquillity and Our Dark Skies

## Background, Reasoning and Policy NE2

We have already identified the importance of the tranquillity of our parish in relation to the characteristics of the natural environment and landscape. Much of the coverage in policy terms which relates to preserving the tranquillity of our environment is contained within AONB Management Plan guidance (which is advisory and not statutory). The adopted Local Plan has no policies specifically referencing or considering the implications of potential change to the tranquillity of our parish. National planning policy allows for planning policies and decisions to aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which “have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason”.<sup>[2]</sup> It is a locally specific issue to our parish and therefore, given its importance to the community, merits some reinforcement through policy in our Plan.

There is a significant body of evidence which demonstrates the presence of dark skies above the parish and their value. Protecting them as an asset through the control of light pollution is important locally. Even small changes to lighting can have an impact when added together cumulatively. National planning policy states that “By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.”<sup>[3]</sup> The Local Plan sets out a policy which identifies light pollution as District-wide criteria for consideration of development proposals. The focus of this policy is on local amenity and surroundings rather than on the impact on dark skies per se. However, the AONB Management Plan sets out an objective which relates, very clearly, to the tranquillity and value stating that “The tranquillity of the Blackdown Hills AONB is conserved and enhanced by restricting or reducing noise and light pollution and major developments within or affecting the AONB.”<sup>[4]</sup>

Given this context, the importance to the community, and its identification in the AONB Management Plan objectives and policies as an important issue, we have introduced a policy which specifically refers to maintaining tranquillity and maintaining our dark skies through the control of light pollution. We have also introduced a community action to encourage the use of the AONB guidance to householders and organisations given that changing small scale lighting and adding household lighting fixtures is not normally subject to requirements for planning permission.

### Policy NE2 – Preserving Tranquillity and Our Dark Skies

To ensure that the tranquillity of the parish and our dark skies are maintained, development will only be supported where it demonstrates that it:

- 1) will have no adverse effect on the tranquillity of the parish through increasing levels and extent of noise;
- 2) will have no adverse effect, through light pollution (during any part of the year), on our valued dark skies observable from the parish.

Photographs on the pages 11 & 12 are courtesy of Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and taken from their policy:-

*“Light Pollution in the Blackdown Hills”.*

<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 123, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government

<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 125, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government.

<sup>4</sup> p56, Objective PD5, Blackdown Hills Management Plan, Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

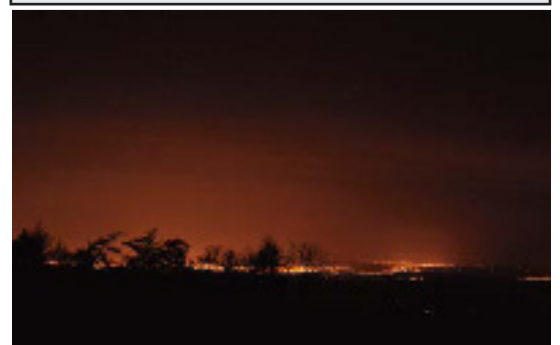
## Community Actions and Projects

- CA1 - The Parish Council will work with partners including the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB and EDDC to encourage the planting of native species of hedge and trees.
- CA2 - The Parish Council will work with partners including the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, Devon County Council and EDDC to encourage the positive management and preservation of our Devon banks.
- CA3 - The Parish Council will work with the local community, farmers, the Blackdown Hills AONB, EDDC and DCC to identify particular hedgerows and Devon banks at risk in the parish.
- CA4 - The Parish Council will actively resist attempts to introduce any extra unessential signs to the area.
- CA5 - Vehicles used in the parish must be appropriate to their access routes to prevent damage to the lanes and track banks and hedges. When employing contractors it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure suitably sized vehicles will be used to complete the contract.
- CA6 - The Parish Council will work with the local community and DCC to retain and support the position of Footpath Warden.
- CA7 - The Parish Council through the Parish Tree Warden with the assistance of others will prepare an asset register of trees, stands and copses which the community will help to protect.
- CA8 - The Parish Council, through the Parish Tree Warden, will secure, encourage and promote a wide range of tree species, woods and hedges in and around the parish to enhance and benefit the community now and for the future.
- CA9 - The Parish Tree Warden, through the auspices of the Parish Council, should form a group of residents who wish to assist in the preservation and appreciation of our tree and woodland heritage.
- CA10 - The Parish Council through a Biodiversity Warden and with the assistance of others will prepare a biodiversity assessment of the parish.
- CA11 - The Parish Council will encourage the use of guidance produced by the Blackdown Hills AONB for householders and organisations on limiting light pollution from new and replacement lighting.
- CA12 - The Parish Council will continue the policy of no street lights.



*Poor lighting, such as this garden bollard, throws light upwards and contributes to light pollution.*

*Glow over Taunton, as seen from Staple Hill in the northern Blackdown Hills.*



## Key supporting evidence

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

"What makes a view?", Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

Devon Landscape Character Assessment, Devon County Council, 2008-12

Natural England National Character Areas, Blackdowns NCA 147, Statements SEO2, 3 &4, Natural England, 2014

Conservation and Management Online Information Pack, Devon County Council, 1998 ([http://www.devon.gov.uk/the\\_devon\\_hedge](http://www.devon.gov.uk/the_devon_hedge))

Protocol for Protected Landscapes, Devon County Council (Highways), 2011  
<http://www.devon.gov.uk/landscape-policy-guidance>

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, September 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

Membury Parish Community Appraisal, Parish Plan, Membury Parish Council, 2006

Membury Design Statement, April 2008

(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)



*Wellington Monument at night. Views of starry skies like this need protection.*

# Built and Historic Environment

Aims	Objectives
<p>3. Ensure that all new development is sympathetic to the traditional character of the area.</p>	<p>3a) Work with East Devon District Council and applicants to ensure that any new development, alteration or extension is carried out according to the Blackdown Hills AONB design guide for houses and the Membury Village Design Statement.</p> <p>3b) Ensure that the size, scale, location and materials used for any development minimises its visual impact on the essential character of the</p>
<p>4. Protect the area's heritage (sites and locations).</p>	<p>4a) Encourage the protection of Membury's historical and archaeological sites [listed in Appendix 1]</p> <p>4b) Retain the hamlets' individuality</p> <p>4c) Resist any unessential signage</p> <p>4d) Encourage growth of native trees, flora and fauna</p>

## Introduction

Of the historical assets, Beckford Packhorse Bridge, Membury Court Chapel and Membury Castle, the castle is the oldest. Through a natural habitation/work balance there has evolved a feel of general history (reflected in the enthusiasm of the Local History Society - one of eleven clubs and societies active in the parish). This feeling has been enhanced through the fabric of the church, St. John Baptist, incorporating work of every century from the twelfth to the twentieth and the village Primary School (circa 1841). There is also the Quaker burial ground on Goyle Acre Lane that the parish is responsible for maintaining.

Evidence from local consultation and our records of designated and important sites and buildings suggest that there are significant historic and heritage assets<sup>5</sup> with national designations and highly valued structures and buildings of local importance. The landscape setting of our village and hamlets is as important as the built form as it is the special landscape of the AONB which frames our settlements. These factors all come together to make up the character of our village and hamlets.



<sup>5</sup> The National Planning Policy Framework defines a "heritage asset" as "A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)." (Appendix 1, p.51)

Land was donated in the centre of the village in 1910 by Samuel Manning-Kidd for a Reading Hall for the use of all parishioners and, more recently, when the shop at St. George's Cottage closed the sole village Shop and Post Office was at the present site at the north end of the main street. The shop is the natural hub of the community where people gather to use the Post Office, collect newspapers and some groceries – especially at times of bad weather when flooding or snow can cut off the parish. This shop has an alcohol licence and currently supplies hot snacks in what they call The Meeting Place and enables them to provide a bar at local events.

To the west the River Yarty forms the parish boundary but otherwise there are no natural features forming our boundary. Other than the A30 clipping the northernmost tip of the parish there is no “main road” and we are not “on the way to” anywhere. This has resulted in a very quiet, self-assisting, close-knit community.

National and district policies and designations afford significant degrees of protection of existing built heritage and historic assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. The AONB Management Plan, although advisory in nature, also sets out objectives and policies relating to the importance of ensuring that any new development is of high quality design and conserves the historic character of the AONB, stating that, *“All development in the AONB is of the highest quality, is in keeping with the landscape and conserves its wildlife, historic character and other special qualities.”*<sup>[6]</sup>

Within this context, our local evidence suggests a need to introduce more local, specific policies to reflect local distinctiveness and ensure that any development proposals respect the importance of our local historic and heritage assets and the traditional built form of our settlements. Importantly, our policies are intended to help guide development proposals on how best to integrate new development into our existing built and natural environments, steering away from blandness in design and towards innovation and respect.

A further issue of importance which emerged through local consultation was the desire to see the network of Footpaths in Membury parish retained and maintained. We have identified a community action which seeks to take action relating to this ambition.



## Protecting Our Valued Historic and Heritage Assets in Membury Parish

### Background, Reasoning and Policy BHE1

Membury village is a typical rural village in a valley setting in the heart of the AONB <sup>[7]</sup>. Typical of an established community, Membury has grown over the years using a mix of local materials – primarily flint and Tolcis stone – and in more recent times (as local sources became restricted) economically available materials such as stone cladding and painted render. The older houses tend to be of stone, originally thatched but now more likely to have slate or clay tiles with a chimney.

<sup>6</sup> p.56, Objective PD1, Blackdown Hills Management Plan, Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

<sup>7</sup> Conservation Area Appraisal, East Devon District Council, 2010

Across the rest of the parish there are numerous significant heritage and historic assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments. The hill fort of Membury Castle is worth particular mention and has been identified as an asset worthy of attention and preservation.

In 2008, the Parish undertook an exercise to produce guidance on development- The Membury Village Design Statement (VDS) <sup>18)</sup> which was afforded Supplementary Planning Guidance status by EDDC Planning Department. The provisions in this document still hold true and it is intended that any new development needs to work within those provisions.

## **Policy BHE1 – Protecting Our Valued Historic and Heritage Assets** [including the fabric & setting of listed buildings and monuments]

Proposals for development will only be supported where they demonstrate in writing that they :-

- 1) have considered the impact of construction material deliveries to the lanes leading to and at the site and
- 2) will not have an adverse impact on nationally and locally designated and protected historic buildings and other valued archaeological, heritage and historic assets in the parish (such as Beckford Packhorse Bridge, Membury Court Chapel, Membury Castle, St. John Baptist church - see Appendix 1 for full list) and
- 3) encourage enhancement of listed assets and
- 4) have taken fully into account any additional supporting local evidence documenting local historic and heritage assets.

### **Community Actions and Projects**

CA13 - The Parish Council will work with partners to encourage the protection of historic assets and protect and enhance any other important heritage and historic buildings and archaeological sites.

CA14 - The Parish Council will work in partnership with Devon County Council as Highways Authority and other partners as necessary to ensure that there is no proliferation of signage.

### **Key supporting evidence**

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, October 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Public Consultation, October 2014

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Natural England National Character Areas, Blackdowns NCA 147, Statement SEO 4, Natural England, 2014

National Heritage List for England, 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

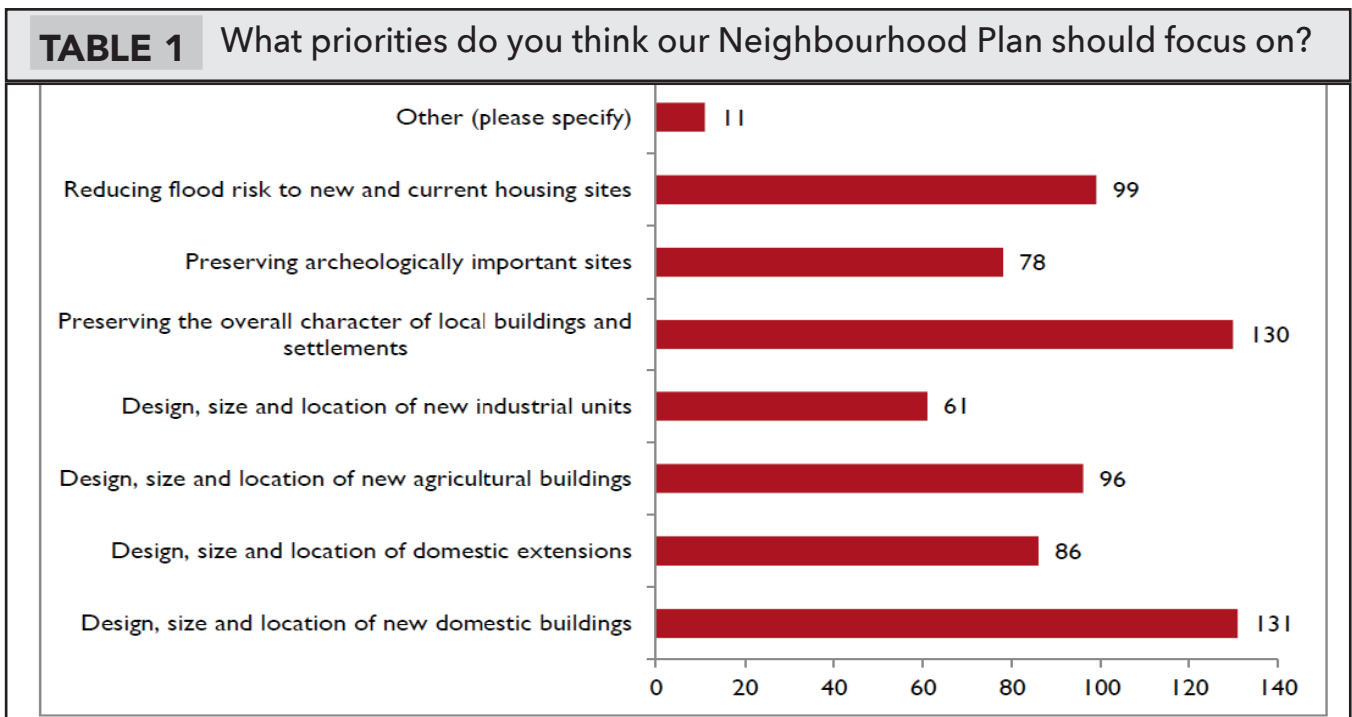
<sup>8</sup> Membury Design Statement, April 2008

# Maintaining the Built Character of Our Parish through High Quality Design

## Background, Reasoning and Policy BHE2

Given the history of our village and hamlets and their setting in the AONB landscape, we consider it important to protect and conserve the character of our existing built environment, whilst recognising that where change does take place, it does so in a way sympathetic and sensitive to our village and hamlets and their setting within the AONB landscape. This was identified by the community in their responses to the Questionnaire [see Table 1]. Therefore the design and materials of any new development should take this into account.

The Membury Design Statement 2008 and Blackdown Hills AONB have developed design guidance for housing and we endorse their content and advice through this Plan, where in accordance with Ministerial guidance. The Membury Design Statement is reproduced in full as Appendix 2 and The Design Guide for Houses is referenced as Appendix 3 to this Plan. Both should be taken into account in addition to the local character and setting of the proposed development site when making proposals for development in Membury. The Membury DS applies specifically to design in our Parish and takes precedence <sup>[9]</sup> over the Blackdown Hills Design Guide for Houses 2012.



The AONB guidance sets out a number of general design principles<sup>[10]</sup> which are:

- **Whether new build or alterations, good detailing, appropriate materials and sensitive treatment of the spaces around buildings are essential elements in achieving a successful and sympathetic scheme.**
- **Locations for new buildings and development should follow the traditional settlement pattern and respect the integrity of historical settlement forms.**
- **Layouts for new development sites should reflect the road patterns and plot forms**

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 2

<sup>10</sup> Page 12, Blackdown Hills AONB Design Guide for Houses, 2012

of the surrounding traditional settlement. It is important to create the same sense of enclosure, traditional proportions and massing of buildings, for example continuing a distinct building line along a street.

- Building forms and materials should reflect the local traditions.
- New extensions and additions to traditional buildings should respect the character and setting of the original building. Where new buildings are adjacent to traditional ones, consider the group as a whole, using scale, form, colour and materials to link new and old.
- Sensitive design of the spaces around buildings is essential to preserve local character. The most harmoniously designed building can look 'out of place' if it is not properly integrated into its setting.
- Contemporary design should draw on the qualities of landscape, historic features and buildings to reinforce local distinctiveness.

The Membury Design Statement is more specific, especially towards design detailing <sup>[11]</sup>:

#### **New build and/or extensions.**

The use of modern materials MUST be in keeping with the locale and not become a feature in itself. Where possible traditional materials (flint, stone and rendering [of a traditionally designed building, not a 'modern' house]) should be used.

Open plan layouts are not typical of the parish and should be avoided.

#### **Impact on existing environment.**

1. We require development proposals to demonstrate that they will not have any adverse impact on the existing state of the natural environment.

2. All-brick is not preferred as an external wall finish. However, it is suitable when used as window reveals/surrounds, quoins or in conjunction with other finishes.

3. Render colours should blend with, be sympathetic to and tone in with adjacent properties and those in the area around any development/extension.

#### **Boundaries**

As well as Devon banks, property boundaries in the main are of local stone and flint walls, hawthorn and mixed hedging or stock fencing.

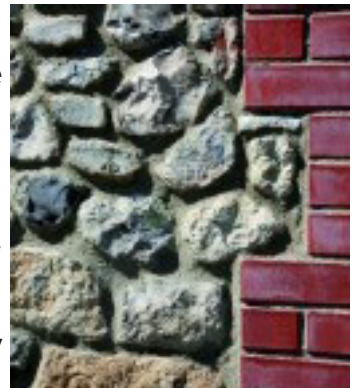
1. The above are the preferred boundary types for all future developments and should ordinarily be incorporated into any property changes. Consideration should be given to adjacent boundaries in finally deciding which is the most appropriate style for the new application.

2. Wooden panelling should be avoided particularly as front and visible side boundaries.

3. Boundary walls greater than 2m in height should not be used between adjacent properties.

#### **Roofs.**

1. Within Membury traditional materials (clay tiles - usually roman or double roman style, slate, thatch or cedar shingles) dominate and are the preferred roofing materials for on-going use. Many roofs were originally thatched and are therefore of significant pitch. This should be reflected in new designs.



<sup>11</sup> Section 4, Membury Design Statement, 2008

2. When re-building or extending, roofing materials must, first, be of traditional materials (as above) or, secondly, match existing - providing they are traditional.

3. Concrete tiles are not preferred.

4. Gable overhangs and eaves are preferred.

5. Flat roofs (except where they form part of an holistic design approach that complies with the spirit of the general statement) should be avoided.



## Policy BHE2 – Maintaining the Built Character of Our Parish through High Quality Design

To ensure that new development is sympathetic to the traditional built character of the parish the proposals will be supported where they conform to the guidance in the relevant section/s of the *Membury Design Statement* and *BH AONB Design Guide for Houses*: are of high quality design: enhance the visual amenity of the setting and minimise any adverse visual impact on the essential character of both the parish and neighbouring properties.

Particular attention should be paid to:

- 1) ensuring that the size, scale and location of the development is appropriate to the form, scale and setting of the surrounding built environment;
- 2) ensuring that materials and design of the development are in keeping with the character of the surrounding built environment; and,
- 3) ensuring that it is designed in such a way as to minimise its impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape, on views of the proposed development and on the natural environment.
- 4) the application should specifically address delivery vehicles size, route to and handling at the site.

### Community Actions and Projects

CA15 - The Parish Council will encourage use of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Design Guide for Houses and the Membury Village Design Statement for residential development which does not require planning permission or fall within Permitted Development Rights.

## Key supporting evidence

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Design Guide for Houses, Blackdown Hills AONB

“What makes a view?”, Blackdown Hills AONB, 2013

Devon Landscape Character Assessment, Devon County Council, 2008-12

Natural England National Character Areas, Blackdowns NCA 147, Statement SEO2, Natural England, 2014

Membury Village Design Statement, 2008

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*



# Housing and Population

Aim	Objectives
<p>5. Support new small-scale local housing development which respects the characteristics and constraints of Membury's built and natural environment yet allows continual evolution of the parish.</p>	<p>5a) Recognise the existing built form and boundaries of our hamlets and village and resist any new housing development outside these confines.</p> <p>5b) Look favourably upon new housing development which meets parish needs and/or supports the ageing population as well as young families.</p> <p>5c) Support development where it re-uses redundant or disused sites or buildings which meets the criteria of this Plan and would lead to an enhancement of the setting.</p> <p>5d) Support schemes which will benefit the parish rural economy and/or society and improve the sustainability of the parish providing they are appropriate to the setting and meet the requirements of this Plan.</p>

## Introduction

Membury lies within the Blackdown Hills AONB (see Page 4). Roads to the village are narrow, often single width country lanes, many of which are flanked by traditional Devon banks or hedges. There is no public transport available and anyone without a car would be reliant on lifts from others and/or community transport to get to services and facilities not available in the parish; therefore it is unlikely that anyone moves to the parish without their own transport or access to private transport.

In recent years, in Planning terms, the village has had two Built Up Area Boundaries [BUAB] which existed until the submission of the revised Local Plan in August 2015. These BUAB's have been removed and the parish is designated as "Open Countryside". As stipulated in the Local Plan *Strategy 7-Development in the Countryside*<sup>12</sup>, this Neighbourhood Plan seeks to modify this status by recognising the impact that the hamlets have in supporting the parish as a whole. In turn this is in accordance with recent government PPG advice "all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas".

The Parish was recognised as a Neighbourhood and began to prepare this Neighbourhood Plan in 2014. As a result of local public consultations, two questionnaires (sent to each household in the parish, one of which specifically addressed new housing development), a Housing Needs Survey conducted by the Community Council of Devon, exhibitions and open public discussions the response has consistently been that the parishioners want to see the parish continue to evolve with a small amount of new house build. Further, feedback shows that this development should be spread across the whole parish (subject to design and location

<sup>12</sup> East Devon Local Plan adopted January 2016

restraints) to improve the viability of the whole parish and to avoid exacerbating the flood risk which would result from concentrating development in the village. It is a requirement that this evolution will enhance the ancient and vibrant community spirit, structure, form and environment.

The parish wishes to embody fully the aims and ideals of the NPPF as expressed by the Minister. This Neighbourhood Plan is an attempt to allow the parish to maintain its current status and vibrancy in an ever-changing world by using new technology to increase employment<sup>[13]</sup>: by preserving the countryside: by controlling the design and location of new build and by supporting the on-going sustainability of the parish as a whole.

It is a requirement of the NPPF that our Neighbourhood Plan, through the planning system, should contribute to achievement of sustainable development and perform a function in promoting this<sup>[14]</sup>. As a result of government funded infrastructure investment, the introduction of fibre optic telephone cable to the village cabinet (FTTC) and around the parish has improved the communications for some and assisted the efficiency and capability of businesses working from home within the hamlets located in the parish, especially valued by those multi-national businesses. There was also strong feedback that mobile phone signal - at the best patchy and often unobtainable - should be addressed. Other than the siting of masts, this is outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan but has been included within the Community Actions.

In recent years the development and improvement of the local parish education: the 2015 Ofsted rating of "good with outstanding features" for the Primary school: the establishment of both Mother & Toddler group and Pre-School providing a linked feeder stream to the main school and the formation of the Acorn Multi Academy Trust. This has provided an excellent educational basis for the parish and has provided a significant increase in pupil head count. A knock-on effect has been a further support to working from home, thus enhancing the above average level of employment "working from home" and its environmental benefits<sup>[11]</sup>.

Government statistics show that rural areas account for 16% of England's total output.

This Plan is intended to offset the possibility of an ageing parish population by capitalising upon the aforementioned advantages and allowing modest development (unlikely to exceed an average of one new dwelling per year over the life of our Plan), encouraging the influx of younger families and supporting in a controlled way the national trend of relocation from urban to rural areas. It supports government rural policy "*we want better internet and mobile phone communications, better transport, better schools, better skills, better housing, better business growth.*"<sup>[15]</sup> Of these 7 aims Membury has already begun to tackle 4 and the public feedback wishes the Neighbourhood Plan to tackle a fifth - housing.

## **Recognise the existing built form and boundaries of our hamlets and village and resist any new housing development outside these confines.**

### **Background, Reasoning and Policy HPI**

The Housing Needs Survey and Neighbourhood Plan Consultation responses evidence a desire to see conversions, some new build and both a need and a desire for affordable housing for young families and suitable accommodation (possibly sheltered) for our older residents, albeit in small numbers. These should be the focus of any new development. In addition, the idea of barn and outbuilding conversion to new dwellings or work/live units was also broadly welcomed.

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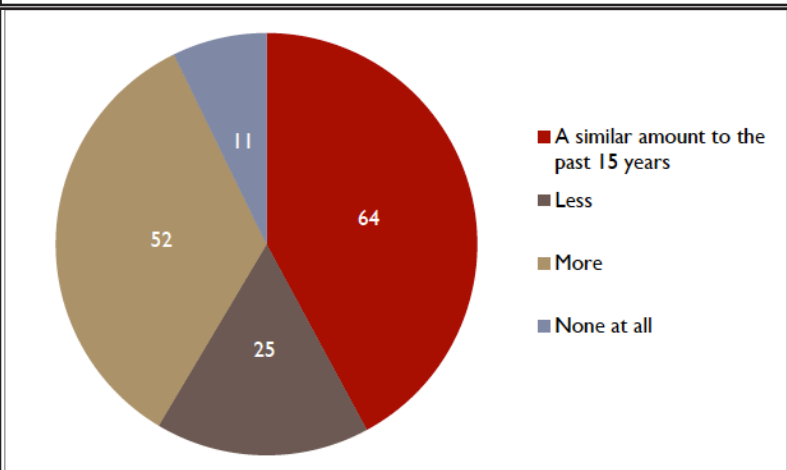
<sup>13</sup> Membury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire, Community Council of Devon Oct. 2014 (Fig 19) which showed 57% of working age people already worked from home and a further 13% considered it.

<sup>14</sup> Ref: Achieving sustainable development: paragraphs 6 & 7, NPPF

<sup>15</sup> Ref: Chancellor of the Exchequer, August 2015

We believe that the mix of housing development within our plan will satisfy the requirements within the NPPF, latest government policies and most of the Local Plan<sup>16</sup> objectives whilst also meeting the wishes of the majority of parishioners and allowing the parish to continue to evolve for another millennium. The new Local Plan restriction on small-scale (hamlet) development will not take cognizance of the potential flash flood risk to the village; it will encourage an ageing population; it will not recognise the above national average number of people working from home in the parish; it will not help sustainability and instead become a self-fulfilling prophecy of gradual decline; it does not recognise the government broadband investment; it does not recognise the importance of the parish primary school, pre-school and toddlers groups all creating a vibrant Ofsted rated educational facility serving the local community and, particularly, will as a consequence reduce the use of all the existing parish amenities thus reducing their viability and sustainability. These impacts fly in the face of NPPF Planning Policy Guidance: Achieving sustainable development Ref: Para 2 NPPF Guidelines<sup>17</sup>.

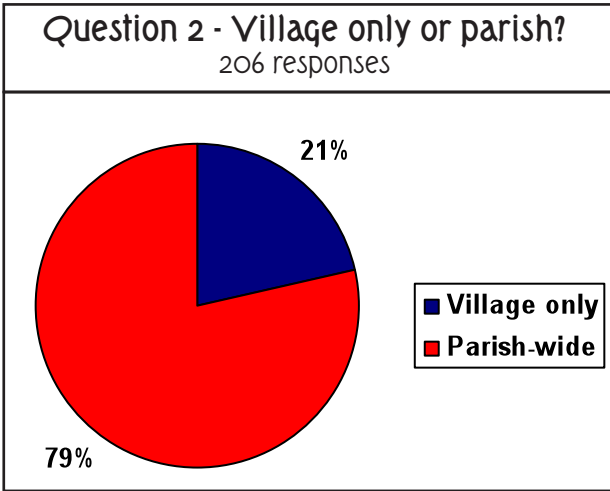
**TABLE 2** Over the next 15 years, how many new homes do you think should be created in our parish to meet our housing needs?



Current government policy wishes “to ensure any village has the freedom to expand ..., subject to local agreement”<sup>18</sup>.

This is a very active and involved parish and it was therefore relatively easy to get response levels of 30% to 50% to community involvement, exhibitions, local household and individual questionnaires. The majority of respondents (84%) wish to see:-

- some very small-scale new market development <sup>19</sup>
- because of the high flash-flood risk within the village centre [and down to the hamlet of Rock], that development to be spread to existing specified hamlets and not continually concentrated on the main village <sup>19</sup>
- the form and built structure of the village and hamlets is maintained <sup>19</sup> and therefore , to satisfy this response, probably no more than 2 or 3 new properties within any single hamlet over the plan period
- no development allowed outside the existing hamlet boundaries <sup>19</sup>
- additionally, barn conversions and annexes (tied to the main property) to be allowed - with emphasis on low-cost homes for family members or carers or B&B (to encourage business within the community) [See HP2 and HP3] and



<sup>16</sup> Adopted Local Plan January 2016

<sup>17</sup> See also NPPF Ministerial Foreword para 2

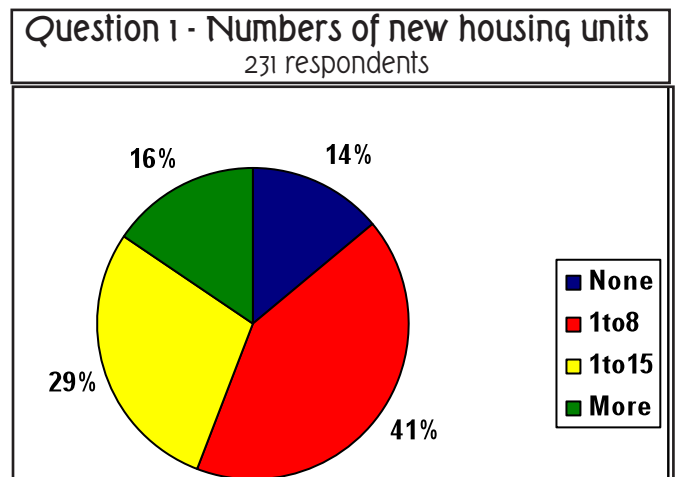
<sup>18</sup> Para 8 “Easier to live and work in rural areas” DEFRA paper August 2015

<sup>19</sup> Ref: Housing Specific questionnaire dated July 2015

- a Community Land Trust to be established to accommodate older supported parishioners and low-cost housing for local people - also providing local employment for local people [See HP4].

International and national bodies have set out broad principles of sustainable development. Resolution 42/187 of the United Nations General Assembly defined sustainable development as: *meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy, "Securing the Future" sets out five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development: *living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly*. It is the contention of the parish that we are meeting all these guidelines for current and future sustainability of the parish as a whole by permitting a very small amount of new development within the supporting named hamlets, thus allowing an ancient parish to continue to evolve and remain active and robust in an ever-changing environment.

National planning policy advises that it is important to recognise the particular issues facing rural areas in terms of housing supply and affordability and the role of housing in supporting the broader sustainability and vitality of villages and smaller settlements. It suggests that a thriving rural community in a living, working countryside depends, in part, upon retaining local services and community facilities such as schools, local shops, cultural venues, public houses and places of worship and that rural housing is essential to ensure viable use of these local facilities. It also states that assessing housing need and allocating sites should be considered at a strategic level and through the Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plan process. A Housing Needs Assessment<sup>[20]</sup> has been undertaken to discern 'Affordable' requirements in the parish. It is indicative of other housing requirements and the community's appetite for that development.



Current adopted local planning policy requires special care to be taken when development takes place within the AONB, as do AONB policies, and the new Local Plan takes a similar stance as set out in earlier sections of this Plan, with development proposals being required to conserve or enhance the character of the landscape and protect the traditional local built form.

The Rt. Hon Greg Clark MP, in his Ministerial Introduction to NPPF said:-

*"The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development."*

*"Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations."*

*"Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices. We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them, can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate."*

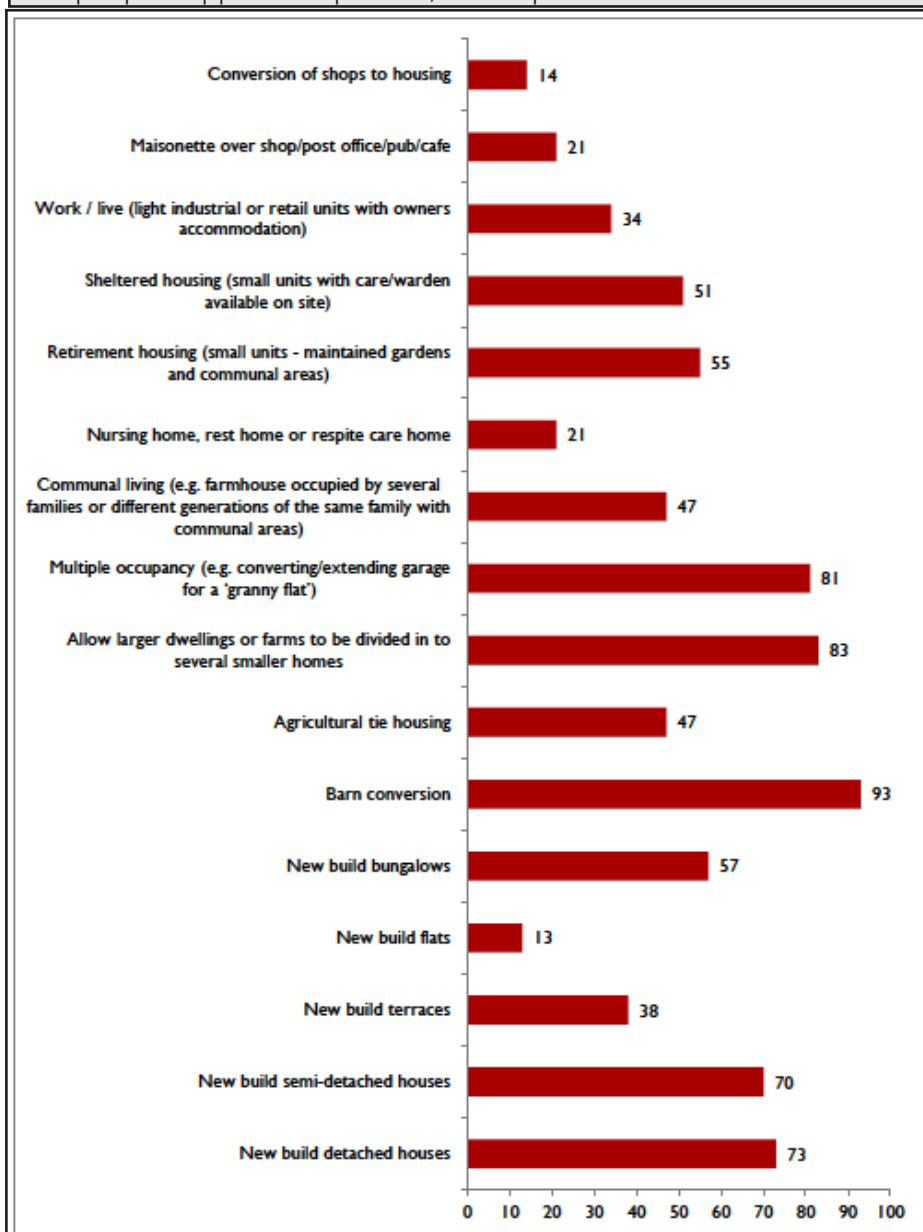
Membury village is the main settlement in the parish with the hamlets of Furley, Longbridge, Rock and Webble Green; clusters at Crawley, Ford, Greendown, James Lane and Lewsley Lane and dispersed rural dwellings and farmsteads making up the remainder. The parish comprises <sup>[21]</sup> 190 detached houses, 37 semi-detached houses, 12 terraced houses and 8 non-purpose built flats, with no caravans/temporary accommodation units. Of these, 182 are owner-occupied

<sup>20</sup> Housing Needs Survey Oct 2014 by Community Council of Devon for Membury Parish Council

<sup>21</sup> ACRE/CCD Rural profile for Membury Parish Oct. 2013

**TABLE 3** Over the next fifteen years, which of the following types of housing do you think would be most appropriate in our parish?

Nine people skipped this question, 150 responded.



with 24 of the remainder private rented and 15 either social rented or other rented accommodation. In the last 15 years, records suggest that 8 new dwellings have been built in the parish - approximately twice the rate over the last 900 years, ignoring the impact of the Black Death in 1348 which halved our population. This is not a high growth area and opinion does not wish that to change significantly. We have stipulated a guide number for new development over our plan period to avoid misunderstanding by developers.

The affordability ratio<sup>[22]</sup> in the parish is 18.1 (with the England average being 15.4)<sup>[23]</sup>. There are 27 properties in tax bands A & B (10.9% c.f. 22% for England average) whereas the number of properties in bands D, E, F & G are above England average. 18.6% of the parish population is aged 17 or under with 37% of the population in the 30 - 59 age group and 28.6% over 64<sup>[24]</sup> - resulting in a dependency ratio [non-working to working age population] of 0.82 (cf England 0.55).

The Parish Council responded to a District Council consultation on potential housing sites in 2012 with a preference for a small site (if sensitively developed) which is within the envelope of the village over one further away from the centre of the village<sup>[25]</sup>. Since that time there has been a shift in public opinion, reflected in this Neighbourhood Plan and the recent Parish Council responses to the then emerging Local Plan.

<sup>22</sup> Ref Membury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire by Community Council of Devon dated October 2014

<sup>23</sup> Data taken from the Membury Rural Community Profile, ACRE /CCD, 2013 (original data sourced from ONS 2011 census). The Profile states that "The housing affordability ratio is based on comparing house prices to earnings. Rather than compare average house prices and incomes, we have compared the "lowest quartile" (the lowest 25%) of prices to the lowest quartile of household incomes – which is more representative of groups trying to get onto the housing ladder. An affordability index of 10 would mean that lowest quartile house prices are 10 times as high as lowest quartile incomes. This data is only available for the local authority, not the local area."

<sup>24</sup> Data taken from the Membury Rural Community Profile, October 2013

<sup>25</sup> Membury Parish Council SHLAA Sites 2012 & Questionnaire, June 2014

The results from our public consultation and Questionnaire <sup>[26]</sup> indicated that most people wished to see some level of new development - see Table 2 (page 22) and Table 3 - and we have reflected this in our Objectives.

Our Housing Specific Questionnaire addressed the deviation that parish feedback had expressed compared to recent Planning decisions and the newly adopted Local Plan - in restricting all development to "large villages". There were 243 responses (48.6% of parishioners) with 198 responses to Question 2 (39.6%), the parishioners reiterated their desire to allow parish-wide new development - in accordance with Strategy 7 of the Local Plan.

Many people are self-employed (97 or 26.6% c.f. England average 9.8%) with six times the England average working from home<sup>[27]</sup>. This figure is likely to increase with the advent of a local fibre optic network improving electronic communication. There is a limited number of employers in the parish and much of the employment is naturally tied to agriculture and associated activity. It is also important to understand the geographical characteristics of Membury village and Rock as they inform the suitability or not of locating new development there, to what scale and of what type. [See also Managing Flood Risk section.]

### **Statement of Principle - The Focus for Any New Housing Development**

In view of the risk of flooding and within the context of other policies in this Plan, Membury village should not be the only focus for new additional housing development in the parish, in accordance with the new East Devon Local Plan (in particular Strategies S3 Sustainable Development, S4 Balanced Communities and S5 Environment). *Defined hamlets are: Membury village, Furley, Longbridge, Rock & Webble Green.*

### **Definition of Infill**

An Infill site is defined as a plot between houses within the existing hamlet developed envelope which is capable of taking up to six dwellings meeting the design criteria of the Design Statement [Note 4.1.6 & 4.1.7] and constraints of HP1 and be physically very well related to the built form of that settlement.

### **Policy HP1 – Meeting new build within an evolving parish**

Any proposal for new additional housing development must meet the requirements and standards of the Design Statement, not detract from the landscape and not increase the flood risk to others and will be supported:

- 1) where they are sympathetic to the area and of appropriate type, design and scale AND,
- 2) providing the cumulative effect does not harm the heritage or character of the village or hamlet AND,
- 3) providing they are infill within village or named hamlet AND
- 4) other than meeting HP3 and HP4, there should be no more than 3 new builds in the village or any hamlet over the plan period AND
- 5) the cumulative new build within the whole parish over the plan period does not exceed around 10 to 15 new properties.

<sup>26</sup> Membury Consultation Report , Community Council of Devon, October 2014

<sup>27</sup> Data taken from the Membury Rural Community Profile, October 2013

# Look favourably upon new housing development which meets parish needs and/or supports the ageing population as well as young families.

## Background, Reasoning and Residential Annexes Policy HP2

In support of both young and old families the creation of annexes for family or carers will enable the elderly to continue to live at home and stay within their parish boundary, close to friends and relatives. In addition, this will relieve external social service demands and provide employment for local residents. The Consultation Report results (see table 3 above) showed that 26% of respondents wished to see some form of sheltered housing within the parish and this proposal goes some way to support this.

The parish has many properties with extensive grounds (mostly old farm houses) wherein an extension would provide a low-cost home for young family members otherwise excluded from affordable homes due to non-reliance on state funding.

### NOTE:

This may not be used as a way of introducing new market housing and the new annexe will be permanently tied to the main property.

## Policy HP 2 – Residential Annexes (attached and detached).

Residential annexes to existing dwellings will normally be permitted in the form of extensions to accommodate family members. Where an extension is not appropriate for design reasons, conversion of an outbuilding (or erection of a purposely designed new building) may be permitted, subject to the annexe being of a satisfactory scale, location and design in relation to the existing dwelling, its curtilage and surroundings. Such a separate annexe must be designed so that it will serve a useful ancillary function to the main house and should not be of a form which would encourage its occupation, or sale, as a separate dwelling. Where an annexe would be capable of forming a separate dwelling in contravention of the housing policies of the Local Plan, a planning condition will be imposed to ensure its occupation is tied to the main dwelling.

## Background, Reasoning and Community Housing Policy HP3

Public feedback was consistent in suggesting the need for both low-cost homes for young families (to remove the necessity for them to move out of the parish) and suitable accommodation for the elderly (also to remove the necessity for them to move out of the parish).

A quarter of respondents (see Table 3) wanted some form of sheltered housing and, in a separate survey by CCD on affordable Housing, some 20 were identified as wanting homes with a care package <sup>[28]</sup> in a 5+ year period.

Within the context of our other policies in this Plan and the new East Devon Local Plan<sup>[29]</sup> we stipulate that only any community housing or a development of suitable accommodation for older residents should be within Membury village built-up envelope and no more than 350m<sup>[30]</sup> (as the crow flies) from the amenities of church, school, village hall, shop, Post Office

<sup>28</sup> Membury Local Housing Needs report by Community Council of Devon, Oct 2014

<sup>29</sup> New Local Plan Strategy S3 (c) and S4 (b and c) and S5 (4)

<sup>30</sup> Estimated to be within 5 minutes walking or mobility scooter distance

and Meeting Place. It is most unlikely that the parish could justify more than one site over the period of this plan.

National planning policy guidance<sup>31</sup> allows opportunities for sustainable rural housing that meets local needs to come forward, as does district policy through its policy on “Exception Sites”. Exception sites are “*Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing.*” Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant that respects its rural and built surroundings.

Our housing needs survey, undertaken in autumn 2014, summarises that there was an affordable housing need for 2 dwellings in the parish, one of which was required for a household in 2015 and one required in the next 5 year period to 2020 <sup>[32]</sup>. Our local consultation during the development of our Neighbourhood Plan has identified a desire that any new housing development which is proposed meets the needs of the local population (with a particular focus on providing housing for young families and an ageing population) by ensuring that the right type and tenure of housing is delivered. It is therefore recommended that a Community Land Trust be set up under the auspices of the Parish Council on a suitable site within the village, whereby low cost housing for local people and young families together with homes for elderly people can be provided. Additionally this would provide maintenance, gardening and care work for local people and provide a positive continuation of the parish community spirit.

## Policy HP3 – Meeting Community Housing needs

Any proposal for new additional housing development must meet the requirements and standards of the Design Statement and not increase the flood risk to others and will be supported:

- 1) if it provides a Community Land Trust to support local families and the local elderly (see Appendix 5 for definition) OR
- 2) where the proposal meets demonstrable local housing needs or is supporting employment or for dependent family

**Support development where it reuses redundant or disused buildings which meets the criteria of this Plan and would lead to an enhancement of the setting.**

### Background, Reasoning and Conversions Policy HP4

In accordance with Para 51 of the NPPF, the responses from the Consultation Report indicated that 33% wished to see some level of Conversions and Extension [see Table 3] to ensure a level of family self-care whilst not degrading the environment, countryside or views and also 13% wished to see work/live units made available within the parish. By converting existing redundant buildings the countryside and the views will not be affected. However those buildings which may otherwise become ruins will be given a more effective use whilst maintaining the sustainability of the local community. To protect the environment and views, constraints on conversion are required, as identified in Policy HP4.

<sup>31</sup> Paragraphs 54 and 55, National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and Local Government

<sup>32</sup> Housing Needs Survey for Membury Parish Council by Community Council for Devon, Oct. 2014

## Policy HP4 – Conversion of existing buildings to housing or work/live units

Proposals for the conversion of redundant, permanent, buildings for residential, tourism or live/work purposes, will be supported where:

1. The building is located within or adjoining an existing cluster of dwellings; and
2. The building is characteristic of the local vernacular and can be converted without significant alteration, increase in ridge height or increase in the original footprint; and
3. The design will retain the original character of the building and positively contribute to its rural surroundings and any external car parking or amenity areas will be situated discretely to reduce the appearance of urbanisation; and
4. The new use will not negatively impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties; and
5. The development will retain any nature conservation interest associated with the site or building, and net gains in biodiversity will be encouraged where possible.

Support schemes which will benefit the parish rural economy and/or society and improve the sustainability of the parish providing they are appropriate to the setting and meet the requirements of this Plan.

### Justification for our Small-scale Self Build Housing Policy HP5

#### What is Self-build Housing?

Self-build housing (which includes “custom build housing”) is defined by the Government (in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations, 2014) as a dwelling built by (or commissioned by) someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least 3 years.

Further information about self-build is available online at the Self-build Portal [www.selfbuildportal.org.uk](http://www.selfbuildportal.org.uk)

We have already outlined that affordability of housing is a problem in our rural community. This is partly due to market forces; an increasing gap between salaries, the amount that can be borrowed and house prices; and also the lack of supply, further driving up house prices. A combination of factors therefore makes housing inaccessible for some people who live locally and who want to get onto the housing ladder, for example, young people and couples who may be living with parents and who wish to remain in the parish but cannot do so. Notwithstanding the gap in supply in our small rural community, in the general sense, there is an affordability gap for people who earn too much to qualify for “affordable housing” (such as social rent or shared equity housing) but earn too little to access a mortgage required to purchase a house on the open market. People and households which fall into this category are often referred to

as being in an “intermediate sector”. Traditionally, these people have to rent privately or live with friends or family until they save enough to buy a property.

We have seen, through local consultation, that there is support for small scale housing (which we would term as “organic growth”) and particularly for local people to help provide an opportunity and solution for those who wish to remain in the parish but for whom the usual route to own their own home or move to a larger home to accommodate their needs (for example a growing family) is made difficult<sup>[33]</sup>. Membury village and the hamlets have historically grown slowly in times past. Our consultation has confirmed that a continuation of this pattern and rate of growth is acceptable to residents.

As the new District Local Plan favours development only in towns and villages with a built-up area boundary, currently Membury village and our hamlets are all considered, in policy terms in the Local Plan (in the policy “Strategy 7, Development in the Countryside”), as “open countryside” within which permission for new development is more difficult to secure. Strategy 7 states that “...Development in the countryside will only be permitted where it is in accordance with a specific Local Plan policy that explicitly permits such development...” and subject to other criteria. However, Strategy 27 *Development at the Small Towns and Larger Villages* does provide the over arching exception where there is a Neighbourhood Plan - “If communities wish to promote development other than that which is supported through this strategy and other strategies in the Plan (at the settlements listed above or any other settlement) they will need to produce a Neighbourhood Plan or promote community led development (for example Community Land Trusts) justifying how and why, in a local context, the development will promote the objectives of sustainable development.” Strategy 35 also introduces an “exceptions” policy where, subject to certain special criteria being met, local needs housing can be built in special circumstances where need is demonstrated.

Away from the district planning policies, support (in principle) to help enable housing in the countryside (outside the gift of this plan) can be found in the Government’s national planning laws, where certain types of barn conversions to residential dwellings can be acceptable and are classed as “permitted development” negating the need for full planning permission (but where such proposals are subject to “prior approval” through the local authority).

National planning guidance does provide some support for the delivery of local needs housing in rural locations. Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that “To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.” We believe that small scale organic growth in the parish, where well-related to our settlements, will help to maintain our facilities and services in Membury village, which are a lifeline for some of our residents, help prevent additional car journeys to other villages and towns to get basic provisions, are focal points for residents and which enhance our sense of community. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF goes on to identify criteria or “special circumstances” where development of homes in the countryside may be acceptable, one of which would be due to the *“exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling...”* where *“such a design should: be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas; reflect the highest standards in architecture; significantly enhance its immediate setting; and, be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.”*

Taking all of this into account, we consider that self-build (or custom-build) housing schemes may provide a solution to help local people get a home of their own or move within the parish to a home which better suits their household or family’s needs as well as responding positively

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<sup>33</sup> Our neighbourhood plan questionnaire responses showed that 89% of respondents supported new build houses of some sort. Almost 31% supported community led self-build and 63% supported privately owned dwellings. The Housing Needs Survey showed 82% of respondents were in favour of small development.

to the views of our community about what development is acceptable and reasonable in the parish.

Self-build can provide a lower cost solution to local people and support the local economy by providing work for local builders, architects and tradesmen. It can also help to “free-up” the availability of market housing (private rent and owned) as a self-builder will usually be resident in the parish already and will vacate their home when their self-build home is complete.

There is growing support for this method of delivering housing, with the Government having introduced the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act in 2015 and, as this plan is being drafted, has consulted on the draft planning guidance which will help the requirements of Act be delivered<sup>[34]</sup>. One of the requirements of the Act is for Local Authorities to maintain a register of people interested in finding or developing a self-build plot. Such registers will provide a useful indicator of demand in the parish for self-build developments. The draft guidance suggests that the registers may be considered as a material consideration when planning applications are being determined (i.e. an issue of relevance to the decision). They should also be taken into account by local authorities in their calculations of housing supply, demand, need and delivery.

Paragraph 50 of the NPPF states that “To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should plan for...the needs of different groups in the community [including]... people wishing to build their own homes...”. This is recognised by the Local Plan which states “The contribution of self build plots to the supply of new housing is recognised and contributes to the range of homes available. A significant proportion of planning permissions for housing in East Devon are on individual plots, which are likely to be available to those wishing to build/have their own house built. Developers of larger sites will be encouraged to set aside a proportion of plots for sale to individuals or groups wishing to build their own homes (Policy H2 of the Development Management policies).”<sup>[35]</sup> While the Local Plan policy position applies to larger developments, we want to take this principle of support for self-build a step further by providing local support to the development of small scale single self-build dwellings.

Self-build dwellings need to remain occupied by the self-builder for a period of at least 3 years (see box). For a self-build dwelling to remain as a property available for only local residents to access after this period of time, a mechanism such as a legal condition on the sale or community land trust (CLT) or other trust should be set up to help ensure this retention. This is because there could be circumstances whereby a dwelling’s owners would wish to sell the property on the open market or have no interest in living in the parish (for example, if the self-build occupier passes away and leaves the property to family living outside the parish).

Our policy sets out our desire to support self-build development at a small scale appropriate to the parish where it meets other policy criteria and also the special considerations relative to our parish such as suitability of broad location, flood risk, tranquillity, design and respect for our local environment. High quality design is particularly important to the parish given its built and environmental character and so self-build proposals should meet the NPPF (paragraph 55)

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<sup>34</sup> The draft guidance can be viewed via [www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding-draft-planning-practice-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-build-and-custom-housebuilding-draft-planning-practice-guidance)

<sup>35</sup> Adopted East Devon Local Plan, paragraph 16.30

## Policy HP5 - Small Scale Self-build Housing

To help achieve localised organic housing growth which supports our rural community and help meet the Government's objective of encouraging self-build, proposals for single self-build dwellings for local people who are constrained by the availability and market cost of properties, and who would not normally qualify for affordable or shared equity housing, but who wish to remain in the parish, will be supported where they:

- 1) are developed for occupancy by self-builders already resident within the parish or those with a strong local connection (through family or work) - refer to Panel 1 AND
- 2) are completed within a reasonable, agreed period AND
- 3) are occupied by the self-builder for a minimum period of 3 years after completion as their main and sole residence AND
- 4) demonstrate that there is a need for the proposed house type and size AND
- 5) are located within the built extent of and be well-related to either Membury village or the hamlets of Furley, Longbridge, Rock or Webble Green AND
- 6) demonstrate that there will be satisfactory access into the plot / site.

*Criteria 2) and 3) will be secured through legal condition placed on planning consent. Legal agreements should also consider opportunities to retain the property for purchase by local residents or local community trust (before marketing on the open market) if, after the 3 year period of occupation by the self-builder, the owner wishes to leave or sell the property or, if prior to 3 years of occupation, ownership changes as a result of Lasting Power of Attorney (Property and Financial Affairs) or execution of a Last Will and Testament.*

### HP5 - PANEL 1

**For the purposes of this policy a strong "local connection" is defined as meaning one or more of the following connections in priority order:**

1. *persons who have been permanently resident in the parish for a continuous period of three years out of the last five years immediately prior to a self-build planning application being registered; or,*
2. *being formerly permanently resident in the parish for a continuous period of five years at some time in the past; or,*
3. *having his or her place of permanent work (normally regarded as 16 hours or more a week and not including seasonal employment) in the parish for a continuous period of at least twelve months immediately prior to a self-build planning application being registered; or,*
4. *persons who can demonstrate a close family connection to the parish in that the person's mother, father, son, daughter or sibling has been permanently resident in the parish for a continuous period of five years immediately prior to a self-build planning application being registered and where there is independent evidence of a caring dependency relationship.*

## Key supporting evidence for our Housing Policies

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

Draft Housing Needs Survey, Community Council of Devon, November 2014

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Devon Landscape Character Assessment, Devon County Council, 2008-12

Natural England National Character Areas, Blackdowns NCA 147, Statements SEO 4, Natural England, 2014

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, September 2014

Membury Housing Needs Survey, Community Council of Devon for Devon Rural Housing Partnership, October 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

# Community Facilities and Services

Aims	Objectives
<p><b>6. Resist the loss of local facilities and amenities (including Car Park, Church, Meeting Place, Playing Field, Post Office, School and Pre-school, Shop, Village Hall) and to protect the area’s heritage (sites and locations).</b></p>	<p>6a) Support the sensitive and necessary maintenance and improvement of local facilities and amenities to help their continued viability.</p>

## Introduction

There is a real sense of community with The Membury MerryMakers being the central hub for supporting new and existing organisations. As a result there are currently 11 clubs, societies or organisations within the parish, creating an active social community life.

The parish primary school provides education for some 22 youngsters and has recently added Pre-school to enhance its catchment potential. The School is part of the Acorn Multi-Academy Trust.

The village shop has developed into much more: being the ad-hoc social hub of the parish. It has a Post Office, shop, licenced Meeting Place (where local people and societies can meet at a nominal cost) and being the “ticket office” and communications hub for any parish activity.

St. John Baptist church sits at the centre of the village and has been in existence since Norman times. It incorporates work of every century from the twelfth to the twentieth.

Quakers Cottage (the former Meeting House) and the Quaker Burial ground form part of the parish history. The burial ground is maintained by the Parish Council.

## Changes to Existing Community Facilities and Amenities Background, Reasoning and Policy CFS1

To ensure that Membury parish remains a proper community, it is felt strongly that we should protect the existing local facilities which contribute to our way of life and its quality. Consultation events have demonstrated a desire amongst the local community to ensure that there is no loss of these community facilities and that what we have remain fit for purpose. We acknowledge that changes may have to be made to help our community facilities, amenities and assets to remain relevant, viable and able to meet future needs and demands in an appropriate way. Changes or improvements that require modification, alteration or extension of existing land or buildings however should not be detrimental to the character of the area or our natural assets. Paragraph 28 of the NPPF recognises their value and states that neighbourhood plans should “promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”.

This is echoed in Policy CC4/A of the Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan, 2014-19 which advocates “support the retention or enhancement of community facilities, services and amenities where compatible with the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB.”

## Recognised community facilities, amenities and services

St John Baptist Church, Quaker Burial Ground, Membury Castle, Membury Court Chapel, Beckford Packhorse bridge, Village Hall, Car Park, Playing Field, Membury Primary School Academy & Pre-school, Membury Post Office, Shop and Meeting Place.

### Policy CFS1 – Changes to Existing Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Assets

Proposals which relate to Membury's existing local community facilities, amenities and assets will be supported where:

- 1) there is a demonstrable need for the change;
- 2) they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments.

## Membury Primary Academy and Pre-School Background, Reasoning and Policy CFS2

The Parish's Primary School is an important local facility<sup>[36]</sup>, which contributes much to our sense of community. The school may need to improve or extend its accommodation and facilities to meet future educational needs of the parish and the wider catchment area. We shall work with the school's governors to ensure that the school is able to continue to offer a first class, modern, education. We will also support proposals that enable the school's facilities to be more accessible to the community at large. We have identified community actions to take this forward.

### Policy CFS2 – Membury Primary Academy

Proposals for development that lead to the provision of new, additional or the improvement of existing facilities at Membury Academy, which serve an educational and / or community purpose, will be supported where they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments.

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<sup>36</sup> Ref: Paragraph 72 NPPF

# Loss of Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Locally Valued Assets through Redevelopment

## Background, Reasoning and Policy CFS3

Our aim is to maintain and increase, not decrease, the range of facilities that serve the local community. We will oppose any proposal that results in a loss of such facilities through the conversion, demolition or redevelopment of any site or building in the Parish. We will work with organisations and businesses that wish to ensure that Membury has the facilities and amenities it requires.

Paragraph 70 of the NPPF states that planning policies should: *guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.* Strategy 27 in the new East Devon Local Plan also states that the "loss of existing facilities will be resisted".

### Policy CFS3 - Loss of Local Community Facilities, Amenities and Locally Valued Assets through Redevelopment or Change of Use

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of locally valued community assets will only be supported where:

1. there is no reasonable prospect of viable continued use of the existing building or facility which will benefit the local community and they demonstrate a need for the proposed change AND
2. planning approval for "change of use" of any named local facility or amenity will be granted only after it has been expertly marketed at a market price for at least two years AND
3. they do not have an adverse impact on the special character of the area's natural and built environments AND
4. they have been subject to consultation with the local community AND
5. they will not result in the net loss of a community facility where need and demand for that facility and / or an alternative community use has been demonstrated.

### Community Actions and Projects

CA16 - We shall work with the School's governors to ensure that the school is able to continue to offer a first class education to all of the local children of the parish and wider area.

CA17 - Explore further use of school facilities by the community.

### Key supporting evidence

Membury Parish Community Appraisal, Parish Plan, 2000

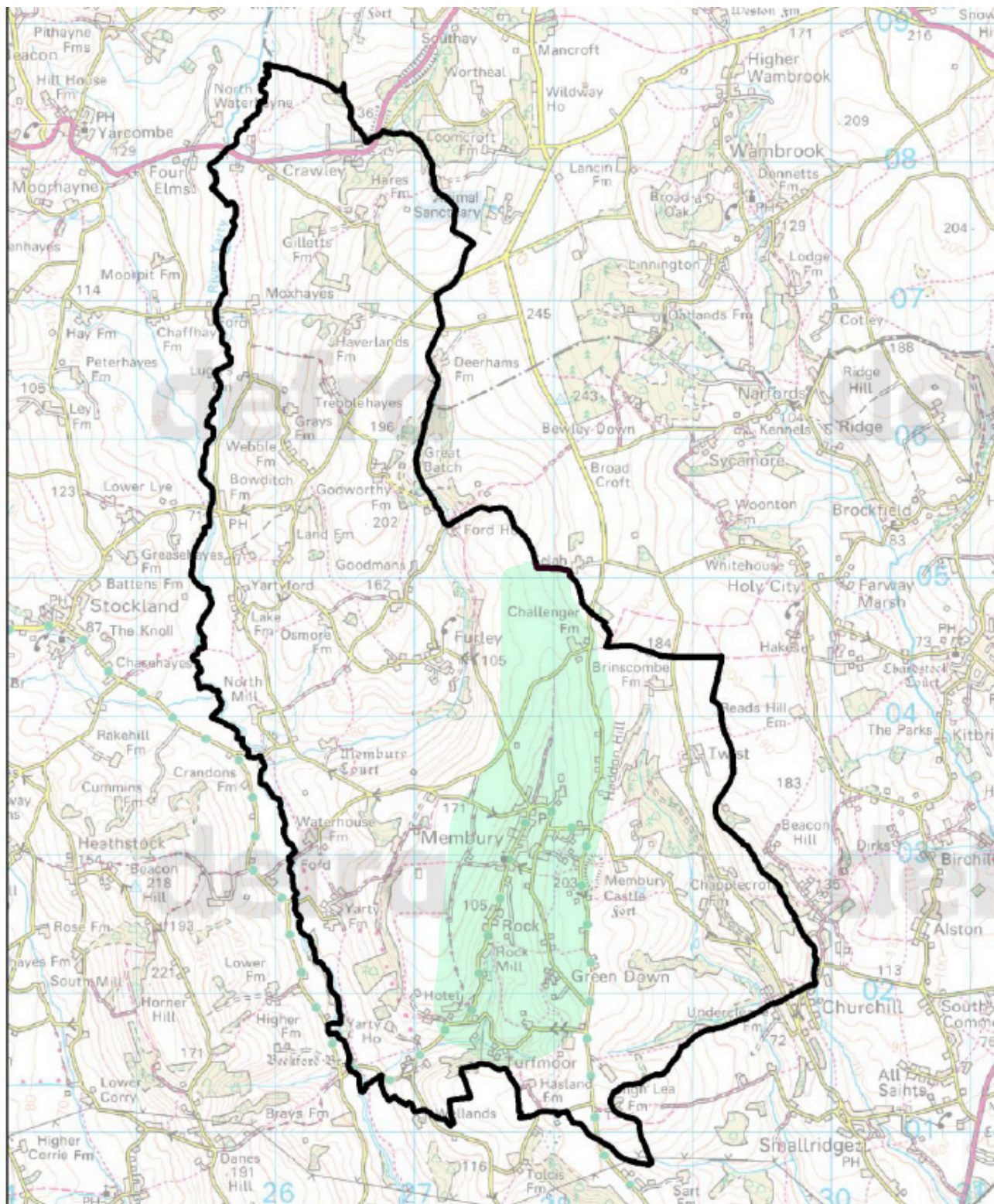
Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, September 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

# Map F1 - Membury village and Rock catchment area

(see Managing Flood Risk section page 37)



Map reprinted by permission of Ordnance Survey and highlights the proposed catchment area based solely upon contours affecting the Environment Agency defined 'at risk' area.

# Managing Flood Risk

Aim	Objectives
<p><b>7. Control and where possible reduce flood risk</b></p>	<p>7a) To work with East Devon District Council and applicants to ensure that any new development, alteration or extension is at least flood neutral and to ensure that specific reference to surface water run-off handling is addressed in the planning application.</p>
	<p>7b) To work with East Devon District Council to ensure that the flood scheme installed and maintained by that authority is kept in full working order. In particular the collection tank [sump] at the head of the scheme and the grille outside Membury Follie must be kept clear of debris.</p>

## Introduction

In general terms, the parish is split geologically between chalk based and clay based sub-structure. This is nowhere more evident than in Membury village where, to the east of the main street the parish is mainly clay and to the west chalk.

Both Membury village and the hamlet of Rock lie on the valley floor - the valley running from Selah in the north to Lewsley Lane in the south. [see Map F1] This valley and its sides form the catchment area which causes most of the flood risk in the parish.

Some work to reduce the risk of flooding was undertaken in October 1976. One new culvert was constructed and two existing ones improved.

In September 1981 work started on a more comprehensive flood alleviation scheme which consists of a collection pit [sump] and weir at the southern end of Bond's Lane (BW33) and a channel under the street which extends as far as the war memorial. There is also a short section past Membury Follie.

The Environment Agency [EA] installed a flood warning siren in the village car park in 2012, which is backed up by self-help measures and a volunteer-organised local ring-around scheme and volunteer Flood Wardens. The storm drain has a sump and weir at its start, at the south end of Bonds Lane. Provided that the street drain-holes, storm drain gullies and the sump are kept clear of debris the scheme has proven invaluable.

Under the auspices of the Parish Council, flooding incidents over the years have been the source of traumatic learning reflected in local knowledge base and modifications to the volunteer procedures and their Flood Emergency Plan. However, flash flooding remains a problem and the valley bottom running from Challenger Farm through the centre of Membury and Rock has been designated as a Zone 3 (1% chance) Flood Risk by EA. This has been exacerbated by the increased area of hard-surfaces under devolved planning rights and EA approved covered clean and dirty water farm yard buildings within the catchment area. This increased rate of run-off can overwhelm the system.

Further, planting of trees at the head of Bonds Lane [BW 33] was established in 2013 to slow down, delay and filter the floodwater emanating from the northern end of the catchment. Since BW33 has been closed by the County Council the lane has become filled with thick vegetation. This has had the effect of slowing down floodwater and trapping debris.

At the time of writing, there are numerous records of occasions when up to 10 properties have been flooded: 1<sup>st</sup> October 1976, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1989, 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2002, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2004, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2008, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2012, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2012, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2013 and these and other incidents, action plans and discussions have been discussed at Parish Council and Annual Public meetings listed in Appendix 4 Supporting Evidence. There are also records of flooding of properties outside the centre of the village.

As can be seen from the data in Appendix 4, there have been at least 9 occasions when the scheme has failed to prevent flooding due to "flash" flooding following either severe short period rainfall in the catchment area or blockage of the storm drain sump or gullies.

The NPPF paragraph 100 says "Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere."

## **Policy F1 New build, self-build, conversion or extension**

To control and where possible reduce flood risk:-

a) within the catchment area defined on Map F1:

1. All planning applications within the catchment area (Map F1) should include a flood risk assessment.
2. Where a planning application from within the catchment area defined in Map F1 has been approved, a condition removing permitted development rights should be applied

b) All planning applications

1. Sustainable drainage systems should be provided unless demonstrated to be inappropriate and
2. Design must ensure that the development does not increase the flood risk to other properties and specific reference to surface water handling must be addressed in the planning application AND
3. The application must demonstrate, as a minimum, compliance with Government-issued Best Practice guidelines which are extant at the time of the application.
4. All new surface water drainage must be into a demonstrably adequate soak-away or other effective storage and slow-release system.
5. Any new or replacement hard-standing within either an existing curtilage or new-build property must comply with best practice regarding surface water permeability, irrespective of the area covered by the hard-standing.

## Community Actions and Projects

CA 18 - The Parish Council to ensure that a Flood Warden or Wardens are appointed with the particular responsibility for checking that the collection pit outfall pipe and roadside storm gullies are not blocked and maintain and update as necessary the Flood Emergency Plan.

CA19 - The Parish Council to work with the Environment Agency to ensure that the warning siren is maintained in full working order.

CA20 - The Parish Council to continue to put pressure on Devon County Council to undertake a Flood Risk Assessment, first requested on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

CA21 - Any plans to reopen BW33 should include systems to ensure that floodwater speeds do not return to the previous damaging levels.

CA22 - The Parish Council to work with the County Council, Environment Agency and landowners to consider further measures to reduce flood risk.

## Key supporting evidence

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, August 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation October 2014

## Transport and Access

Aims	Objectives
8. Maintain and enhance the network of footpaths and bridleways.	8a) Support the position of Footpath Warden under the Parish Council.
	8b) Support small-scale improvement projects for footpaths and bridleways.

### Introduction

Membury parish is served by a network of narrow lanes typical of rural East Devon and the Blackdown Hills. The main access road into and out of the Parish runs north-south connecting the A30, which clips the northern tip of the parish, with the A35 to the south, at Axminster and by-passes the main village, ensuring that traffic in the centre of Membury is relatively light and mostly local. As a parish community we are very car-dependent; there is no bus service. Car ownership is high - only 5% of households do not have regular access to a motor vehicle. Fortunately the parish is also served by the Fare Car (community transport) service. Recent consultation shows that travel and traffic issues are few and most people accept and enjoy their relative seclusion. It is pleasing to record that many local people enjoy walking. Our intent is to recognise the necessity of the motor car and enhance both the intra-support within the parish whilst continuing to make walking, riding and cycling safer and more appealing.

## Rights of Way (Public Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways)

### Background, Reasoning and Policy TRA1

As a community we appreciate the footpath and bridleway network and wish to enjoy the natural environment in our parish in a way that is safe and not detrimental to the countryside or those that inhabit or work within it. We wish to see this maintained and, where or if appropriate, enhanced. The voluntary position of Footpath Warden - appointed through the Parish Council - is one that we wish to see maintained and supported.

### Policy TRA1 – Rights of Way (Public Footpaths and Bridleways)

Proposals for development of or affecting public rights of way will be supported where:

- 1) they promote, protect, maintain and enhance the existing local footpath and bridleway network for use on foot, bicycle or horseback;
- 2) they improve and enhance the existing network through the provision of new or extended routes;
- 3) they prevent motorised vehicles (except those specifically designed for the disabled) illegally using designated footpaths, bridleways and cycleways (where established).

## **Key supporting evidence**

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan 2014-19

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, August 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation October 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

# Economy and Employment

Aims	Objectives
<p><b>9. Help create, support and sustain local businesses.</b></p>	<p>9a) Actively pursue advances in communication technology and support the provision of high-speed broadband and mobile phone signal to every property in the parish.</p>
	<p>9b) Support the diversification of farm businesses and the conversion of agricultural buildings where it is shown to be necessary to help ensure the continued viability of the farm.</p>
	<p>9c) Encourage measures to uphold best practice farming methods, especially the management of land within a flood catchment area.</p>

## Introduction

Membury is a rural community with a rural economy based on agriculture. There is an above average (20%) level of those of working-age working from home<sup>[37]</sup> within the local economy. We envisage the character of the economy and employment patterns showing an ever increasing number of people working from home and our proposals are aimed at supporting this whilst protecting the overall character of the Parish.

## Pursue advances in communications technology - Super-fast Connectivity

### Background, Reasoning and Policy EE1

We recognise that good mobile phone connection and regular use of the internet and social media is important if we are to maintain our quality of life and allow local businesses to flourish. Fast and reliable connection will be essential in future for running successful businesses, accessing services and assistance, furthering education and creating a breadth of opportunities for personal growth and development. We are intent on establishing and maintaining the necessary level of connectivity. While the main driver for our policy is to help sustain and improve the local economy, the need for improved provision extends beyond the traditional business premises and office as many people are now working from home or running a business from home which could require high speed broadband connectivity. There are naturally positive spin-offs in ensuring improved connectivity speeds to households on this basis as the use of the internet for social interaction, education and access to essential services increases with time.

However, this cannot be done at any cost and so recognising the special quality of our natural and built environment, to minimise the visual impact of new connectivity infrastructure such as cabling or telecoms boxes or hubs for super-fast fibre broadband, such infrastructure should be appropriately sited, sympathetically designed and camouflaged so that it is in keeping with its setting and surroundings.

Faster broadband is identified as the biggest need to support employment within the parish.

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<sup>37</sup> Ref: ACRE/DCC Rural profile for Membury Parish Council

Given the numbers working from home or considering it, faster broadband would be important in supporting this, as would improved mobile phone signals.

## Policy EE1 – Super-fast Connectivity

The development of a super-fast broadband infrastructure to serve the Parish will be supported where it is sensitively sited and sympathetically designed.

## Community Actions and Projects

CA23 - The Parish Council will make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of evolving advances in communications technology so that the parish as a whole can benefit.

CA24 - The Parish Council will recognise the importance of mobile signals and broadband or other means of accessing online data and take advice, make representations and lobby, and work with providers, as well as other parishes and organisations to try and obtain effective communications within the parish.

CA25 - It is acceptable for there to be some limited visual impact in order to achieve mobile phone communication, should this be necessary. However, proposals must take into account that this is an AONB.

CA26 - Work with providers to accelerate the introduction of a reliable parish-wide mobile phone signal.

## Key supporting evidence

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, August 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Aug 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

## Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

### Background, Reasoning and Policy EE2

Farming is a vital component of our parish and its economy. We will help ensure that farming businesses can remain viable by permitting the conversion or redevelopment of existing farm buildings where it can be shown that it will make a difference to the business but have little or no impact on the character of its surroundings.

The NPPF (paragraph 28) calls for policies that support a prosperous rural economy. It states that planning policies should “*support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings*”.

In the spirit of this national policy we will not oppose the careful and sensitive conversion and alteration of existing agricultural buildings for business-related purposes. Any development however must conform to other policies in the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan that are aimed at protecting the character, tranquillity and visual appearance of the area.

The AONB Management Plan recognises the need to:

- *Support rural diversification which contributes to business viability, develops local markets and adds value to local products without compromising the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB (Policy RET 1/A)*
- *Encourage the development of sustainable employment opportunities that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, and encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities (Policy RET 1/B)*
- *Support the development of sustainable tourism activities that are compatible with conserving and enhancing natural beauty and the special qualities of the AONB, and encourage people to continue to live and work within their communities (Policy RET 1/C)*

Our policy is intended to facilitate the conversion of redundant agricultural buildings in the interests of increasing the viability of the farm business whilst ensuring the conversion and reuse is compatible with its setting and the special character of the AONB.

## Policy EE2 – Conversion of Agricultural Buildings

To support farm diversification, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings for business or business-related purposes will be supported where:

1. the proposal would be compatible with its landscape setting, AND
2. the local road network could safely accommodate the increase in vehicles resulting from the proposal; AND,
3. the proposal complements, or is otherwise compatible with the agricultural or other land-based activities present in the area; AND,
4. the proposal would not harm the amenity of neighbouring residents and/or other uses; AND,
5. the buildings concerned would not require substantial rebuilding or disproportionate extension.

## Key supporting evidence

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, August 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

## Farming

### Background, Reasoning and Farming New Development Policy EE3

The NPPF (para. 109) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*
- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”*

Farming has described and defined the character of the natural and local environment of our parish for centuries. Changes in farming methods should not put this special and unique character at risk.

The community has made it clear at recent consultation events that it supports measures to uphold best-practice farming methods. Therefore where the proposed change is not enabled by the General Permitted Development Order, we will resist developments and changes on farmland that are likely to have an adverse effect on the established rural landscape or best-practice agricultural methods.

Should new development be deemed necessary it should meet the requirements of the East Devon new Local Plan - Policies EN13 and D7, and Policy EE3 (below) of the Neighbourhood Plan. Policy D7: Agricultural Buildings and Development, of the new Local Plan, states that (sic):

*“New agricultural buildings and/or buildings intended for intensive agricultural activities that could give rise to adverse amenity, landscape, environmental or other impacts will be permitted where there is a genuine agricultural need for the development and the following criteria are met:*

- 1. It is well integrated with its surroundings and closely related to existing buildings, being of appropriate location, scale, design and materials so as not to harm the character, biodiversity and landscape of the rural area particularly within the AONB.*
- 2. It will not be detrimental to the amenity of nearby residents on grounds of smell, noise or fly nuisance.*
- 4. It has been established that there are no other suitable buildings on the holding or in the vicinity which could meet the reasonable need.*
- 5. It will not lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic on the local highway network*
- 6. All clean roof and surface waters will be drained separately from foul drainage and foul drainage will not discharge to any watercourse in order to prevent pollution of the water environment.*

*Proposals for the development of new large scale buildings for livestock or for other use that could have polluting impacts should be accompanied by a Waste Management Plan.”*

## Policy EE3 – Farming (New Development Proposals)

In all cases, new agricultural development proposals requiring planning permission will be expected to demonstrate how they will protect and/or enhance best practice farming methods and the rural characteristics of the surrounding area and demonstrate how the proposal protects and promotes the natural beauty and special character of the AONB landscape.

## Community Actions and Projects

CA27 - Encourage measures to uphold best practice farming methods, especially the management of land within a flood catchment area.

### Key supporting evidence

Membury Parish Biodiversity Audit, 2014

Membury NP Questionnaire Report, Community Council for Devon for Membury Parish Council, August 2014

Membury Aims and Objectives Consultation, October 2014

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

# Energy and Low Carbon

Aim	Objectives
<p><b>10. Support small scale, unobtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes providing they are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped).</b></p>	<p>10a) Ensure that any renewable or low carbon energy schemes are sensitively sited and screened (appropriately landscaped) to protect the essential qualities of the AONB.</p>
	<p>10b) Resist large-scale and obtrusive renewable or low carbon energy schemes that are likely to have a negative impact on enjoyment of the natural and built environment and are contrary to our Vision.</p>
	<p>10c) Develop possible ecological solutions to energy conservation and generation using any natural features within the constraints of all other policies</p>

## Introduction

We recognise the importance and value that renewable and low carbon energy schemes (and improvements to energy efficiency of buildings where done sensitively) can have in helping provide alternatives to fossil based fuels and therefore help reduce carbon dioxide emissions, improve the security of energy supply, reduce households bills for energy, generate an income for community organisations and businesses and reduce the cost of supply of energy.

However, in practical terms, different types of renewable and low carbon energy installations will be suitable in different built and natural landscapes. We have already set out how we value our natural landscape and tranquillity in Membury within the context of the AONB and the policies we have developed on energy proposals reflect this position.

## Small and Large Scale Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

### Background, Reasoning and Policies ELC1 (Small Scale) and ELC2 (Large scale)

Evidence we have gathered<sup>[38]</sup>, together with the views of our local community, have identified support for smaller scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes which respect the qualities of the landscape and natural environment as a whole and do not have an adverse impact on the beauty of and biodiversity within our parish.

This includes the findings of the “Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills” report which assessed the suitability, in broad terms, in the AONB of different types and scales of renewable and low carbon energy solutions. Table 4 below, reproduced from the “Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills” report<sup>[39]</sup>, sets out this position and also helpfully confirms what we mean in our policies by “small scale” and “large scale” renewable energy installations.

<sup>38</sup> Such as the Blackdown Hills Management Plan, 2014; the Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report, 2010; and, the Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in the Devon Landscape: Advice Note, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> p.9, Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report, Land Use Consultants in association with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, 2010

Table 4

TYPE	TECHNOLOGY	SUITABILITY
<b>Biomass</b>	Large-scale 10-40MW electricity generation plant	
	Small Combined Heat and Power plant	
	Business / domestic biomass boilers	
	Business / domestic biomass stoves	
<b>Anaerobic digestion</b>	Centralised anaerobic digestion (AD) plant	
	AD serving a group of farms	
	AD serving a single farm	
<b>Waste to energy scheme</b>		
<b>Micro-hydro</b>	Micro-hydro	
	Restoration of traditional mill sites	
<b>Photovoltaics</b>	Building associated PV systems	
	Solar PV farms	v. limited
<b>Solar hot water</b>		
<b>Ground, air and water source heat pumps</b>		
<b>Community heating</b>	Small-scale or micro community heating	
<b>Wind</b>	Large-scale turbines (90m – 135m)	
	Medium-scale turbines (25m – 90m)	v. limited
	Small-scale turbines (12m – 25m height)	
	Micro turbines (<11m)	

## Policy ELC1 - Small Scale Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

- Proposals for renewable or low carbon energy schemes will be supported where they are small scale, sensitively sited, demonstrate they will not have an adverse impact upon and protect the quality of Membury's and the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's landscape, biodiversity, tranquillity and wildlife habitats.
- Where appropriate landscaping should be used to lessen the impact on the landscape.
- In addition to other policies in this Plan, proposals should take into account the advice given in the "Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report", 2010.
- Planning applications for smaller wind turbines will be assessed in terms of visual intrusion and the appropriateness of the site and must be accompanied by site-specific measured wind speed data and not solely the NOABL (estimated) database.

## Policy ELC2 - Large Scale Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes

Medium and large-scale renewable or low carbon energy schemes (as per Table 4) will be supported where they have no negative impact on enjoyment of the natural and built environment nor on the quality of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's landscape, biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

### Community Actions and Projects

CA28 - Encourage possible ecological solutions to energy conservation and generation using any natural features within the constraints of all other policies.

CA29 - The Parish Council will make every reasonable effort to keep abreast of evolving advances in electric vehicle technology and potential charge points so that the parish as a whole can benefit.

### Key supporting evidence

Blackdown Hills AONB Management Plan

Devon Landscape Character Assessment, Devon County Council

Natural England National Character Areas, Blackdowns NCA 147, Statements SEO2, 3 and 4

Renewable Energy in the Blackdown Hills Report

Accommodating Wind and Solar PV Developments in the Devon Landscape: Advice Note

*(More relevant evidence is summarised in the Membury Parish Written Evidence Report)*

## Monitoring and Review

While there is no statutory requirement for the impact of this Plan and its policies to be monitored, the Parish Council will periodically monitor the impact of policies on change in the parish by considering the policies' effectiveness in the planning application decision making process. The Parish Council will do this by referring to this Plan when reviewing planning applications. The Clerk will keep a record of the application, any applicable policies, the comment from the Parish Council and the eventual outcome of the application. The delivery of community actions that have been identified will also be periodically monitored.

A full or partial review of this Plan is unlikely to be considered necessary during its lifetime unless triggered by changes to legislation, changes to national or District-wide planning policies or significant planning issues being raised by the local community which cannot be dealt with effectively by a combination of national, district and / or existing neighbourhood plan policies.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Refer to Built and Historical Environment policy BHE1.2 Historical and architectural assets - see [www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

### Listed Buildings and Historical Sites

SITE	GRADE	List N°
1. Crawley Bridge	2	1098183
2. Nimrods	2	1098438
3. April Cottage	2	1098439
4. Lea Hill Farm Hotel	2	1098440
5. Cleave Hill	2	1098441
6. Grey Farmhouse - now known as Grays Farm		1098442
7. North Grey - now known as North Grays	2	1098443
8. Stotehayes	2	1098444
9. Kinders	2	1098445
10. Colecroft Cottage	2	1098446
11. Barn Immediately West Of Osmore Farmhouse	2	1098447
12. Rock House	2	1098448
13. Forge Cottage	2	1098449
14. Gaffers	2	1098450
15. Toehill	2	1098451
16. Land Farm House	2	1098452
17. Land Cottage And Lancet Barn Approximately 23 Metres North North-East Of Land Farm House	2	1098453
18. Yarty Farm House Including Former Bakehouse Immediately South West	2	1098454
19. Converted Farm Building Immediately South Of Higher Yartyford	2	1098455
20. Barn Immediately North Of Lower Yartyford	2	1098456
21. Gapper's Farmhouse	2	1098457
22. Orchards, Yartyford Lane	2	1098458
23. Former Chapel Immediately North Of Membury Court	2*	1098473
24. Linhay Immediately West Of Membury Court	2	1098474
25. Footbridge Immediately South Of Membury Court	2	1098475
26. Goodmans	2	1098476
27. Stables Immediately North Of Ford Farmhouse	2	1098477
28. Godworthy Farmhouse	2	1098478
29. Trebblehayes	2	1098479
30. Gilletts Farmhouse	2	1098480
31. Membury Court	2	1170743
32. Barn Approximately 50 Yards West Of Membury Court	2	1170752
33. Barn Immediately South East Of Brinscombe Farmhouse	2	1170754
34. Ford Farmhouse	2	1170759
35. Barn Approximately 20 Yards North East Of Ford Farmhouse, Casehayes Lane	2	1170765

36. Haveland, Chard Road - now known as Haverlands Farm	2	1170770
37. Stevens Farmhouse, Crawley Common	2	1170775
38. Rose Cottage, Furley	2	1170783
39. Barn Adjoining West And South West Of Lugg's Farmhouse	2	1170806
40. Moxhayes Farmhouse	2	1170812
41. Church Of St John The Baptist	1	1170817
42. North Mill House	2	1170814
43. Osmore Farmhouse	2	1170843
44. Rock Cottage	2	1170848
45. Rock Mill	2	1170851
46. Quakers	2	1170857
47. Cottage Immediately South East Of Toehill - now known as Lords Fillet	2	1170879
48. Higher Yartyford	2	1170892
49. Lower Yartyford	2	1170900
50. Wall Immediately South East Of Lower Yartyford	2	1170907
51. Barn Immediately South Of Osmore Farmhouse	2	1248176
52. Farm Building Immediately South East Of Gapper's Farmhouse	2	1305839
53. Long Orchard	2	1305858
54. West Barn Approximately 23 Metres North Of Land Farm House	2	1305866
55. Garden Boundary Wall East Of Osmore Farmhouse	2	1305887
56. Crawley Farmhouse	2	1305893
57. Rices	2	1305894
58. Hasland Farm House	2	1333562
59. Bridge Meadow, Crawley Common	2	1333573
60. Goddards	2	1333574
61. Rosemary Cottage, Heath Common	2	1333595
62. Knightslands, Hill Common	2	1333596
63. Lugg's Farmhouse Including Outbuilding Adjoining South East	2*	1333598
64. The Folly	2	1333599
65. Former Water Mill Immediately North Of North Mill House	2	1333600
66. Inglenook Cottage	2	1333601
67. Membury War Memorial	2	1438719
68. The Below Ground Remains Of The Former Chapel At Membury Court	Scheduling	1002513
69. Membury Castle	Scheduling	1017951
70. Beckford Bridge	2	1098481

## Appendix 2 Membury Design Statement

See pages 53 - 59 inclusive

## Appendix 3

**Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty "Design Guide for Houses".**

This is available at [www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk](http://www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk)

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The Parish

Membury parish lies within the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in East Devon, with its centre some 3.5 miles NW from the nearest town (Axminster) and 7 miles south-west of Chard. The parish is 4 miles long (N to S) and is bordered by Somerset (to the North) and within 1.5 miles of Dorset (to the East).

This is a rural parish of scattered farms, dating back to before Anglo-Saxon times (and mentioned in the Domesday Book) containing the hamlets of Crawley, Furley, Rock and Webble Green – all within 3 miles of Membury Village centre, where there is a School, Village Hall, C of E Church and a licensed PO/Shop/Meeting Place. There is an extremely active range of clubs (badminton to short mat bowls, pantomime to local history) meeting in the village hall and/or the Meeting Place.

The parish is connected by a maze of narrow lanes derived from original track ways and is defined by its open, sweeping views across valleys: views down to and from small hamlets: lanes with their high mixed-species hedges, Devon banks, passing places and abundant, varied wild fauna: small orchards and local-stone-walled buildings with a variety of traditional roofing materials (clay tiles, slate, thatch and corrugated iron).

## 1.2 Methodology, data collection and assessment

In 2006 the Parish Appraisal was published following the feedback from public meetings and a questionnaire sent to all 213 households. Some 183 (86%) responses were received and analysed with the help of Devon County Council (DCC). The Parish Appraisal was formally adopted as Membury Parish Plan in March 2007.

In 2006 the Parish Council, as a result of discussing at Council the Actions identified in the Appraisal, began to investigate the next strategic steps to maximise the usefulness of the Appraisal. In February 2007 a sub-committee was established to be responsible for preparing a Village Design Statement to identify the landscape, building design and material features that the majority wished to see protected – with the intention of it being formally adopted by East Devon District Council (EDDC) as Supplementary Planning Guidance for Membury.

This exercise was publicly launched at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2007. Further public feedback through an exhibition and questionnaire gained a 50% electoral roll response plus a document created by all the pupils in the village school which resulted from their parallel project – “What we like about Membury”. The Design Statement progress was reported through open discussion, as an agenda item at all Council meetings and articles in The Membury Mercury, a quarterly magazine delivered to every household in the parish.

## 1.3 Design Statement summary

This Design Statement is the result of public consultation and consensus, working with EDDC to complement and augment the statutory planning processes.

It specifies how we wish to manage change in our parish and the landscape and standards we want to see maintained. Even apparently small deviations if insufficiently considered, whether they be by private individuals, commercial or agricultural organisations or local authorities, have and will combine to make the parish appearance noticeably worse.

The purpose, therefore, of this design statement is to set down those special features and happy circumstances that combine to make Membury such an attractive parish.

# Membury Design Statement



## 2 History

Contributed by the Membury Local History Society

*"When I was young I felt in my bones that the landscape itself was speaking to me."*

Prof. W.E Hoskins

People who have had the good fortune to live in the parish of Membury for several years must have become aware of the many different facets that have produced its unique landscape and history.

The Iron Age 'Castle' that gave the village its name; its lanes, old roads and trackways that provide keys to its settlement patterns; the names and layout of the fields that reflect the development of agriculture from the very earliest of times – these define Membury.

Whilst we have archaeological evidence of the presence of man within the parish from at least Neolithic times through to the Romans, written records associate the parish with King Athelstan and the Norman occupation onwards.

The parish has been 'owned' by kings and abbeyes (and their underlings) but the people – being so far from these centres of administration – have always displayed an independent, nonconformist spirit, as evidenced by those who fought in the Civil War, followed the Duke of Monmouth to Sedgemoor or joined the Quaker movement. Our most well-known local campaigner was Thomas Wakley (MP and founder of The Lancet) who supported the rights of the Tolpuddle martyrs, spoke out against flogging in the army and the inhumanity of the workhouse.

Today we still celebrate the restoration of the monarchy on Oak Apple Day in the churchyard of St. John Baptist. We are truly unique — we must preserve our uniqueness.



# 3 The landscape

## 3.1 Wider landscape

Existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows, boundary walls, etc. [even where they are not afforded specific protection by tree preservation orders, through being in a protected area (AONB), or as curtilage to a designated listed building] should be considered for retention and enhancement in any new development or redevelopment to both protect and enhance the existing character of Membury parish.

- 3.1.1 **Impact on the skyline should be carefully considered and the existing skyline maintained wherever possible.**
- 3.1.2 **There is a presumption of retention unless a better design solution arises from removal and the justification for removal must be covered in the planning application Design and Access Statement.**

The public surveys and questionnaires have highlighted the vast number of vistas within the parish that people wish to see preserved and protected. This is translated as indicating the desire to protect what exists and that the present countryside structure, building density and styles complement each other and constitute 'our parish'.

## 3.2 Trees, hedges and orchards

Within our parish mature trees, hedges and orchards support a huge range of species. Our native broadleaved trees help support a rich wildlife; they are often large and old, providing a natural habitat for our native flora and fauna and food for insects, birds and animals. Even isolated trees standing in fields in farmland provide a haven to wildlife.

Our hedgerows support a wide variety of wild flowers and wildlife and are an intrinsic part of the parish landscape. These are all in decline through hedgerow loss and the careless use of oversized agricultural machinery.

We also have a number of old, small orchards with mature trees that are particularly important because they provide both a link to our past and a variety of old fruit species that are no longer being planted. They, too, often provide regular favoured habitats and food for birds and animals and their continuity makes them particularly important.

- 3.2.1 **Removal of trees, hedges or orchards**  
**If removal is proposed this must be justified in the planning application Design and Access Statement and be supported with a specific plan for replanting/ rejuvenation with appropriate varieties procured from local stock.**
- 3.2.2 **Trees**  
**Planting and/or replacement planting should be of native species selected from oak, ash, beech, field maple and hazel.**
- 3.2.3 **Hedges**  
**Must be of traditional single or mixed species, e.g. any of the above trees plus hawthorn and/or blackthorn, holly, juniper, wild privet, dog rose and wild cherry.**



- 3.2.4 **Orchards**  
**Any development must make every effort to preserve veteran fruit trees and small orchards. Replacement of an existing orchard, as opposed to new additional planting, must be with veteran varieties.**

## 3.3 Lanes

The network of lanes around the parish is an important part of its historic character. The lanes are now a mix of metalled roads and unmetalled tracks forming part of the access routes around the hamlets. Their character is defined by the low level of vehicular traffic, the lack of inappropriate signage, the mature/ancient mixed traditional species hedgerows on Devon banks and a profusion of wild flowers growing in the banks and verges beside the lanes. The hedge banks provide a natural habitat for animals, wild flowers and plants. All this provides a balance between nature and man which forms an intrinsic part of our parish.

- 3.3.1 **Actively resist any attempts to introduce any extra signs to the area.**
- 3.3.2 **It should be accepted as the duty of all residents and contractors to maintain this aspect of our rural heritage through specified use of suitably-sized vehicles which includes removal or delivery company vans, harvesters or other agricultural vehicles and machinery.**
- 3.3.3 **The planning application Design and Access Statement must explicitly address vehicular access and handling.**
- 3.3.4 **Vehicles used in the parish must be appropriate to their access routes to prevent damage to the lane and track banks and hedges.**

# 4 Design and materials

## 4.1 General design principles

All planning applications (outline and full) are required to provide a Design and Access Statement at the time of submission.

4.1.1 **Additionally an application must identify how it respects and enhances the character of the area and highlighting – with explanation and reasoning – any areas that do not meet this Design Statement.**

4.1.2 Mass

Typically, Membury is not a parish with imposing, grand, large houses but of farmhouses and their support dwellings nestling in the clefts within the countryside. It is noticeable that some newer properties and extensions blend into their surroundings and the topography whereas others do not.

All new building (including light industrial and farm buildings) should address this aspect of their design and ensure that their mass and degree of prominence consider the adjacent buildings, the land contours and the consequential views of the new build.

4.1.2.1 **Where the applicant deems appropriate and in all cases of dispute, it is recommended that a scaffold outline of the proposal should be erected (at the applicants cost) to show all interested parties the impact of the proposal.**

4.1.2.2 **Any development or extension/re-build should not dominate the landscape, hamlet or village but be in harmony with its surroundings.**

4.1.2.3 **Plans must show the proposed ridge height relative to those of adjacent properties with appropriate estimation of the effect of the contours around the sites.**

4.1.2.4 **Ridge heights must recognise and follow the landscape and contours.**



4.1.3 Dormers  
The use of dormers, to reduce ridge height, is approved but they should have pitched roofs and be subservient to the main roof.

4.1.4 Skyline  
Future development should wherever possible avoid building on a skyline.

4.1.5 Fuel and refuse storage  
Fuel and refuse storage should be concealed from public view and, if possible, from neighbours.

4.1.6 Footprint size  
Membury is a rural environment, typified by houses of 'farmhouse/country' designs, all with gardens. Building footprints are typically less than 25% of plot and also provide on-site parking. This is a major contributor to the spaciousness and feel of both the parish and its hamlets.

**The scale of future developments should seek to retain the existing balance between buildings and greenery, which is part of the distinctive character of the parish. As a guide, developments (including garages and hard-standings) should be less than 25% of the plot area.**

4.1.7 Developments of more than one building  
4.1.7.1 **High density development will be resisted as it is not appropriate to the area.**  
4.1.7.2 **The scale of future developments should reflect the existing pattern of development which is characterised by small groups of dwellings (not usually exceeding six) of varied traditional designs.**

4.1.8 Aerials  
TV dish aerials should be discreetly sited and where possible away from the main frontage.



## 4.2 Buildings and external walls appearance

Typical of an established community, Membury has grown over the years using a mix of local materials – primarily flint and Tolcis stone – and in more recent times (as local sources became restricted) economically available materials such as stone cladding and painted render. The use of modern materials **MUST** be in keeping with the locale and not become a feature in itself. Where possible traditional materials (flint, stone and rendering [of a traditionally designed building, not a ‘modern’ house]) should be used.

- 4.2.1 **Obvious faux stone and full timber cladding of houses should be avoided.**
- 4.2.2 **All-brick is not preferred as an external wall finish. However, it is suitable when used as window reveals/surrounds, coignes or in conjunction with other finishes.**
- 4.2.3 **Render colours should blend with, be sympathetic to and tone in with adjacent properties and those in the area around the development/extension.**

## 4.3 Roofs

(See 4.1.2 Mass – and particularly 4.1.2.3)

Within Membury traditional materials (clay tiles – usually roman or double roman style, slate, thatch or cedar shingles) dominate and are the preferred roofing materials for on-going use. Many roofs were originally thatched and are therefore of significant pitch. This should be reflected in new designs. It is recognised that concrete tile over traditional timber and roofing felt is considered an ‘A rated’ material in the BRE’s Green Guide to Specification, however public opinion was against the use of these tiles.

- 4.3.1 **When re-building or extending, roofing materials must, first, be of traditional materials (roman or double roman style clay, slate, cedar shingles or thatch) or, secondly, match existing – providing they are traditional.**
- 4.3.2 **Concrete tiles are not preferred.**
- 4.3.3 **Gable overhangs and eaves are preferred.**
- 4.3.4 **Flat roofs (except where they form part of an holistic design approach that complies with the spirit of the general statement) should be avoided.**



## 4.4 Windows

Double-glazed timber frames of hard wood (from sustainable sources) or painted softwood is the preferred design. Recent developments in u-PVC have resulted in an increasing use of this modern material. However, it is noted that separate multi-paned styles with external glazing bars are more appropriate within the parish.

- 4.4.1 **Whilst u-PVC is acceptable in all bar Listed Buildings – see 4.4.2 below – all fenestration design with externally applied glazing bar detail must be in keeping with the property period and design.**
- 4.4.2 **Listed Buildings: should replicate existing materials if appropriate to the prime listed building period – or be in wood. Replacement windows should duly consider conservation and use the latest specification heat-retaining glass.**

## 4.5 Boundaries

As well as Devon banks, property boundaries, in the main, are of local stone and flint walls, hawthorn and mixed hedging or stock fencing.

- 4.5.1 **The above are the preferred boundary types for all future developments and should ordinarily be incorporated into any property changes. Consideration should be given to adjacent boundaries in finally deciding which is the most appropriate style for the new application.**
- 4.5.2 **Wooden panelling should be avoided particularly as front and visible side boundaries.**
- 4.5.3 **Boundary walls greater than 2m in height should not be used between adjacent properties.**
- 4.5.4 **Open plan layouts should be avoided.**

## 4.6 Energy conservation features

In general, we want to encourage appropriate conservation methods and features within both new and re-build – providing they do not compromise the final design. Green building design is welcome providing it is appropriate to the site.

### 4.6.1 Wind generation

Units may not be installed in locations where either:

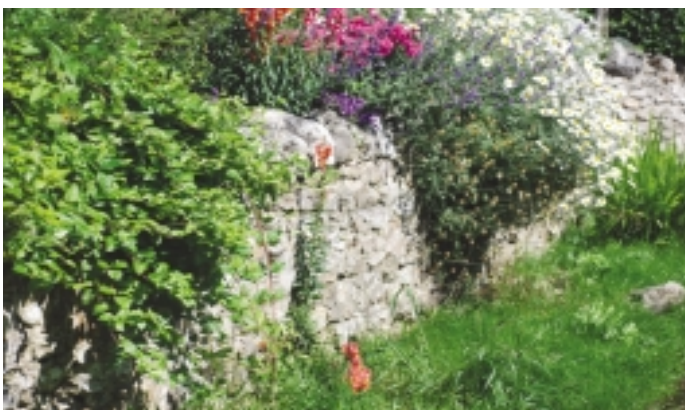
- the noise would affect neighbouring properties or
- the landscape, or views of the landscape around the wind generator, would be adversely affected.

### 4.6.2 Solar generation

These units are to be sited such that they are visually unobtrusive when seen from public access.

## 4.7 Garages (free-standing)

Garages should have pitched roofs similar to their main house and, where detached, need to be set back from the building line.



## 4.8 Porches and car ports

4.8.1 Porches should have pitched roofs matching the main roof of the property to which they are attached and be of a restricted size, with a footprint no more than twice the width of the door in either direction.

4.8.2 Porch joinery design should be traditional.

4.8.3 Car ports, in the main, are not deemed to be appropriate. If absolutely necessary they should be designed and constructed to be subservient to and in a traditional style with roofs to match the main. Their size and visual impact must be minor when compared to the main dwelling.

4.8.4 Car port position should be obscured and away from the main building line.

## 4.9 Surface water and drainage

The centre of Membury village, running down the valley to Rock is an area at risk of flooding. From Selah/Bewley Down, through Challenger the numerous springs and surface water from the surrounding buildings and lanes is funnelled into this valley and the street gully. It is therefore of concern to those inhabitants to ensure that risk of flash-flooding and the management of surface water is controlled.

4.9.1 When planning permission is granted for new residential development within or adjoining a Flood Zone (as identified by the Environment Agency), permitted development rights in respect of extensions, curtilage buildings and hardstandings shall be withdrawn. Any resultant planning applications can then be assessed by the Local Planning Authority in the light of Environment Agency advice.

4.9.2 All new drainage must be into a demonstrably adequate soak-away.

## 4.10 Exterior security and street lighting

One of the attractions of the parish is that it benefits from a low level of light pollution. Responses from our parish surveys have shown a very strong desire that street lighting should be avoided wherever possible unless clear reasons are provided for any additional lighting.

Further, exterior security and flood-lighting must be carefully designed to ensure that the 'dark skies' are protected. Typically this will mean that flat glass, full horizontal cut-off luminaires (light units) should ordinarily be used. Lamp wattage and type must be important considerations

## 4.11 Agricultural and brown field buildings

The Parish recognises the positive advantages of having a healthy agricultural economy. In turn the farming community are required to understand their impact upon all parishioners and the visual impact they do and can have on the countryside.

4.11.1 All new agricultural buildings must meet sections 3, 4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.4, 4.1.5, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9 and 4.10.

# Membury Design Statement



## Acknowledgements

East Devon District Council – Claire Rodway (Senior Planning Officer),  
Steve Power (Urban Design Officer) and Paul Diviani (District Councillor)  
Devon County Council – IT Department and County Councillor Douglas Hull  
Blackdown Hills Partnership – Lisa Turner  
Membury Local History Society  
Community Council of Devon – Paul Edwards  
Membury Community School – Mrs. Weatherley, staff and pupils

## Appendix 4

Membury Housing Specific questionnaire Note: Jason Hawkes is no longer resident in the parish

**Membury Parish Council  
Neighbourhood Plan 2016 – 2031  
HOUSING SPECIFIC QUESTIONNAIRE**

The neighbourhood plan is nearly done but we have a grey area surrounding our interpretation of the parishioners' requirements for housing and the District Council's recommendations, which are very different.

Therefore we need everyone in your household to answer the simple questions overleaf and **return to the PO or any member of the Steering Group by 25<sup>th</sup> July** to ensure we represent the parishioners' requirements in our plan.

Since we started the Neighbourhood Plan there have been changes proposed to the housing rules in the draft District Council Local Plan which, if they remain and are approved by the Government Inspector, will affect Membury and be contrary to the views the majority of parishioners expressed in our first Questionnaire.

Thank you for your continued support.

IT IS OUR PARISH

WE **URGENTLY** NEED YOUR HELP AND CONFIRMATION OF YOUR VIEWS!

**Please return this form by Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July  
to the Post Office, here at Haddon Fields or any Steering Group member.**  
Spare copies of this Questionnaire are available from the Post Office.

Alex Tasker

### Steering Group Members

MEMBER	HOUSE	TELEPHONE NUMBER
Mark Burrough	Deerhams Farm	07860 246156
Sam Dare	Little Goslins	881 580
Jason Hawkes		
Heather Pearse	Challenger Farm	881 255
Alex Tasker	Haddon Fields	881 364
Jeremy Wallace	Membury PO & Shop	881 225
John Watkins	Clarence Cottage	881 630
Nick Yool	Forge Farm	881 428

## Membury Parish Neighbourhood Plan Housing Questionnaire

Q1- In the last 15 years, there have been 8 new houses in Membury Parish. Over the next 15 years, how many new houses do you think there should be? (Please tick one box only)

	No new houses	1-8	1-15	More than 15
Person 1				
Person 2				
Person 3				
Person 4				

If you ticked 'No new houses', you need not answer the rest of the questions.  
Many thanks for taking part.

Q2- Should all new housing be concentrated within Membury Village, or be spread around the other hamlets and clusters in the Parish?

	Village only	Entire Parish
Person 1		
Person 2		
Person 3		
Person 4		

Q3- Should all new development only be met by barn/outbuilding conversions and new agricultural dwellings?

	Yes	No
Person 1		
Person 2		
Person 3		
Person 4		

If you ticked 'Yes', you need not answer the rest of the questions.  
Many thanks for taking part.

Q4- Do you support a policy that allows only one specific development, which meets the needs identified in the recent 'Housing Needs Survey' (2 affordable houses and some form of retirement/ sheltered accommodation) and no other?

	Yes	No
Person 1		
Person 2		
Person 3		
Person 4		

If you ticked 'Yes', you need not answer the next question. Many thanks for taking part.

Q5- Would you support small-scale, new development, in which the people of Membury have no say other than to ensure that the 2008 Membury Design Statement is followed?

	Yes	No
Person 1		
Person 2		
Person 3		
Person 4		

Many thanks, we very much appreciate your input

## Appendix 5

Refer to Meeting Community Housing needs, Policy HP3.1

### Definition of “Local Families” and “Local Elderly”

Over the past 50 years this parish, like many others, has seen small properties bought and re-developed to make them more commercially attractive. Consequently the more affordable properties have been removed from the market/housing mix. It has become extremely difficult for young people to stay within the parish and own their own home.

The intention of this policy is for the parish to support a community house building project, possibly using a Community Land Trust [CLT] or some similar parish legal entity, primarily for the benefit of parishioners. This should provide low cost houses for younger families together with homes for elderly residents, for the latter probably on a commercial basis. The implementation of this policy will enable young people to remain in the parish by making available low cost homes. Additionally, they might provide employment in maintenance support (be it cleaning, laundering, gardening or decorating etc.) for the older residents. Thus, it is hoped, the mature can down-size yet stay within the community and their social sphere; free up their properties for up-scaling locals or new residents - thereby enabling housing market movement; the continued evolution of the parish; promoting local employment for local people and keeping a wide age range demographic.

The Steering Group commissioned a Housing Needs Survey conducted by the Community Council of Devon<sup>[40]</sup> [see footnote 32, page 27] which indicated an on-going requirement of approximately 2 affordable houses and a much larger (20) interest in housing for the elderly. At the time of writing “affordable” housing has developed its own connotation, therefore we have tended to use the apolitical term “low cost housing”. All political parties are promoting their own ideas for providing affordable houses.

A CLT is a mechanism whereby the parish (through the Parish Council) can own in perpetuity the site thus taking out the land cost and any subsequent market inflation from the final property price - thus reducing the cost of the home. There are other mechanisms which attempt to achieve the same end and it is also possible to design and build a lower cost home. The current political trends suggest that other new government initiatives may emerge over coming years and should be considered.

Selection must be through a criteria based policy giving priority to parishioners. The criteria must recognise applicants’ length of time living in the parish and/or closeness of association with the parish through direct family plus their contribution within our community. It is not intended just to help reduce the area’s housing waiting list. Elderly would normally be regarded as over the age of 55.

There are potential sites which will meet all the requirements of this Plan.

It will be the responsibility of the parish council through their CLT management committee to define their selection criteria but it should be a priority-based selection which reflects the connection to the parish both in terms of length of residency and/or closeness to family members currently living in the parish plus any contribution that the applicants have made to the parish.

These prioritised criteria should apply whether selecting suitable local families or local elderly.

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<sup>40</sup> The Community Council of Devon is now known as Devon Communities Together

## Appendix 6 - Membury & Rock Flooding Supporting Evidence: flooding incidents and preventative action plan/s

### Membury Parish Council meeting minutes:

- 1975 - 9th September, 27th October and 8th December  
1976 - 20th January, 8th March and 13th April  
1977 - 17th January  
1978 - 19th September and 1st November  
1980 - 15th September  
1981 - 27th May, 27th July, 15th September and 10th November (construction of flood scheme)  
1990 - 15th January and 21st February  
1998 - 13th January  
2000 - 11th January  
2004 - 3rd February  
2009 - 17th February, 24th March, 19th May, 14th July, 18th August, 29th September and 17th November  
2010 - 4th January, 16th February, 30th March, 18th May, 17th August, 11th October and 29th November (all siren)  
2011 - 17th January, 1st March, 12th April, 17th May, 5th July, 16th August, 4th October and 5th December (all siren)  
2012 - 14th February, 27th March, 15th May, 3rd July, 28th August and 4th December\* (\* = flooding)  
2013 - 5th February\*, 19th March, 21st May, 2nd July, 20th August, 8th October and 3rd December (\* = flooding)  
2014 - 28th January and 18th March

### Annual Parish Meeting minutes:-

- 1976 - 8th March - also special open meeting 18th October 1976  
1977 - 18th April  
1981 - 16th June and 29th September - special open meetings to consider flood prevention scheme.  
1982 - 23rd March  
1983 - 25th April - First flood prevention scheme completed.  
1998 - 21st April  
2001 - 9th April  
2009 - 28th April  
2010 - 27th April  
2011 19th April  
2012 - 24th April  
2013 - 27th April - includes flood scheme review.

# Membury, Devon Parish Map & designated Neighbourhood

