

Standish Neighbourhood Development Plan

2026–2040

**Pre-Submission Draft
(Regulation 14)**

June 2026

**Standish
Parish
Council**





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FOREWORD

The production of a Neighbourhood Development Plan has been an aspiration of Standish Parish Council for some years. Its development has met a number of obstacles along the way, and involved many hours of work, so it is a particular pleasure for me that we have now reached a stage where I am able to introduce this Plan to you. The Standish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) takes the opportunity offered by the Localism Act 2011 to create a statutory plan which will shape and protect Standish over the next 14 years.

The word “development” is a difficult and controversial one. For many, it is not something they wish to see in our community, yet development will assuredly take place. The form it takes may be good, bad or indifferent. The purpose of this document is to influence decisions about development in Standish so that it remains a beautiful place, with enhanced and sustainable opportunities for those who wish to live and work here.

The NDP aims to ensure that development within the parish will contribute to what residents most value about Standish: a strong neighbourly community living in a tranquil rural setting with good access to local services. It contains aspirations for greater sustainability in housing; travel and transport; and services. It aims to ensure that priority is given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside and to protecting and enhancing its rich biodiversity. All planning applications through to 2040 will have to pay regard to this NDP and conform to it.

This is the second iteration of the NDP. The first, based on consultation within the parish, was prepared by the Standish Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group under the guidance of a planning consultant. Unfortunately, that version was turned down at Examination in May 2022. The Examiner’s report, setting out her reasons for recommending that the NDP did not meet the Basic Conditions, may be viewed at

[Standish-Neighbourhood-Development-Plan-Independent-Examiners-Report-May-2022-retitled.pdf](#)

A few months later, the planning consultant withdrew from the revising work.

Since then, the NDP has been extensively rewritten and revised, based on the earlier public consultations, by a smaller number from the original Steering Group, with professional guidance from Stroud District Council planning officers. We are very grateful to them and also to landscape consultants, Illman Young, whose detailed Landscape Appraisal continues to provide important background to the NDP.



Standish Village Hall and Church with the Cotswolds National Landscape behind.

Much has changed during the period the Plan has been in preparation. Stroud District Council’s draft Local Plan, to which this NDP refers, has faced many difficulties and is still formally at the Examination in Public stage. A limited consultation relating to highways matters is currently underway and closes in June 2026. Separately, the Government is requiring all local authorities to commence new Local Plans in 2026. In addition, we are currently undergoing local government restructuring. In 2028, Stroud District Council will no longer exist and Standish will be part of a new unitary authority. These factors only make it more important that we have an NDP that seeks to capture all that is special about Standish and to ensure that its features and character are taken into account in any planning applications over the next 14 years.

On behalf of Standish Parish Council, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of the NDP since work started in earnest in Autumn 2018. I believe that we now have a Plan that is clear, concise and fit for purpose and will impact positively on development in the parish until 2040.

Sue Hartley
Chair, Standish Parish Council

June 2026

INTRODUCTION

This is the main Neighbourhood Development Plan policy document and it provides policy and supporting text that will guide development in Standish until 2040.

There are 6 **evidence papers** that review the available evidence and Development Plan policies to justify the approach in the NDP:

1. Planning Policy Context
2. Standish Development Framework
3. Locally Significant Heritage Assets
4. Sustainable Travel in Standish
5. Community Facilities
6. Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site

There are 2 **free-standing appendices** that provide background information and further detail to the NDP:

- 1.1 Standish Landscape Appraisal – text
- 1.2 Standish Landscape Appraisal – figures

These independently-authored documents support the NDP:

- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

The following documents will be compiled following the first (Regulation 14) consultation on the NDP:

- Basic Conditions Statement
- Consultation Statement



Green Walk (on the former Standish Hospital site).

BACKGROUND AND POLICY

Neighbourhood planning context

1. Neighbourhood planning was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give communities the right to shape and develop their areas. This Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been positively prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
2. The Standish community has been very active in seeking to shape its environment and has produced a substantial body of evidence that has been used in support of the NDP. This NDP is for Standish Parish in Gloucestershire and covers the period from adoption to 2040.

Planning policy context

3. The Stroud Local Plan was adopted in November 2015 and currently forms the primary Development Plan document against which planning applications are assessed. The Local Plan identifies a requirement for at least 11,400 dwellings to be delivered in Stroud District between 2006 and 2031. A significant proportion of this housing has already been completed or is committed, with a residual requirement of 3,615 dwellings identified at the time of adoption.
4. Stroud District Council has declared a climate emergency and has set an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030. This commitment underpins the Council's approach to plan-making and development management and is reflected in both adopted and emerging planning policy.
5. The largest confirmed strategic allocation in the adopted Local Plan is set out in Core Policy CP2, which allocates the SA2 site, "West of Stonehouse", now known as Great Oldbury, for 1,350 dwellings and 10 hectares of employment land. Policy CP2 clarifies that, outside of strategic allocations, development should take place in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, with new housing generally directed to designated settlement development limits. Only limited development is permitted outside these areas. Figure 1 shows the location of SA2. A small portion of this site originally lay within Standish parish, but this was transferred to Great Oldbury parish in 2023 following boundary changes.
6. Within the settlement hierarchy, Stonehouse is designated as a Tier 1 settlement (the most sustainable), while Standish parish is designated as open countryside. In accordance with Core

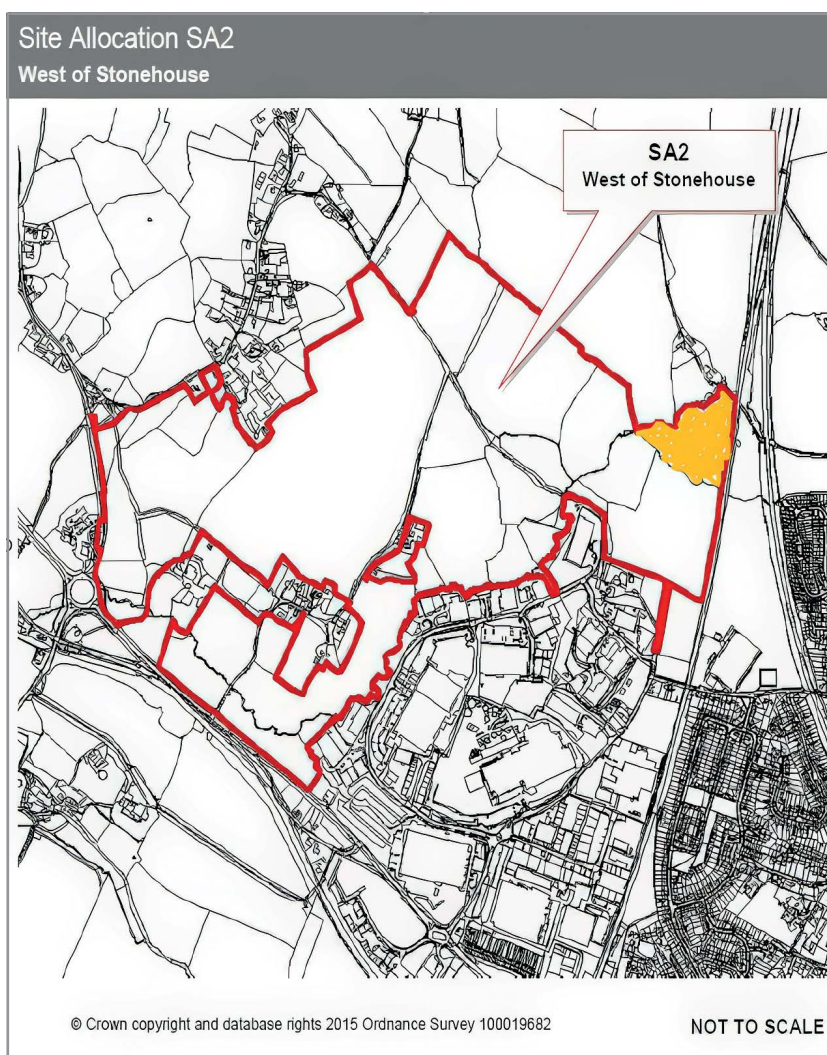


Figure 1. Site Allocation SA2 (now Great Oldbury). The land highlighted in yellow was transferred from Standish to the newly created Great Oldbury parish in 2023.

Policy CP2, only limited development is therefore permissible in Standish, except where development is supported by paragraphs 80 and 84 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

7. The Gloucestershire Minerals Local Plan (Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme – MWDS – October 2024/25 to 2026/27) identifies a significant part of Standish parish as lying within a Minerals Resource Area for sand and

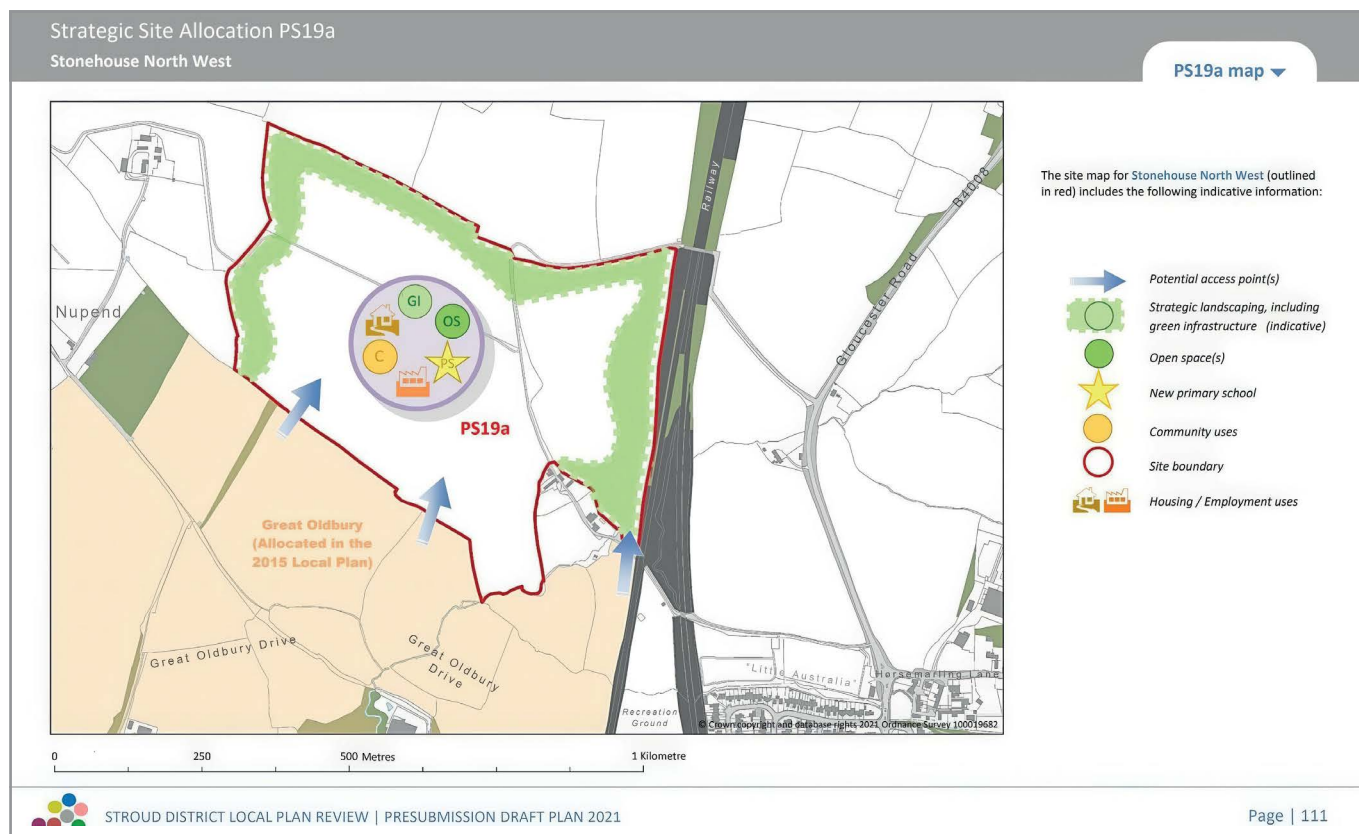


Figure 2. PS19a proposed Strategic Site Allocation

gravel and an emerging Minerals Safeguarding Area. These designations must be taken into account when considering development proposals, particularly in relation to safeguarding mineral resources (see Planning Policy Context Evidence Paper).

8. The Stonehouse Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) seeks to protect important views over Standish towards the escarpment and to ensure that new development, including that at SA2/Great Oldbury, delivers a robust network of accessible walking and cycling routes which also function as wildlife corridors.
9. The Stroud Local Plan is currently under review, and the draft Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in October 2021 for Examination in Public (EiP). The majority of the examination hearings have taken place, including those relating to the strategic allocation PS19a, which lies entirely within Standish parish. Following a pause to allow further work to be undertaken in relation to impacts on the Strategic Road Network, the Examination remains live. The draft Local Plan proposes to allocate PS19a for approximately 700 dwellings and 5 hectares of employment land.
10. At the time the draft Local Plan was prepared, it was required by the Government's Standard Method for calculating local housing need to plan for a significant increase in housing delivery, raising annual delivery from around 456 homes per year to at least 630 homes per year. Over the plan period to 2040, this equated to a residual requirement of 8,005 additional homes. As the Local Plan was submitted in October 2021, it is effectively "frozen" at that point in time and is not being assessed against subsequent changes to national policy, including later increases to housing need.
11. The draft Local Plan proposes that Stonehouse will remain a Tier 1 settlement, and that Standish parish (outside the strategic allocation) will continue to be treated as countryside, where only very limited development will be supported. The draft Local Plan (May 2021) PS19a allocation is shown in Figure 2.
12. This NDP has been positively prepared in response to the challenges and opportunities identified through the draft Local Plan. National Planning Practice Guidance encourages neighbourhood plans to have regard to emerging Local Plan policies and supports early and ongoing engagement between the local planning authority and the qualifying body to minimise potential conflicts between plans.
13. Accordingly, this NDP includes policies which anticipate the delivery of a strategic allocation within Standish parish. Should such development not come forward, those policies would remain unused and dormant. However, if PS19a is allocated or brought forward through a planning application, the NDP will remain up to date and will not require

immediate review following the adoption of a new Local Plan.

14. As of April 2026, the Inspectors had written to Stroud District Council, National Highways, Gloucestershire County Council and South Gloucestershire Council seeking further clarification through a targeted consultation relating to the Strategic Road Network, specifically M5 Junctions 12 and 14. This consultation closed on 5 June 2026 and was open only to the organisations named above. The Examination remains paused and, at the time of writing, there is uncertainty regarding the Inspectors' next steps and whether the draft Local Plan will ultimately be found sound.
15. Separately, and irrespective of the outcome of the current Examination, changes introduced by the Government since 2024 to the NPPF and housing targets now require Stroud District Council to commence preparation of a new Local Plan. This new plan must plan for housing numbers approximately 33% higher than those in the submitted draft and must reach Gateway 1 (self-assessment) by 31 October 2026. This requirement applies regardless of progress on the submitted Local Plan and reflects the Government's intention to ensure all authorities move quickly towards up-to-date plans under the new plan-making system.

16. While this context creates a degree of uncertainty, the Government is clear that neighbourhood plans are expected to continue to progress. Standish Parish Council has worked closely with Stroud District Council to understand the evolving policy position, anticipated timescales and interactions with both the draft and forthcoming Local Plans. Notwithstanding the uncertainty, the Standish Neighbourhood Development Plan remains in general conformity with the adopted NPPF and all relevant Stroud District planning policy documents, whether adopted, under examination or emerging.
17. The Neighbourhood Development Plan has been positively prepared and seeks to play an active role in shaping development in Standish. It includes the allocation of a housing site and introduces robust, locally specific policies that complement national planning policy and the strategic objectives of the Local Plan, while responding to the unique character, constraints and opportunities of the parish.

STANDISH: HISTORY AND CONTEXT

18. Standish parish is located in Stroud District to the north of Stonehouse and adjacent to the M5 motorway, which forms its western boundary. Standish parish is almost entirely open countryside and its eastern portion is part of the Cotswolds National Landscape (NB: as of November 2023, the UK Government officially rebranded Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONBs] as National Landscapes). It is relatively unspoilt, despite being close to urban settlements. It includes National Trust woodland (Standish Wood) and extensive farmland. From the higher ground there are panoramic views over the Severn Valley. There is an ancient historic village centre which consists of Grade II listed Church House (now Standish Village Hall), Grade I listed Church of St Nicholas, Grade II* listed Almonry Arch and the residences at Standish Court (five are Grade II listed).
19. The Standish settlement is a collection of small hamlets, including Little Haresfield, Standish, Stroud Green, Oxlynch, Arlebrook and Horsemarling, which are locally perceived to be one community. These hamlets are spread out over approximately 2 miles, on either side of the B4008, at the foot of the Cotswold escarpment. Standish is a very small community with approximately 260 households, which includes the recent addition of Green Walk on the former Standish Hospital site.
20. Standish has a long history of human population, with evidence of later Stone Age tools having been found in the local long barrows. It is referenced in the Domesday Book, when Greater Standish included Hardwicke, Randwick and Saul. From the 14th to the 16th century, the Manor of Standish belonged to the monks of Gloucester and its revenues were used for charity. This ended with the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536.
21. From the 18th to early 20th century, the Lords Sherborne owned significant land holdings in the parish. These lands passed through the family down to Edward, who died in 1919, and thence to his brother, the Reverend Frederick, who died within six months of inheriting the estate. With two sets of death duties owing, the Sherborne Standish estate was the first land accepted by the British government in lieu of their payment. The woods were passed to the National Trust; Standish House (which had been used as a Red Cross hospital during and after the Great War) passed to the Joint Committee of the Council, then eventually to the National Health Service; and the estate's land went to Gloucestershire County Council to provide smallholdings and farms for ex-servicemen. Eight of these farms are still occupied by County Council tenants today. The parish comprises a lovely rural area and is relatively unspoilt, despite being close to urban settlements. The boundaries of Standish have changed many times over the years and at times it included Whiteshill, Epney, Colethrop, Pitchcombe, Whitminster, Moreton Valence and Randwick. The boundary was redrawn in 1882–5, and remained in place until the M5 came through and cut off the land between the new motorway and the A38, which went to Moreton Valence parish. The 2023 boundary review ceded a small area of SA2 to the new Great Oldbury parish (marked in yellow on Figure 1).
22. Standish currently has no shop or pub, school or post office. This, in the context of a large parish with scattered housing and with few safe non-motorised routes, tends to limit contact and communication between residents.
23. The main road in the parish is the B4008 which links Stonehouse with Junction 12 of the M5 motorway. This road has become increasingly busy over the past few years, making it difficult for walkers, horse riders and cyclists to use it safely. Major development at Junction 12 has contributed to change in the character of the parish, with the Javelin Park Energy from Waste plant clearly visible from many locations in the parish. Other commercial developments have been created and are planned near this motorway junction as the wider area between Stroud and Gloucester becomes more developed.
24. The parish is crossed, and severed, by two branches of National Rail, which meet at Standish Junction.

Parish consultations prior to the NDP

25. In 2009, Standish Parish Council set up a working group of parish councillors and residents to produce a Parish Plan containing a series of recommendations. The key items of concern raised were:

Safety on the B4008

- This was the highest priority issue for Standish residents who felt that drivers on the B4008 drove faster than road conditions allowed and that there had been many accidents. Residents feared for their safety.
- In support of the Parish Plan, the Parish Council undertook extensive local consultation on residents' views of the B4008. This included several public meetings where the issues were discussed. The Parish Council campaigned for improvements to safety, including through the local press, and pulled together multi-agency partners to facilitate a resolution.
- A traffic calming scheme with gates, red markings etc. was fully implemented as a result. However, the Parish Council did not succeed in getting the speed limit reduced to 40mph as requested by residents. Accidents continue to happen.
- The importance of road safety was later reinforced through a 2017 questionnaire, coordinated by Standish Parish Council. This was sent to every household and generated a 70% response rate (78 returned questionnaires). It showed that more than 88% of respondents thought the B4008 was 'extremely', 'very' or 'moderately' dangerous. 65% supported spending up to £60,000 to improve traffic-calming measures. (See Community Survey of Opinions Regarding the B4008 in Sustainable Travel in Standish Evidence Paper Appendix 4.1.)

Cycle path, bridleway and pedestrian path along the B4008

- The Parish Plan identified this as a priority. Responses to the 2017 questionnaire expressed significant concern about the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and horseriders on the B4008, and 77% of respondents rated improvements to safety for this group as 'very' to 'moderately' important. Many of the individual comments were around safety, particularly for children and cyclists.
- There was overwhelming support for proposed measures to improve safety, including 86% of

respondents who supported improving the existing pavement to make it safe for cyclists, riders and walkers.

- The Parish Council has worked with Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council to progress this and the first section of the Standish Multi-User Path has been completed (July 2025). See NDP Policy 4 – Sustainable Travel in Standish for more information.

Neighbourhood Watch

- In 2009 many Standish residents reported that they had been the victims of property crime. In 2019, the Parish Council made efforts to recruit a Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator, without success. The Neighbourhood Watch pyramid network is no longer functional. Residents remain concerned about theft, littering and dangerous driving. Since 2019 the Parish Council has employed a handyperson, part of whose task is to litter pick in the parish.

Natural environment

- The Parish Plan established the importance of the natural environment to residents and to their wellbeing. This was reaffirmed by the 2018 vision that underpins this NDP.

Standish Wood

- In 2009 there was concern that the woods were under threat from motorbikes and cyclists. The Parish Council worked with the landowners – the National Trust – who have done some work to address the problem, such as installing horse stiles that prevent access by motorised vehicles.

Footpaths

- Standish benefits from a large network of footpaths. The Parish Plan identified that many of the footpaths required better maintenance. An audit of footpaths was undertaken for the earlier draft NDP and is included in Sustainable Travel in Standish Evidence Paper Appendix 4.4. Many of the issues identified in 2009 persist and are relevant to the NDP, particularly those around the concern for the environment, the safety of the B4008, the need for improved facilities for non-motorised and sustainable modes of transport and the need for access to Standish Wood in a manner that does not damage them.

STANDISH IN 2025: COMMUNITY PROFILE

26. In 2021, there were 340 people living in Standish (based on figures from the 2021 Census: see <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/inform/population/census-of-population/census-2021/>). The population in Standish dropped by approximately 10% between 2001 and 2017 but rose by 31% between 2017 and 2021. The population in Gloucestershire rose by 8% between 2013 and 2022 mid-year estimates from the Office for National Statistics, 2013–22: <https://www.ons.gov.uk>).
27. Tables 1–4 set out further information on Standish’s population profile, its housing types and household composition.

Additional information from the Local Insight profile for the Standish area:

[Community Insight profile report](#)

- 0% of households lack central heating in Standish compared with 2% across England (pp. 24–32).
- The overall crime rate is lower in Standish than the average across England (p. 33).
- 51% of people in Standish claim to be in very good health compared with 48% across England (pp. 35–49).
- 0% of children aged 0–19 are in relative low-income families in Standish compared with 19% across England (pp. 10–23).
- 12% of people have no qualifications in Standish compared with 18% across England (pp. 45–47).
- 25% of people living in Standish aged 16–74 are in full-time employment compared with 34% across England (pp. 48–54).
- 4% of households have no car in Standish compared with 24% across England; 26.5% of households have one car in Standish compared with 41% across England and 42% of households have two cars in Standish compared with 26% across England (pp. 55–57).
- The percentage of people ‘satisfied with their neighbourhood’ (87.8%) is higher in Standish than the average across England (79.3%) (pp. 58–65).
- 100% of Standish households are classified as rural residents, i.e. rural area, sparsely populated, above average employment in agriculture, higher number owning multiple cars, an older married population, a high provision of unpaid care and an above-average number of people living in communal establishments.

Table 1. Population: Age and gender (2021 Census).

	Standish	England
Total population	340	56,490,000
Male	47% (160)	49%
Female	53% (180)	51%
Aged 0–14	16%	17%
Aged 15–64	52%	64%
Aged 65+*	33%	18.0%
Dependency ratio	0.94	0.54

*Note: In January 2025, 54 people (aged between 60 and 103 years old) were reported to be living in a residential care home in Standish.

Table 2. Ethnicity (2021 Census).

	Standish	England
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1.2%	3%
White	98.8%	81%

Table 3. Housing: Type (2021 Census).

	Standish	England average
Detached	57.5%	23%
Semi-detached	25%	31%
Terraced	18%	23%
Temporary dwelling	0%	0.4%

Table 4. Household: Composition (2021 Census).

	Standish	England average
One-person household	14.9%	30.1%
Single-family household	77.2%	63%
Other households	7.9%	6.9%

STANDISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Plan Area

28. Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the parish of Standish in the District of Stroud and the County of Gloucestershire was designated as a Neighbourhood Area. Standish Parish Council was recognised as the relevant body for the designated area with regard to the

provisions of the Regulations. This designation was conferred by resolution of Stroud District Council's Environment Committee on the 4th February 2014. The area covered by the designation is shown on the map submitted to Stroud District Council under Article 5(1)(a) of the above Regulations (Figure 3).

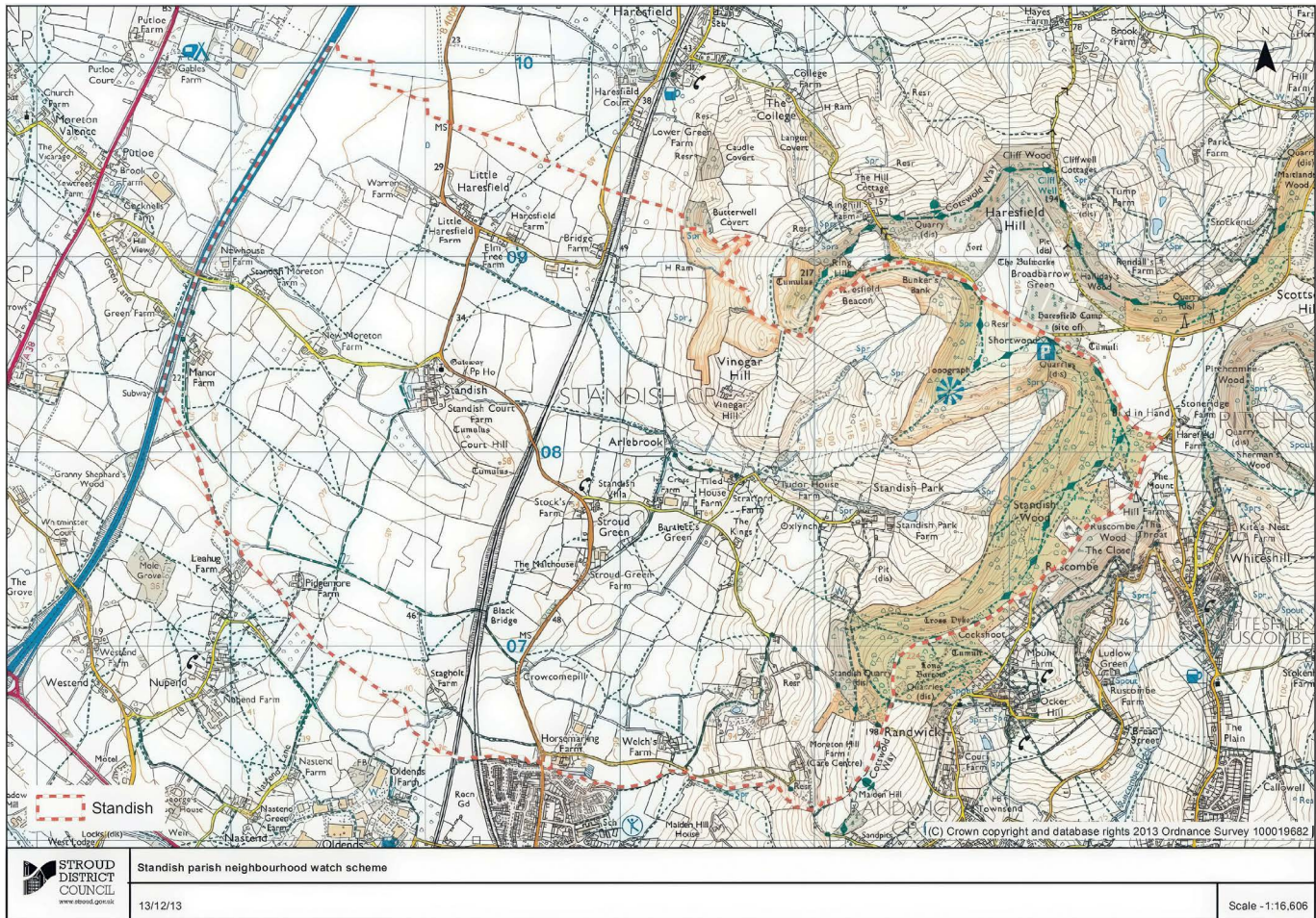


Figure 3. Standish Neighbourhood Plan Area.

A Vision for Standish

29. On 15 November 2018, the Standish community came together again in a meeting to consider how to take the Parish Plan forward and the success of this meeting encouraged the Parish Council to embark on the NDP journey. In that meeting, the community considered afresh what issues it felt were important. The discussion centred around the potential new site allocations in the Emerging Stroud District Local Plan and how future development would affect their rural community.
30. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) exercise was undertaken on behalf of Standish Parish Council in 2018. Details of this can be found in the Consultation Statement. The results of the SWOT analysis and of other consultations and surveys carried out by the NDP Working Group (set up by the Parish Council and made up of parish councillors and residents) have been used to create a Vision for Standish. The Vision describes how the people of Standish see the future of their parish in 2040. It is distinctive to Standish and derives from the analysis of resident consultations, which in turn have shaped the policies in the Plan:

Vision for Standish

In 2040, Standish will have retained its character as an environmentally diverse rural area of outstanding natural beauty, responding effectively to the challenges of climate change.

It will continue to be a pleasant and tranquil place for its residents to live, providing a green lung for nearby urban communities.

The small, scattered hamlets which make up the parish will have retained their separate and distinct character.

New housing will be of high-quality, carbon-neutral design, integrated into the landscape and complementing the historic features of the parish, such as the Almonry Arch and monastic buildings that constitute the ancient parish centre.

The parish's open countryside and farmland will support a wide range of biodiversity.

Easy access to countryside will be maintained via the parish's extensive public rights of way network.

A diverse range of sustainable travel options will enable safe, well-connected movement throughout the parish and to neighbouring urban centres.

Good community facilities will be maintained and enhanced and be accessible to all.

Neighbourhood Development Plan Objectives

31. Based on work done by Standish Parish Council, the NDP Steering Group and the community over several years (including the Vision for Standish), a series of objectives has been developed for this NDP. These objectives are:

Landscape, Biodiversity and Climate Change

1. Ensure priority is given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside.
2. Maintain a strong rural identity and provide a “green lung” by acting as a green buffer between neighbouring built-up areas.
3. Ensure new development supports the retention and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity, dark skies, wildlife corridors and linkages.
4. Ensure new development responds to the local landscape character and the parish’s situation as a transition between the Cotswolds National Landscape escarpment and the Severn Vale.
5. Ensure new development is of high quality, well designed and using carbon neutral technology. New development should be sensitive to the green environment and non-intrusive to the landscape.

Heritage

6. Maintain the historic characteristics of the parish and protect the setting of designated heritage assets.
7. Improve understanding of the contribution made by undesignated heritage assets to local character and sense of place within the parish.
8. Ensure undesignated heritage assets and their settings are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Sustainable Travel and Connectivity

9. Ensure new development provides appropriate connectivity to the existing and proposed footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and multi-user paths through the provision of new routes and enhancements to existing routes.
10. Support a new strategic active travel link between Gloucester and Stroud through Standish, thus providing a sustainable travel option from Standish to these towns.
11. Preserve and enhance as necessary access to Stagholt Farm and ensure it is accessible from any new surrounding development.

Community Facilities

12. Improve the existing community facility provision within the parish and support the provision of appropriate new community facilities.

Site Allocation

13. Designate land at Stagholt Farm as a Protected Area of Search, to be released for housing development only if site PS19a is allocated in the Stroud District Local Plan or if a planning application for PS19a otherwise receives planning consent.

THE STANDISH COUNTRYSIDE: OUR SPECIAL NATURAL AND HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

32. Standish is a rural parish of scattered hamlets divided into two broad landscape zones as described in the Stroud District Landscape Assessment SPG (2000) – Escarpment, and Rolling Agricultural Plain, the latter comprising both escarpment foot-slopes and lowland plain. The Escarpment is part of the Cotswolds National Landscape and is principally woodland and limestone pasture. The foot-slopes and lowland plain are mixed farmland.
33. The parish provides some breath-taking views, especially from the Escarpment. This zone is part of a major landscape feature, the Cotswold Ridge. Parts of Standish are thus visible from Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) some some 40 miles distant, from much of the Severn Vale south of Gloucester, as far as the Severn Bridges and Forest of Dean, and northwards to the Malvern Hills and beyond. The views out of the zone are similarly impressive, though marred by modern developments such as the Müller factory in Stonehouse, the M5, the Javelin Park Energy from Waste plant, the new warehouses on the St Modwen's site on Stonehouse Road, Haresfield, and the roofs of the garden centre near M5 junction 12.
34. The NDP Vision for Standish 2040 seeks to retain a separate identity for the parish, including its tranquil rural character. The Standish countryside has intrinsic value as a place for agriculture and recreation, and a home for wildlife. Productive landscapes, such as farms, coppice woodlands, orchards etc., can provide a resilient, biodiverse, rich landscape that can provide both employment and produce for the local community.
35. Policies relevant to the NDP are reviewed in the Planning Policy Context Evidence Paper and the Standish Development Framework Evidence Paper.

Growth and development in the Standish countryside

36. The Stroud District Local Plan identifies the main towns and villages within the District and defines a 'settlement development limit' around each of them, within and adjacent to which suitable development may be permitted. There are no defined settlements within Standish parish and the Local Plan treats the whole parish area as "countryside", giving priority to protecting its quality, character and distinctness, including its built and natural heritage.¹
37. Development options within our small rural communities and the open countryside are extremely limited. The scale and type of acceptable development here is determined principally by Core Policy CP15 – "A quality living and working countryside". The Local Plan explains that the countryside (including very small settlements and hamlets that are not identified in the Settlement Hierarchy, set out in Core Policy CP3) is not generally considered a sustainable location for growth and development and that "development will be restricted to that which contributes to diverse and sustainable farming enterprises, recreation, tourism and essential community facilities" in accordance with a series of detailed criteria set out in policy CP15.
38. Subject to detailed policy criteria, in principle the Local Plan allows for the following types of development within the Standish countryside:
 - i. Development that is essential to the maintenance or enhancement of a sustainable forestry or farming enterprise.²
 - ii. Development that will support the rural economy through employment, sport, leisure or tourism (providing it is essential to its operation that the development is located here).³
 - iii. "Enabling development" required in order to maintain a heritage asset.⁴
 - iv. Replacement dwellings and house extensions or subdivisions (including to create an annexe for a dependant or carer).⁵
 - v. Essential community facilities⁶ and Green Infrastructure (GI).
 - vi. Adaptive re-use of an existing redundant or disused rural building.⁷
 - vii. The extension of existing employment sites within the countryside.⁸
 - viii. Renewable or low-carbon energy generation.⁹

1. Local Plan Policy CP15.

2. CP15, EI5

3. CP15, EI10, EI11

4. CP15

5. CP15, HC5, HC6, HC7, HC8

6. CP15

7. CP15 (and new policy DES1 of the 2021 submission draft local plan)

8. EI4

9. ES2

- ix. Providing it is on land adjoining or close to the Stonehouse settlement development limit, the Local Plan may allow for a “rural exception site” to meet local housing needs and possibly live-work development.¹⁰
- 39. Because there are no defined settlements within the parish, the Local Plan limits the scope for residential development to replacement dwellings, house extensions and subdivisions.¹¹ New homes might also be created through the conversion of an existing redundant or disused rural building¹² and they could potentially form part of an “enabling development” required in order to maintain a heritage asset¹³ (as has happened at the former Standish Hospital site – now Green Walk – in recent years).¹⁴
- 40. The Local Plan also allows for renewable or low-carbon energy generation¹⁵ on suitable land, subject to detailed policy criteria set out in Delivery Policy ES2 and national planning policy. Stroud District Council’s 2019 Renewable Energy Resources Assessment (RERA) includes a Landscape Sensitivity Assessment which seeks to provide an initial indication of landscape sensitivity and potential suitability for wind turbines and ground-mounted solar development (see Appendix B of the draft Local Plan at EiP). The mapped findings for Standish are shown in figures 4 and 5.
- 41. Standish sits on the western edge of the Cotswolds National Landscape, and approximately the eastern half of the parish lies within it. Figure 6 shows the extent of the AONB/National Landscape designation in the parish. Both national¹⁶ and local planning policy are clear that development within the National Landscape should be limited in scale and extent, while development within its setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area. Local Plan Policy ES7 – “Landscape character” states that “Major development [within the AONB] will not be permitted unless it is demonstrated to be in the national interest and there is a lack of alternative sustainable development sites.”

Northward expansion of Stonehouse

- 42. Although the parish as a whole is defined as “countryside” for the purposes of the Local Plan, the presence of Stonehouse to our immediate south presents a number of threats to the quality, character and distinctness of our local environment. It also presents some opportunities.
- 43. The Local Plan’s Core Policy CP3 sets out a hierarchy of defined settlements, within which Stonehouse is identified as a Tier 1 Main Settlement and a primary focus for future growth and development. The Local Plan’s vision for the parishes around Stonehouse (which include Standish, as well as Eastington, Frocester, Leonard Stanley and Kings Stanley) is for “Economic growth and thriving, well connected communities” and it allows for growth and development at defined settlements, in order to sustain their role and function and to promote sustainable communities.
- 44. In recent years, Stonehouse has seen substantial westward expansion. The new community of Great Oldbury was established in Eastington parish, through allocation SA2 in the 2015 Local Plan. Great Oldbury became a separate parish in 2023. In some form, Stonehouse is likely to continue its expansion in the future.
- 45. The Settlement Development Limit for Stonehouse adjoins the Standish parish boundary, just south of Horsemarling Lane. Providing it is on land adjoining or close to the edge of Stonehouse, the Local Plan may allow for a “rural exception site” (and possibly live-work development) within our parish to meet local housing needs. The Local Plan also allows for some other limited forms of “edge of settlement” development that could potentially impact upon our parish.
- 46. Most significantly, the Local Plan Review identified land northwest of Stonehouse, within Standish parish, as a sustainable urban extension to Great Oldbury. The proposed strategic allocation PS19a in the 2021 draft Local Plan at EiP is for 700 homes and 5 hectares of employment land.
- 47. Taken together, the current SA2 allocation and the PS19a allocation could, without mitigation, have a harmful landscape impact upon the parish and, it could be argued, upon Stonehouse as well. This impact could be felt in the following ways:

10. CP15, HC4, HC3 (and new policy DHC3 of the 2021 submission draft local plan)

11. CP15, HC5, HC6, HC7, HC8

12. CP15 (and new policy DES1 of the 2021 submission draft local plan)

13. CP15

14. **Note:** as a designated Rural Parish, Core Policy CP9 of the 2021 submission draft local plan will require at least 30% affordable housing on any housing site that does come forward in Standish, if the site is capable of providing 4 or more dwellings (net).

15. ES2

16. NPPF para 17

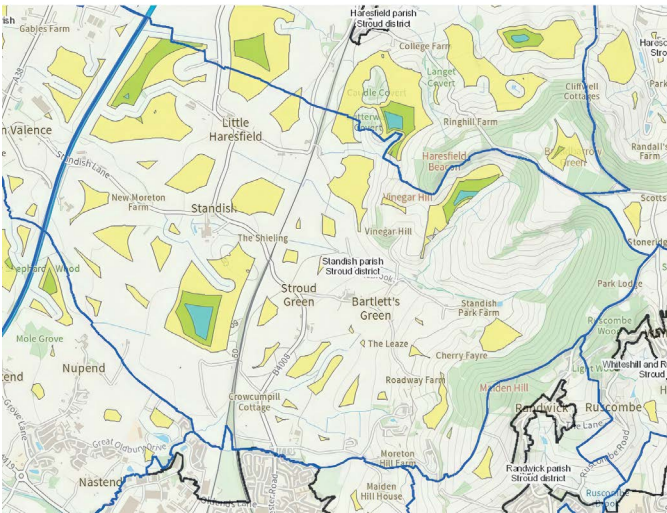


Figure 4. Opportunities for wind energy generation (draft Local Plan at EiP).

Suitable Land for Wind Development
Turbine Type (Tip Height)

Very large (150m-200m)
Large (100m-150m)
Medium (60m-100m)
Small (<60m)

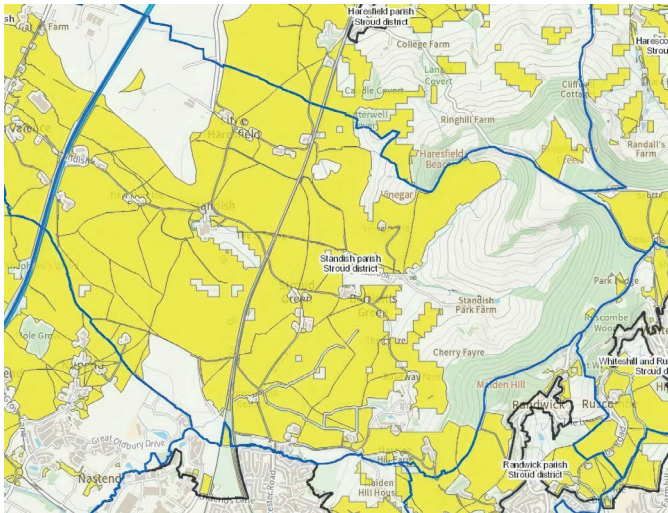


Figure 5. Land potentially suitable for solar generation (draft Local Plan at EiP).

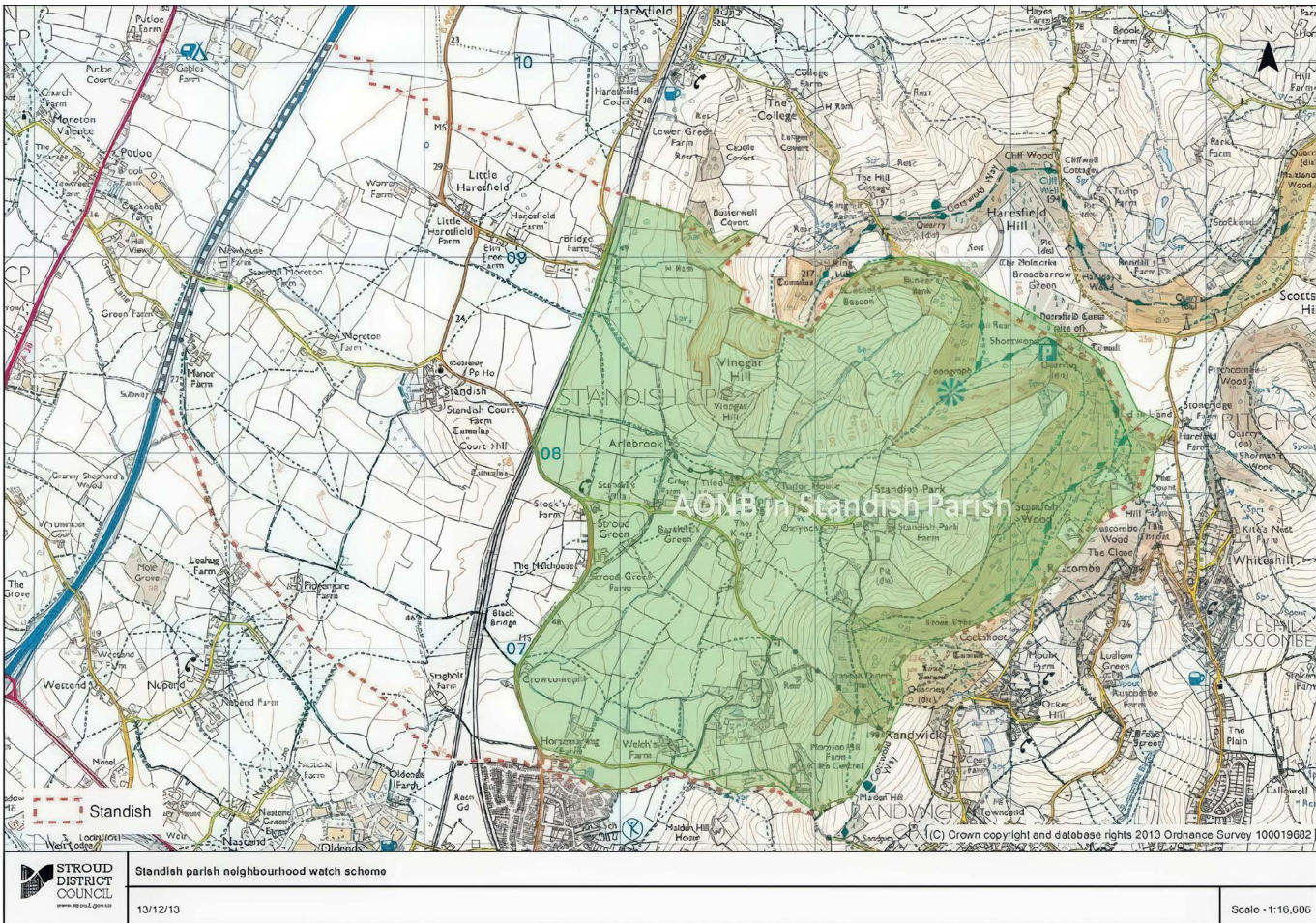


Figure 6. National Landscape (formerly AONB) in Standish Parish.

- i. Harm to views of and from the Cotswolds National Landscape by introducing large-scale urban development into the agricultural setting.
- ii. Loss of green infrastructure for Standish and Stonehouse and all the benefits that this provides.
- iii. Loss of habitat for protected species.
- iv. Urbanisation of public rights of way (PROW) that currently traverse open countryside.

48. Standish Parish Council recognises the need for the proposed expansion of Great Oldbury but will be keen to influence the development to ensure that the best possible landscape and community integration outcomes occur. This NDP therefore aims to supplement the generalist policies and the description of open countryside in the Local Plan by providing a granular level of detail about the NDP area to inform the proposed allocation and any possible future strategic developments in the parish.

Our special natural and historic environment

49. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan, prepared by the Cotswolds National Landscape Board, is a material consideration when assessing development proposals within the National Landscape. The Management Plan requires that parishes use the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan and Landscape Strategy and Guidelines to inform NDPs. NDPs should pay regard to the setting of the National Landscape as well as the National Landscape itself. Planning decisions about development within (or impacting upon) the National Landscape should have regard to the scenic quality of the location and should ensure that views within, into and out of the National Landscape are conserved and enhanced.¹⁷

50. Policy ES7 in the Local Plan requires that, within the National Landscape or its setting, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of its special qualities, including beauty, tranquillity, dark skies, and natural and cultural heritage. The policy also requires that in all locations (both within and outside the National Landscape) development should conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of Stroud District's different landscape character types for their own intrinsic beauty and for their benefit to economic, environmental and social wellbeing. This NDP is keen to ensure that opportunities for appropriate landscaping will be sought alongside all new development within the parish, such that our landscape key characteristics are strengthened, in accordance with ES7.

51. The Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan requires that there should be safe, pleasant, accessible, clearly waymarked and well-connected public rights of way (PROW) across the National Landscape. Local communities from the surrounding areas should be a priority for

engagement. The Management Plan seeks to increase the provision of walking, cycling and riding routes, including easy access routes for people with disabilities, opportunities to access and interact with nature, and volunteering and personal development opportunities. Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership's 2015 Strategic Framework for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire shows that Standish falls within an area designated as providing Strategic Green Infrastructure for the county.

52. Straddling the Severn Vale and the Cotswolds National Landscape, Standish has a rich biodiversity. Local Plan Delivery Policy ES6 – "Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity" provides the key Development Plan policy tool for conserving and enhancing the natural environment and achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through



View of the Standish countryside with the River Severn and Forest of Dean in the background.

17. CP15, HC4, HC3 (and new policy DHC3 of the 2021 submission draft local plan). Reference Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan 2025–2030.

new development. Policy ES8 focuses specifically on protecting “Trees, hedgerows and woodlands” and aims to encourage development, where appropriate, to enhance and expand Stroud District’s tree, hedgerow and woodland resource – a key component of local ecological networks, with benefits for health and wellbeing, carbon sequestration and climate mitigation. A more detailed analysis of biodiversity in Standish and policies relating to it are dealt with in Policy 2 of this NDP.

53. Local Plan Policy ES10 – “Valuing our historic environment and assets” sets out requirements for the preservation, protection and enhancement of the historic environment. The policy supports development proposals that will conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance and setting of heritage assets, including key views and vistas. This includes designated assets (such as listed buildings and scheduled monuments), as well as non-designated assets of local heritage significance and areas of archaeological potential.
54. The Local Plan also expects that the historic environment should act as a positive stimulus and inspiration for new development, drawing upon aspects of local character and distinctiveness. As well as Policy ES10, Core Policies CP4 and CP14 require development to create places that are locally-inspired and reflect local character, including local topography, built environment and heritage. A more detailed analysis of the historic environment in Standish and policies relating to it are dealt with in Policy 3 of this NDP.
55. The following NDP policies seek to inform the application of Local Plan policies relating to the protection and enhancement of our local countryside, including our built and natural heritage.

POLICY 1 – STANDISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Objectives

Landscape, Biodiversity and Climate Change

1. Ensure priority is given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside.
2. Maintain a strong rural identity and provide a “green lung” by acting as a green buffer between neighbouring built-up areas.
3. Ensure new development supports the retention and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity, dark skies, wildlife corridors and linkages.
4. Ensure new development responds to the local landscape character and the parish’s situation as a transition between the Cotswolds National Landscape escarpment and the Severn Vale.
5. Ensure new development is of high quality, well designed and using carbon neutral technology. New development should be sensitive to the green environment and non- intrusive to the landscape.

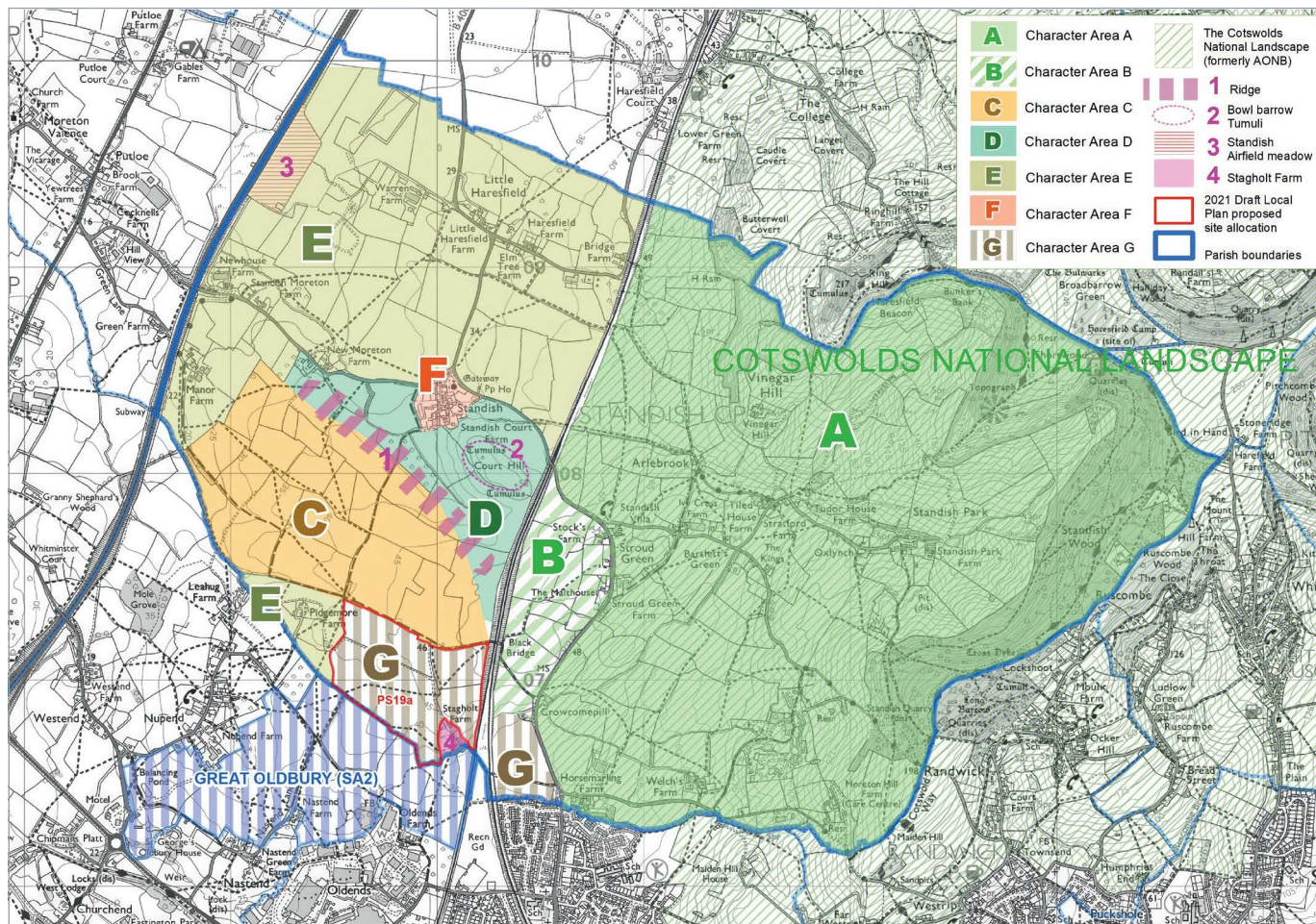


Figure 7. Standish Parish Character Areas.

Background and explanation

56. The Stroud District Local Plan expects all development proposals to have regard to the local distinctiveness of the District's different landscapes and expects proposals to draw upon relevant assessments, including the Stroud District Landscape Assessment 2000.
57. In order to provide detailed local information to inform future strategic development within the parish and to aid the implementation of various local plan policies, including ES7, Standish Parish Council commissioned Illman Young to prepare a landscape appraisal of the parish in 2019. The Standish Landscape Appraisal is in two parts (text and figures) and can found in stand-alone Appendices 1.1 and 1.2. They should be consulted by applicants when preparing proposals that may affect the local landscape.
58. The Standish Landscape Appraisal undertaken by Illman Young considered the potential impact of Great Oldbury's northward expansion, looking at proposed Local Plan site allocation PS19a alongside the existing Great Oldbury allocation (SA2). The Appraisal also covered another site (PS19b), which was initially considered as a potential site allocation through the Local Plan Review, but which was dropped later in 2019 at Draft Plan stage, due to high landscape impacts. The study assessed the entire Standish Parish landscape, focusing heavily on views into and out of the National Landscape.
59. The Standish Landscape Appraisal (and other evidence summarised in the Standish Development Framework Evidence Paper) indicates that the parish can be divided into seven character areas. Each will require a different approach to development management. The Character Areas are illustrated in Figure 7, labelled A–G.
60. **Area A.** This is the Cotswolds National Landscape, which is covered by national and local policy already outlined above. The Cotswolds National Landscape is subject to its own Management Plan, and under footnote 7 of the NPPF 2024 it is an area protected as an asset of particular importance. Therefore, development would not normally be appropriate here.
61. **Area B.** The Illman Young Landscape Appraisal identified land immediately outside the National Landscape that constitutes a highly visible location in both near and distant views, as well as more elevated viewpoints to the east. This area, due to its location, constitutes part of the setting of the National Landscape and the Appraisal concludes that it should be considered as inappropriate for development in the longer term.
62. **Area C.** This area is bounded by the proposed allocation site PS19a to the south and to the north by a shallow localised ridge running east–west (marked as a dashed line on Figure 7), along with a field boundary hedgerow including a number of mature trees. This ridge protects the setting of Standish Church, Village Hall, Almonry Arch, Standish Court and the two Bowl Barrows scheduled monument on Court Hill, Standish Court Farm. Should further development be considered on land to the north of the current proposed area at PS19a, the Illman Young Landscape Appraisal recommends that a landscape assessment would be required to identify and mitigate impacts on the National Landscape and the setting of Standish Church, Village Hall, Almonry Arch and Standish Court and other historic assets including the two Bowl Barrows, demonstrating that their setting will be protected, preserved and enhanced.
63. **Area D.** This area is bounded to the south by the low ridge that blocks views from Standish Church, Village Hall, Almonry Arch and Standish Court and to the north by the B4008. The Illman Young Landscape Appraisal concludes that the landscape character around Standish Church of St Nicholas (Grade I), Village Hall (Grade II) and Standish Court (Grade II and II*) has a small-scale rural quality, with remnant orchards, hay meadows and small-scale fields. Standish Church is a significant feature in this landscape, with its spire visible in views from all locations within the near and medium distance, and from some elevated viewpoints to the east.
It should be noted that Court Hill is identified in the draft Local Plan at EiP Appendix B as suitable for a large wind turbine. However, policy ES2 places requirements on such development to take account of landscape and historic features. Difficult decisions will be required should this site be identified for a wind turbine, since it would certainly affect the setting of Standish's historic core and the two Bowl Barrows scheduled monument. It will be necessary to balance the need for non-carbon energy against the need to preserve Standish's local historic character and features.
64. **Area E.** This is classified as open countryside and includes Standish Airfield Meadow (see Figure 7) which has naturally developed into a species-diverse area that should be preserved. This is an area of high-quality grassland supporting a

richly biodiverse habitat of plants, insects, birds and mammals on the site of a wartime airfield. It is understood that it has never been ploughed and thus is probably ancient grassland. Following the submission of a botanical survey carried out by Juliet Bailey (local naturalist and Chair of Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society) in July 2020, the meadow was placed on Natural England's Priority Habitats Inventory and listed on the DEFRA MAGIC database. Though planning policy is not able to control agricultural development, it can control development such as solar farms which are likely to be unacceptable in this location.

65. **Area F.** This is the historic core of Standish where Standish Church, Village Hall, Almonry Arch and Standish Court listed buildings are located.



The Almonry Arch (or Gateway) at the entrance to Standish Court, is a Scheduled Monument constructed in the late 13th or early 14th century. It was used by the Abbey of St Peter, Gloucester.

66. **Area G.** This is the rural edge adjacent to Stonehouse and includes draft Local Plan at EiP Strategic Allocation PS19a and Stagholt Farm (the latter is marked on Figure 7) and former potential site allocation PS19b. The Illman Young Landscape Appraisal drew conclusions about the need for tree planting and screening of PS19a. This same issue was identified in the Local Plan at EiP which requires a significant tree belt to be planted and the NDP is therefore not required to address this matter. However, Stagholt Farm is not included in the strategic allocation, and conclusions from the appraisal should be applied to it.

With regard to footpaths relating to PS19a (and accordingly also Stagholt Farm), the Illman Young Landscape Appraisal concludes that existing routes should be maintained in their current location wherever possible, and incorporated within a broad landscape band, to maintain their more rural context. This matter is addressed in Policy 4 of this NDP – Sustainable Travel in Standish. As the connectivity of these routes is good, it provides the opportunity to maximise the benefit of this existing network, which provides good access in all directions. The Stroud District Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study (June 2019) indicates that, for the Strategic Allocation PS19a, the proposal should include provision of allotments, parks and recreation grounds, children's play areas, youth access and accessible natural greenspaces to meet identified under-provision.

Policy considerations

Table 4. Key policy considerations relating to the Standish Parish Character Areas.

Area	Area description	Key policy considerations
Area A	The National Landscape in Standish Parish	Development would not normally be appropriate here.
Area B	This area falls outside the National Landscape but is an important feature of its setting.	Development here would have a negative impact on the setting of the National Landscape.
Area C	The area bound by draft Local Plan Strategic Allocation PS19a to the south and the local ridge to the north.	Standish historic core and its setting should be preserved and enhanced by all development and views of Standish Church spire should be preserved. Opportunities should be maximised to create new and strengthen existing green corridors and to improve and create new/better connections to multi-functional green infrastructure. Green energy benefits should be balanced against potential harm to Standish historic centre, the two Bowl Barrows and other historic assets.
Area D	This area is bounded to the south by a low ridge and to the north by the B4008.	Standish historic centre and its setting should be preserved and enhanced by all development, and views of Standish Church spire should be preserved.

Area	Area description	Key policy considerations
Area E	This land is countryside where only rural development would be appropriate (NPPF 2025 paras. 80 and 84). Area E includes Standish Airfield Meadow: Centroid SO7927051 (approximately 8 hectares).	Opportunities should be maximised to create new and strengthen existing green corridors and to improve and create new/better connections to multi-functional green infrastructure. Biodiversity Net Gain should be focused on improving local natural features. Development should resist harm to Standish Airfield Meadow's biodiversity and habitats.
Area F	The Standish historic core.	Standish historic core and its setting should be preserved and enhanced by all development and views of Standish Church spire should be preserved.
Area G	The rural edge adjacent to Stonehouse.	Opportunities should be maximised to create new and strengthen existing green corridors and to improve and create new/better connections to multi-functional green infrastructure.

POLICY 1 – STANDISH LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Within the parish, there are distinct areas of different countryside character, each with different constraints and opportunities which require tailored development management. The Character Areas are illustrated in Figure 7, labelled A–G, and these shall be recognised for the purposes of implementing Stroud District Local Plan Policy ES7 – Landscape Character.

In all landscape character areas, development will prioritise the preservation and enhancement of Standish's countryside and landscape setting, historic environment, biodiversity and green infrastructure in overall scheme design. The following points are all subject to this requirement:

1. Development proposals should consider whether the location, materials, scale and use are sympathetic and complementary to the character of our local countryside.
2. Development proposals should ensure the retention and appropriate future management of natural features that contribute to our local landscape character.
3. Major or strategic development proposals should deliver appropriate landscaping and green infrastructure, such that the key characteristics of our local built and natural environment will be conserved and reinforced. Hard landscaping and planting will be expected to integrate new development into its countryside setting, as well as delivering appropriate biodiversity gains and creating high-quality and locally-distinctive places.

Table 4 summarises some key considerations which are specific to each of the parish landscape character areas. Development proposals will be supported where they accord with these key considerations.

Where proposals do not accord fully with the key considerations for relevant character areas, they will be supported only if there is clear and convincing justification to explain how the proposals will nevertheless achieve criteria 1–3 of this policy and will prioritise the quality, character and distinctness of the Standish countryside, including its built and natural heritage.

The **Standish Parish Landscape Appraisal** 2019 provides supplementary information and should be referred to alongside other relevant landscape assessments when considering development proposals that are likely to affect the special qualities or character of the Standish countryside.

POLICY 2 – BIODIVERSITY

Objectives

Landscape, Biodiversity and Climate Change

1. Ensure priority is given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside.
2. Maintain a strong rural identity and provide a “green lung” by acting as a green buffer between neighbouring built-up areas.
3. Ensure new development supports the retention and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity, dark skies, wildlife corridors and linkages.
4. Ensure new development responds to the local landscape character and the parish’s situation as a transition between the Cotswolds National Landscape escarpment and the Severn Vale.
5. Ensure new development is of high quality, well designed and using carbon neutral technology. New development should be sensitive to the green environment and non-intrusive to the landscape.

Background and explanation

67. Standish falls within an area designated as providing Strategic Green Infrastructure (A Strategic Framework for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire 2015, Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership) and as an AONB (now Cotswolds National Landscape). Green Infrastructure is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as “A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.” The Local Plan adds detail to this definition, stating, “Green Infrastructure (GI) – is a network of high-quality green spaces and other environmental features. It needs to be planned and delivered at all spatial scales from national to neighbourhood levels. The greatest benefits will be gained when it is designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits (ecosystem services) for local communities” (Appendix E, page 331). Development should conserve and enhance the special features and diversity of the different landscape character types for their own intrinsic beauty and for their benefit to economic, environmental and social wellbeing as described in paragraph 174 of the NPPF. Local Plan Delivery Policy ES6 – “Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity” provides the key policy tool for conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

68. The Standish countryside has attractive green spaces and opportunities for healthy activity in a tranquil environment. Local Plan Delivery Policy DCH5 – “Wellbeing and healthy communities”

promotes such areas for their contribution towards health and wellbeing. Green Infrastructure is also recognised as a cornerstone of sustainable development and communities and is subject to Local Plan Delivery Policy DES2 considerations.

Endangered species found in Standish in need of protection

69. Straddling the Severn Vale and the Cotswolds National Landscape, Standish has a rich biodiversity. However, as is the case across the globe, many species are suffering decline in numbers. Many birds are currently on the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Birds of Conservation Concern 5 Red List, due to falling numbers. This list is compiled by a coalition of the UK’s leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations and reviews the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. Using standardised criteria, experts from a range of NGOs, including BTO, assessed 245 species with breeding, passage or wintering populations in the UK and assigned each to the Red, Amber or Green Lists of conservation concern. The Red List identifies the birds that are of most concern. The 17 species whose numbers have noticeably declined in the parish of Standish (mainly due to loss of habitat) and which are on the BTO Red List are listed in the Development Framework Evidence Paper.

70. Swifts have been observed nesting in the roof of Standish Village Hall and have been doing so for many years. The community is particularly keen to support and enhance their numbers, and swift nest

boxes were erected on the Village Hall in October 2023. Swifts are on the UK Red List of the BTO Birds of Conservation Concern, having declined by 62% between 1995 and 2021. Skylarks, which are also on the Red list, have been observed in Standish.



Nest boxes have been put up on the Village Hall for swifts.

71. Tawny owls, sparrowhawks, kestrels, wrens, song thrushes, redwings, dunnocks and grey wagtail have been regularly seen in Standish and are on the BTO Birds of Conservation Concern UK Amber List (species that have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe or whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years).

Mammals and other creatures

72. A number of mammals and other creatures are also in decline. A list of 13 species that have been recorded in Standish (and are now of particular concern as their numbers are declining) is to be found in the Development Framework Evidence Paper 2.



Water vole in Standish.

73. Observations made in Standish of all the 13 species have been recorded and reported to British Trust for Ornithology - British Breeding Bird Survey; Butterfly Conservation (Gloucestershire); People's Trust for Endangered Species - Water Vole Survey; Stroud Swift Group; and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
74. To enable these vulnerable species to survive and flourish in Standish, it is important to maintain and enhance quality green wildlife corridors and linkages in accordance with Local Plan Delivery Policies.

Importance of Biodiversity Net Gain

75. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land – it is making sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development. BNG requirements in the Town and Country Planning Act have applied since November 2023 for development (unless exempt). The requirements have applied to small sites since April 2024 (unless exempt).

Compliance with the mitigation hierarchy contained in Local Plan Delivery Policy ES6 will need to be demonstrated.

76. Today's higher population density in urban areas means that the provision of good quality, accessible and safe urban green space is critical. As over 80% of England's population now lives in urban areas, accessible nearby green infrastructure is vital to our nation's wellbeing. A range of studies have shown that living close to green space has a positive influence on a number of general health indicators (including perceived health, stress and disease morbidity). Green space supports physical and mental health; it improves air quality, reduces the urban heat effect arising from the built infrastructure, captures and stores carbon, provides habitat and food for wildlife, and reduces flood risk.

A major challenge for policymakers and planners is that not everyone has access to good quality greenspace. The provision of green space encourages higher physical activity levels, but this is just one of the health benefits from such areas. Approximately 7 million people in England have been diagnosed with mental illness. Research in the UK has shown that dissatisfaction with local green space is associated with poorer mental health while participation in green space exercise programmes has been shown to improve confidence, self-esteem and mood. Moving closer to a green space appears to have a long-lasting positive effect on mental health. While it is important to scrutinise the causal claims in this evidence carefully, these effects are likely to be accompanied by substantial economic benefits. Natural England estimates that if every household in England were provided with equitable access to good quality green space, then savings of £2.1bn could be achieved every year in averted health costs. (Source: The State of Natural Capital Report for England 2024: Risks to nature and why it matters <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk>)

77. Standish Parish is considered to provide all the benefits listed in The State of Natural Capital report. Wildflower areas have been established in various parts of Standish (Standish churchyard, the Village Green, roadside verges and private gardens) with the aim of enhancing, supporting and providing critical habitats for the insect population and thus supporting wildlife. This should improve air quality, soil health and stability, and water quality, as well as providing shelter and food for birds and small mammals.

78. Hedgerows, trees, barns, open fields, streams and ponds in the area all provide habitats and green corridors for wildlife and as such should be conserved. Opportunities should be maximised to create new, and strengthen existing, green corridors. Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council are working on the production of County and District Local Nature Recovery and Biodiversity Strategies. Both went out for public consultation in 2025 and set out the biodiversity priorities and opportunities within the wider County and District to tackle the biodiversity emergency and enhance the natural environment, both for nature and the wider benefits to the environment, economy and society.

Trees of Standish

79. Standish has an abundance of locally valued trees. There are some Ancient, Venerable and Notable Trees registered on the Ancient Tree Inventory. (Tree Search - Ancient Tree Inventory, <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>)
80. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) updated its Red List of Threatened Species (October 2024) and published the first Global Tree Assessment, a comprehensive worldwide study involving more than 1,000 tree experts. Scientists assessed more than 80% of known tree species and found that 38% were at risk of extinction. In numbers, that means at least 16,425 of the 47,282 tree species studied could soon die out forever. Trees now make up more than a quarter of all species on the IUCN's Red List. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news>
81. In recent years, the importance of trees and green space has become increasingly recognised. Trees play a vital role in Standish by delivering environmental, economic and social benefits to our community. We have open fields, open-grown trees, woodland and hedgerows, as well as amenity trees



Many of the Ancient, Venerable and Notable Trees in Standish Parish are recorded on the Ancient Tree Inventory, including this cork oak at Green Walk.

- in gardens, alongside roads and railway lines, in the churchyard and on the village green.
82. Standish has a wealth of special, outstanding trees with many recorded in the Ancient Tree Inventory (see paragraph 82 and Figure 8). The large veteran cork oak tree, *Quercus suber*, at Green Walk (Ancient Tree Inventory record 75771) is thought to be one of the oldest in the UK. This is one of many notable trees at Green Walk.
83. The three ancient Pedunculate oaks, known as the Edward II oaks, near Standish Lane (numbers 28043, 280542 and 53632 on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory) are thought to be approximately 700 years old. These trees are protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO /6069) by virtue of their public amenity value, landscape value and ecological value. The trees are ancient and are defined as an irreplaceable habitat. Local folklore tells that these are the surviving oaks of the avenue of trees planted to mark the route of the cortege taking the body of King Edward II from Berkeley Castle, via Standish Church, to the Bristol Road on its way to Gloucester Cathedral for his funeral in December 1327.
84. Standish Wood (SO830075) is a large (272.08 acres) area of mixed (mainly beech) woodland with extensive views towards the River Severn situated within the Cotswold escarpment landscape adjacent to Haresfield Beacon. The wood contains many veteran beech trees that are thought to be over 200 years old. It is a valued part of Standish, used by many locals and visitors to the area for recreation and well-being. There are several well-used footpaths running through the wood including part of the Cotswold Way and the evocatively named Robbers' Road.
- The wood is an area of high biodiversity, featuring the ancient beech trees, a vibrant spring bluebell carpet, and many birds such as woodpeckers,



Standish Wood, the site of a Romano-British hillfort, is typical Cotswold escarpment mixed beech woodland.

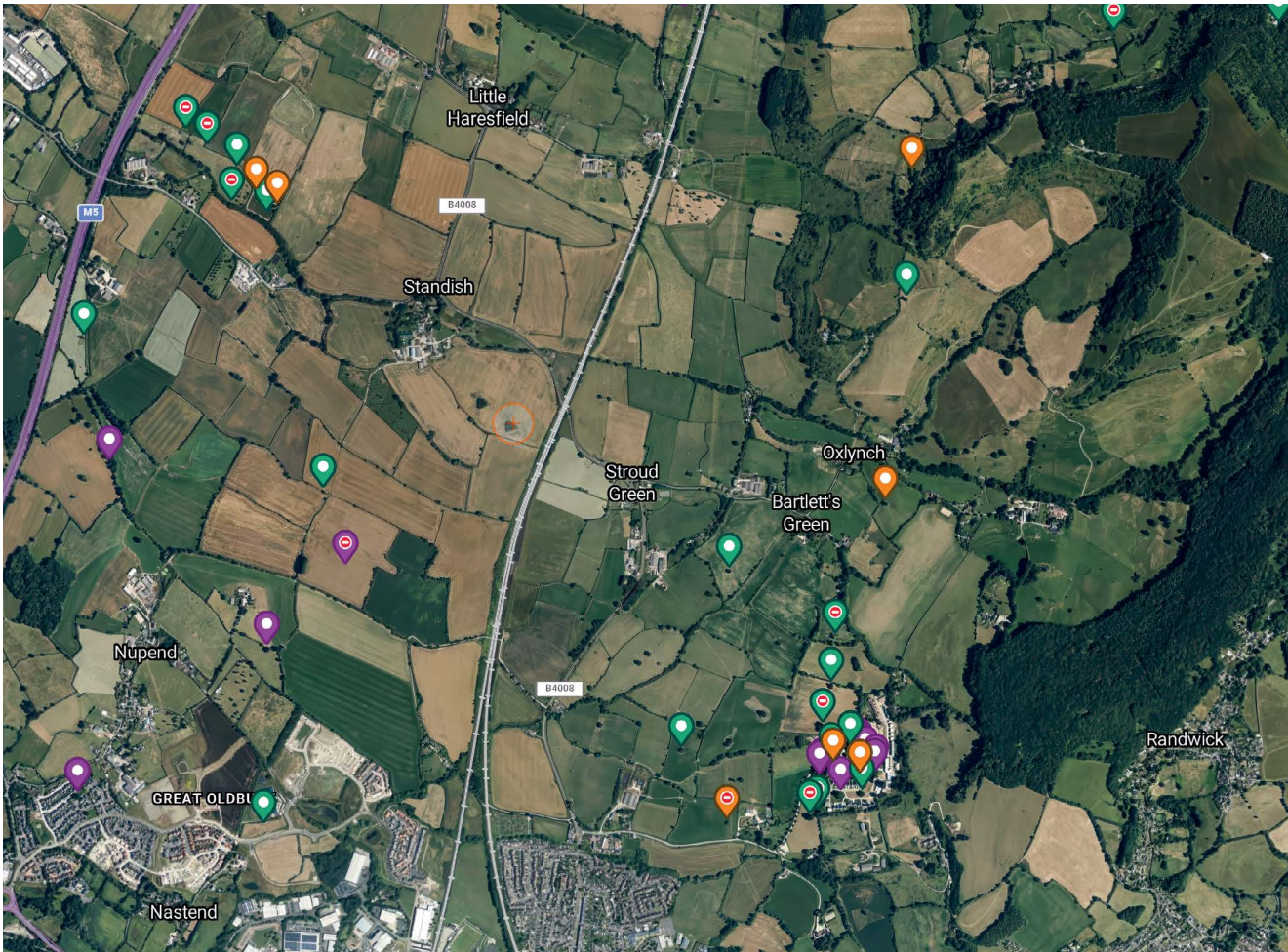


Figure 8. Ancient Tree Inventory (<https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>). **Key:** Veteran tree Notable tree Ancient tree

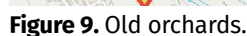
nuthatches, buzzards, kestrels and treecreepers. A variety of orchids (including bee and butterfly orchids) can be seen in the nearby grasslands in summer, and autumn brings diverse fungi (including the giant polypore, *Meripilus giganteus*). The area’s varied habitats and wildlife demonstrate its significant nature conservation value.

At the western end of the wood there are significant archaeological sites indicating the area’s long human history, including an Iron Age Romano-British hillfort, a 200-metre Iron Age cross dyke, a Neolithic long barrow and two Bronze Age round barrows. A Mid Bronze Age flint plano-convex knife was found when one of the barrows was excavated and is now in Gloucester Museum. Records show that in 1297 the wood was owned by Gloucester Abbey, and it is recorded that, in 1515, twelve cart loads of beechwood were provided annually to the monks of Gloucester Abbey. In 1931 the wood was bought by the National Trust, along with Haresfield Beacon, to preserve its high nature conservation value and to enable public access.

85. The definitions of Veteran, Notable and Ancient vary with the species of tree, e.g. ancient oaks may live for 1,000 years and are classified as ancient

from 400 years old, an oak estimated to be between 200 and 400 is classified as veteran and one that is between 150 and 200 is classified as notable. Yew trees, however, may live for over 3,000 and are only classified as ancient at the age of 900 years; a veteran yew will be 400–900 years of age and a notable yew may be 200–450 years old.

86. “Locally valued” trees and hedgerows are referred to in emerging Local Plan policy: 2021 Draft Plan Policy ES8 (and in May 2023 proposed modification to supporting text paragraph 6.60 explains that trees with local interest or value may be identified as part of an adopted Neighbourhood Development Plan).
87. Trees help to combat climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help improve soil. They massively reduce the amount of rainwater entering watercourses, thus lowering the likelihood of flooding. Trees provide habitats for a wealth of wildlife e.g. insects, birds, bats, dormice and fungi. Trees boost our physical and mental health – removing pollutants from the air, shading our streets and stock in fields and improving our immunity (Local Plan Delivery Policy ES8 – “Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands”).



88. Over 70% of Gloucestershire's orchards have been lost in the last 50 years according to the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust (GOT) and what was once a familiar part of the landscape is now increasingly rare. There are several old orchards in fields in Standish parish that contribute to our local cultural and natural heritage, and these should be conserved, enhanced and managed to ensure their longer-term survival. Orchards are 'priority habitats' under the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan because fruit trees are particularly good habitats for wildlife: they are 'early senescent', meaning that they get old relatively quickly and develop veteran features such as hollow trunks, rot holes, dead wood and sap runs. These features are important for over 400 species of saproxylic invertebrates that live on decaying wood. Fruit tree blossom is also an important source of nectar for pollinating insects. Trees in orchards are usually more widely spaced than trees in a dense woodland, so they let in more sunlight, which is good for flying insects that need warmth such as bees and butterflies.

89. Standish's orchards should be sustainably restored and maintained, enabling them to flourish into the distant future. Standish NDP supports the GOT vision to celebrate the rich cultural, genetic, ecological, heritage and landscape values of traditional orchards.

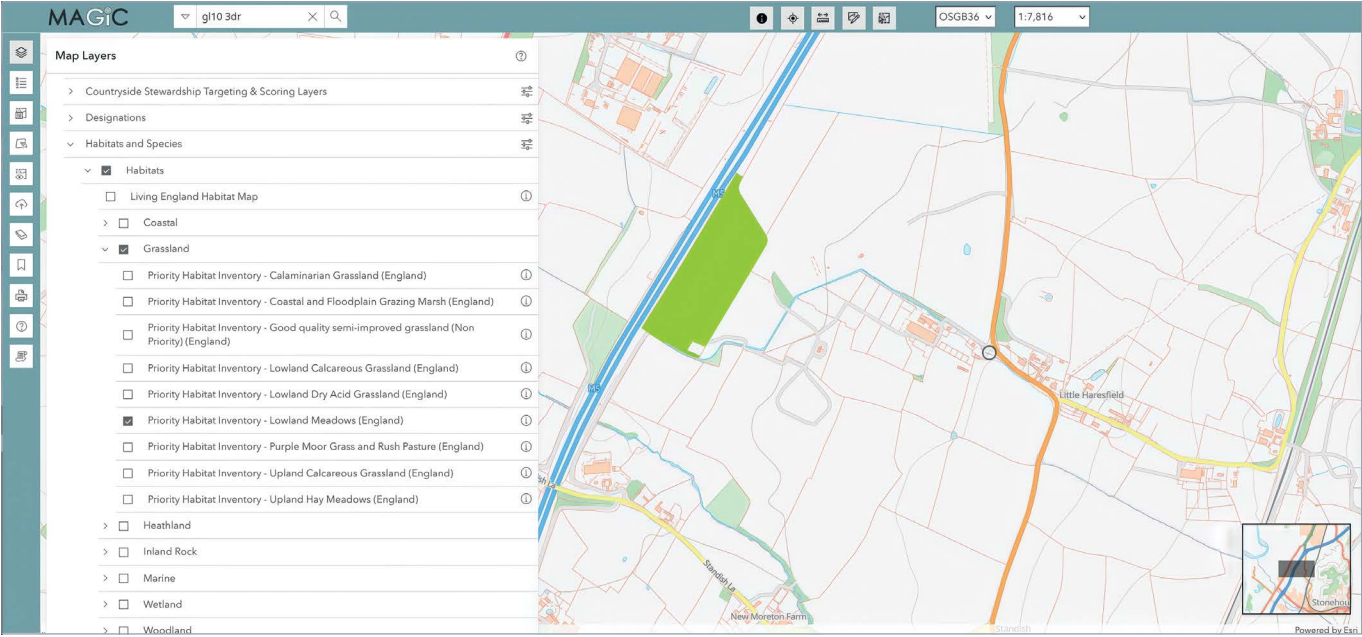


Figure 10a. Standish Airfield Meadow, Natural England UID: PHID37925883_020947447, approximately 8 hectares.

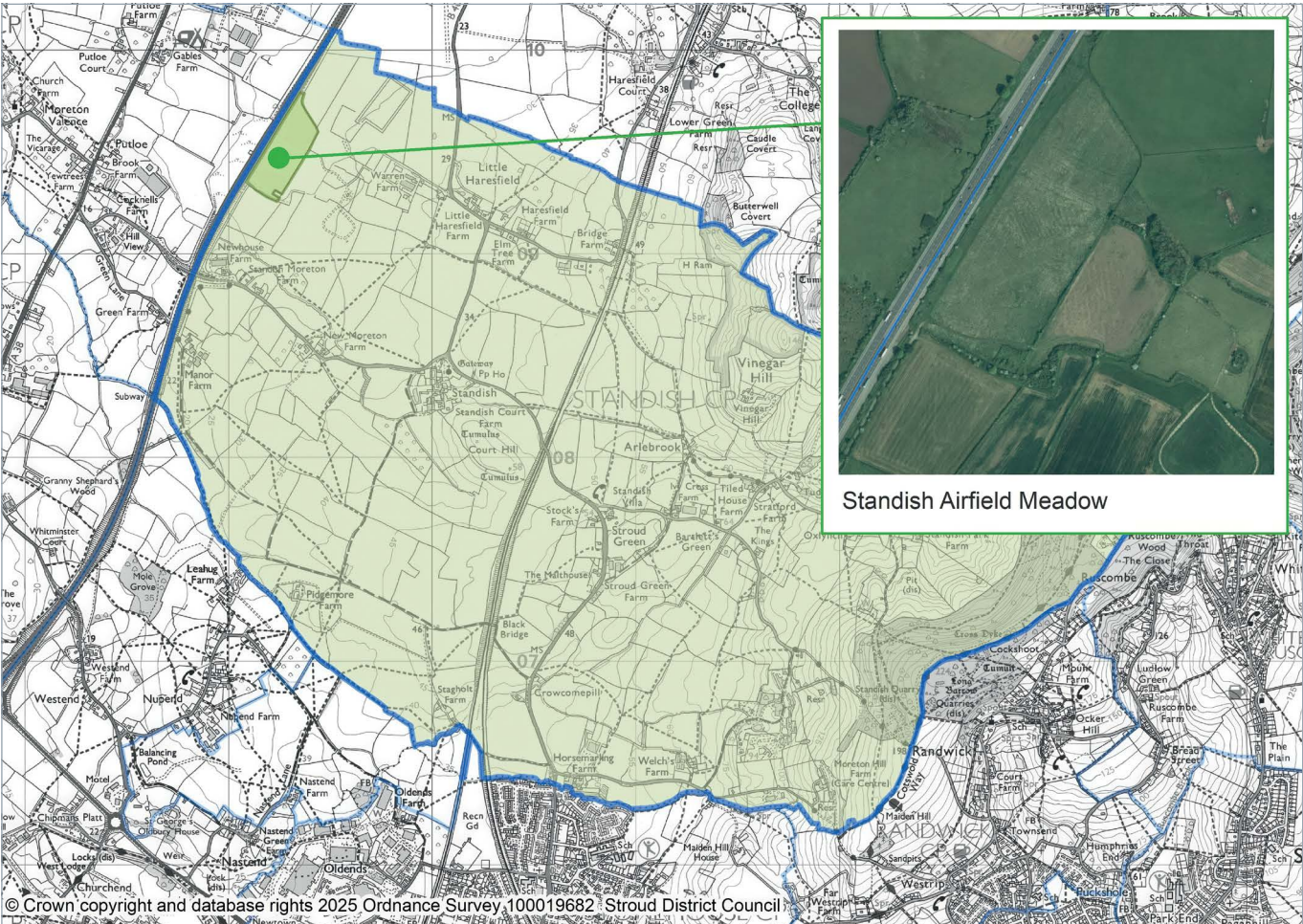


Figure 10b. Location of Standish Airfield Meadow.

Protecting Standish Airfield Meadow’s biodiversity and habitats

90. Standish Airfield Meadow has naturally developed into a species diverse area that should be conserved. The meadow is recognised as being an important feature of Standish and is listed

on DEFRA MAGIC Priority Habitat Inventory Lowland Meadows (England). Lowland meadows are defined by Natural England as semi-natural, neutral grasslands defined by a characteristic species-rich flora, which exceptionally may exceed 40 species per 4 m² and may often include a few uncommon species. They are associated with

low-input agriculture and tend to be managed as hay meadows or permanent pastures. The list of 67 plants recorded by local naturalist and Chair of Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society, Juliet Bailey, in this meadow from 2004 to 2020 can be found in Standish Development Framework Evidence Paper.

Conserving hedgerows

91. Standish is a rural parish with a wide variety of hedgerows which should be protected. Hedgerows are the most widespread semi-natural habitat in the UK, supporting a large diversity of flora and fauna. Many of these hedges can be seen on old maps (e.g. Figure 11) and have been field and lane boundaries for many hundreds of years.
92. The Woodland Trust's Hedges and Hedgerows Position Statement says, "Hedgerows can be locally distinctive and are a defining characteristic in many rural landscapes, with cultural, historical and aesthetic importance. They provide shade, shelter and containment for livestock, cover for game and pollinating insects, fodder, fuel and fruits from trees and act as windbreaks, reducing soil erosion and improving efficiency of water use by crops. They also form the primary habitat for at

least 27 species of conservation concern, including 13 which are globally threatened or rapidly declining. Where there are trees in the hedge, they are particularly important for butterflies, moths, many species of birds, bats and dormice. Where hedgerows are ancient or are remnants of ancient woodland, they act as a refuge for woodland plants or ancient trees, which themselves play host to important assemblages of decaying wood fungi, invertebrates and lichens on the bark. In autumn and early winter hedges offer abundant sources of food for wildlife. Ancient and wildlife-rich hedgerows can play an important role in creating links for wildlife across the landscape, making it more permeable. "Hedgerows should be protected and conserved, especially those with ancient woodland features or ancient trees, though other hedges can also support wildlife and deliver ecosystem services": <https://woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2013/02/hedges-and-hedgerows-position-statement/>. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) estimated 40% of hedges (95,000 miles) are ancient and/or species rich. Intensification of agriculture led to hedgerow clearance: around 118,000 miles of hedgerows have disappeared since 1950.



Figure 11. Standish in 1882, showing hedgerows as field boundaries.

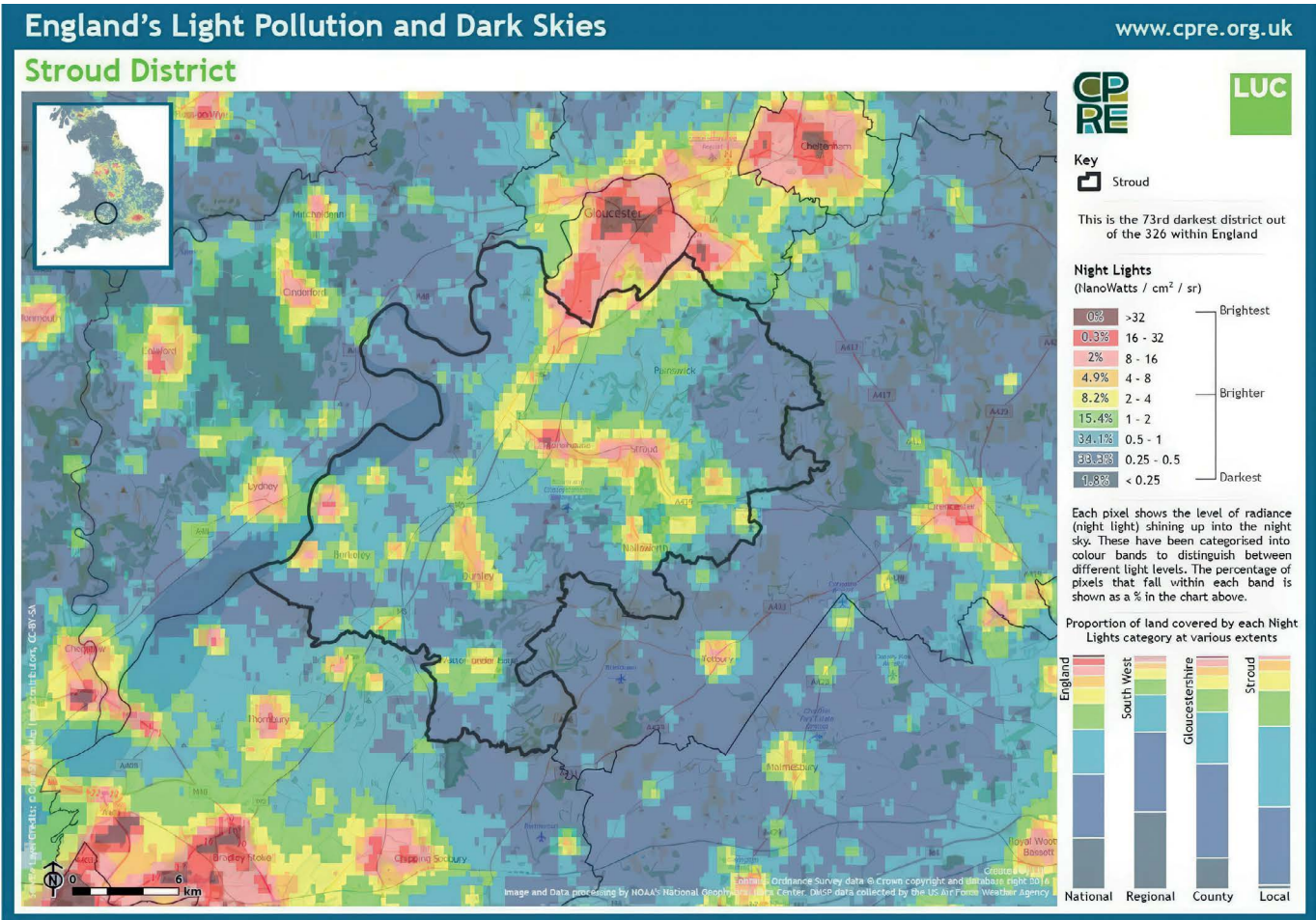


Figure 12. Stroud District night-time light pollution.

Dark skies

93. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) prepared an assessment of night-time light pollution for Stroud District, shown in Figure 12. The most recent interactive map was produced with satellite images captured at 1.30 am throughout September 2015. **Note:** This was before the construction of the Javelin Park Energy from Waste Facility, Great Oldbury and Green Walk.
94. A section of the Stroud District light pollution assessment showing Standish parish is shown in Figure 13. It shows that for most of Standish parish, away from built-up areas and the motorway, the light pollution level was 0.5–1 nanowatts/cm²/sr when the assessment was made. This level was experienced across 34.1% of Stroud District during the assessment. Stroud is the 73/326 darkest district in England and Standish is one of the darkest parts of Stroud. The level of night-time darkness is also very consistent across Standish parish. (**Note:** sr stands for steradian, the SI unit for a solid angle, which measures how much of a sphere's surface is covered by a given light source when viewed from

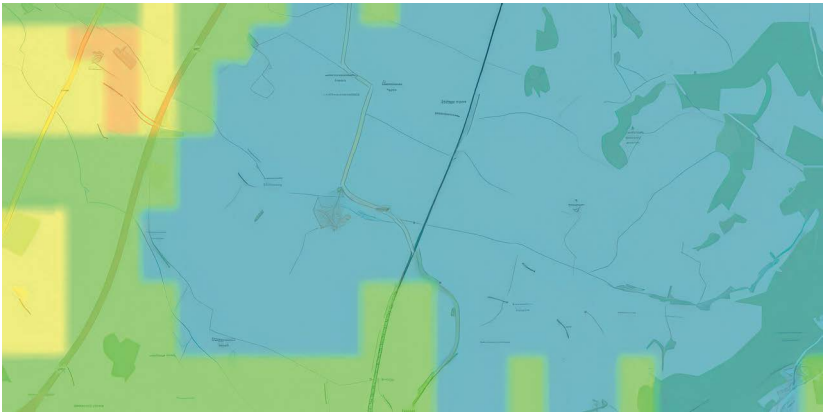


Figure 13. A section from the Figure 12 Dark Skies assessment showing the Standish Parish area.

- a specific point. In the context of the CPRE dark skies report NW/cm²/sr is a unit of measurement of radiance to quantify the brightness of the night sky – or specifically of light pollution.)
95. Night-time dark skies in the Standish countryside are an aspect of its character that would be under threat from new development. The CPRE recommends that existing dark skies are protected and that new developments do not increase local light pollution.

POLICY 2 – BIODIVERSITY

Priority will be given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside. Within this context:

1. Development should recognise the important role of Standish as a green lung for neighbouring built-up areas.
2. Development should support the retention and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity and dark skies.
3. Biodiversity Net Gain should be focused on protecting endangered species and improving local natural features.
4. Development at Stagholt Farm should retain and complement the existing mature trees and areas of biodiversity contained within the allocation, with betterment where possible
5. Development should resist harm to Standish Airfield Meadow's biodiversity and habitats.
6. New community infrastructure that conserves, enhances or reinstates orchards will be supported.

Bibliography: 'Biodiversity 2020 and Hedgerows' – <https://hedgelink.org.uk>; 'Hedges' – Historic England website; Woodland Trust – *Ancient Tree Inventory*; 'Save our magnificent meadows' – Cotswolds National Landscape website; 'Convert your lawn into a meadow' – Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

POLICY 3 – LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Objectives

Heritage

6. Maintain the historic characteristics of the parish and protect the setting of designated heritage assets.
7. Improve understanding of the contribution made by undesignated heritage assets to local character and sense of place within the parish.
8. Ensure undesignated heritage assets and their settings are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.



Stile formed from limestone monoliths in Standish Wood at the junction of Ash Lane and footpath 71323.

Background and explanation

96. Local heritage assets are not statutorily designated. These are generally buildings, structures or features that do not meet the high threshold of heritage significance to warrant listing or scheduling, but they nevertheless have local architectural or historic value.
97. National planning policy provides guidance on the identification and protection of locally significant heritage assets. National policy expects that the contribution of such heritage assets to local character and sense of place is recognised and valued and that policies ensure they are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. The effect of proposed development on the significance of any non-designated heritage assets should be taken into account when determining planning applications, as part of a balanced judgement.
98. The Local Plan Policy ES10 – “Valuing our historic environment and assets” sets out a series of requirements which are designed to ensure this happens. This includes a requirement for all development proposals involving a local heritage asset to be accompanied by a Heritage Statement, comprising a description of the heritage asset’s significance and setting, together with an

assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on that significance. The assessment should be proportionate to the asset’s significance, but it must be of sufficient detail to allow any potential impacts to be adequately assessed as part of a balanced planning judgement.

99. Stroud District Council’s Heritage Strategy (2018) explains that local heritage assets may be identified locally, including through the definition of “local listing” criteria in Neighbourhood Development Plans, as well as incidentally through the development management process.
100. This policy seeks to ease the application of Local Plan policies by highlighting a number of local heritage assets of particular significance to Standish parish. An initial list has been compiled in Locally Significant Heritage Assets Evidence Paper Appendix 3.1. They range from a WWII military airfield to a limestone stile and a row of ancient oak trees (believed to have been planted to commemorate Edward II in 1327), and they all make an important contribution to the character, distinctiveness and cultural legacy of our area. The identification of locally significant veteran trees, a



One of the ancient oaks traditionally thought to have been planted in Standish in 1327 to mark the route of King Edward II’s funeral cortege from Berkeley Castle to Gloucester Cathedral.

key part of this parish’s historic landscape, is also intended to aid the application of Local Plan Policy ES8 – “Trees, hedgerows and woodlands”.

101. The NDP does not consider the assets named in Locally Significant Heritage Assets Evidence Paper Appendix 3.1. to be an exhaustive list, but rather a useful starting point for the identification of local heritage assets. In the future, additional assets may be identified, in conformity with the criteria set out in Locally Significant Heritage Assets Evidence Paper Appendix 3.2, which comprises a pro forma to enable community members and anyone

with sufficient information to suggest potential candidates for inclusion in our Standish “local list”. Nominations will be assessed against the NDP’s defined criteria and considered by the Parish Council, as soon as possible following submission.

102. There is currently no Stroud District-wide “local list”. Should Stroud District Council instigate such a list in the future, the Standish community expects the local heritage assets identified in this plan (and any other assets within the parish that accord with the NDP’s defined criteria) to be formally considered for inclusion within it.

POLICY 3 – LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT HERITAGE ASSETS

Within the parish, there are undesignated heritage assets, such as buildings or structures of local architectural or historic interest, locally important archaeological sites, historic landscape features and spaces of local heritage significance. They are worthy of protection and shall be treated as local heritage assets for the purposes of implementing Stroud District Local Plan Policy ES10 – “Valuing our historic environment and assets”, having particular regard to the following principles:

1. Development proposals and initiatives will be supported where they can demonstrate that the heritage significance and setting of our local heritage assets will be conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced.
2. Proposals involving any harm to a local heritage asset or any potential loss of significance will be supported only where there is clear and convincing justification, set out in a Heritage Statement.
3. Where development proposals involve a change of use or physical alteration to a local heritage asset, these will be supported where the change would be sympathetic to the character and significance of the asset and where creative re-use and/or adaptation would secure the asset’s physical condition and longer-term future.

Locally Significant Heritage Assets Evidence Paper Appendix 3.1 records a number of non-designated heritage assets that have been identified as locally significant to Standish. In the future, additional assets may be identified in conformity with the criteria set out in Locally Significant Heritage Assets Appendix 3.2 and these may be added to our Standish Parish “local list”. Assets not included within this list are not necessarily considered “locally insignificant”.

POLICY 4 – SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL IN STANDISH

Objectives

Sustainable Travel and Connectivity

9. Ensure new development provides appropriate connectivity to the existing and proposed footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and multi-user paths through the provision of new routes and enhancements to existing routes.
10. Support a new strategic active travel link between Gloucester and Stroud through Standish, thus providing a sustainable travel option from Standish to these towns.
11. Preserve and enhance as necessary access to Stagholt Farm and ensure it is accessible from any new surrounding development.

Background and explanation

103. The Vision for Standish states that “Easy access to countryside will be maintained via the parish’s extensive public rights of way network. A diverse range of sustainable travel options will enable safe, well- connected movement throughout the parish and to neighbouring urban centres.” The Standish NDP Sustainable Travel Policy aims to meet this vision. The Sustainable Travel Evidence Paper summarises how the Parish Council and the Standish community are seeking to improve sustainable travel options. This has been a key priority for the Parish Council for a number of years, informed by several in-depth consultations with residents.

104. The main transport route through Standish is the B4008 which traverses the parish from the northwest to the southeast, and at present does not provide safe and sustainable options. It is a winding and narrow road and is particularly unsuitable for cyclists and walkers due to width restrictions and poor visibility for motorists.

105. A Freedom of Information request showed that in 1999 approximately 5,400 vehicles per day used the B4008 through Standish. Gloucestershire County Council Transport Monitoring data shows a drop in 2020 to a daily average to 4,464 vehicles due to Covid-19. The number of vehicles recorded in 2024 was a daily average of 8,111 in a period when approximately 41% of workers (Office of National Statistics) were working part time from home and thus not travelling to work every day.

106. Gloucestershire County Council data for Casualties from Road Traffic Collisions 2019–21 by Parish/Town Council Area shows 3 serious collisions, 1 fatality and 3 minor collisions on the B4008 in Standish during this period.

107. Figure 14 shows slight, serious and fatal accidents on the B4008, attended by police between 2021 and 2026. Of the two fatal accidents, one took place in May 2024 and the other in March 2026. A number of additional minor collisions have been observed by residents, though not recorded by police.

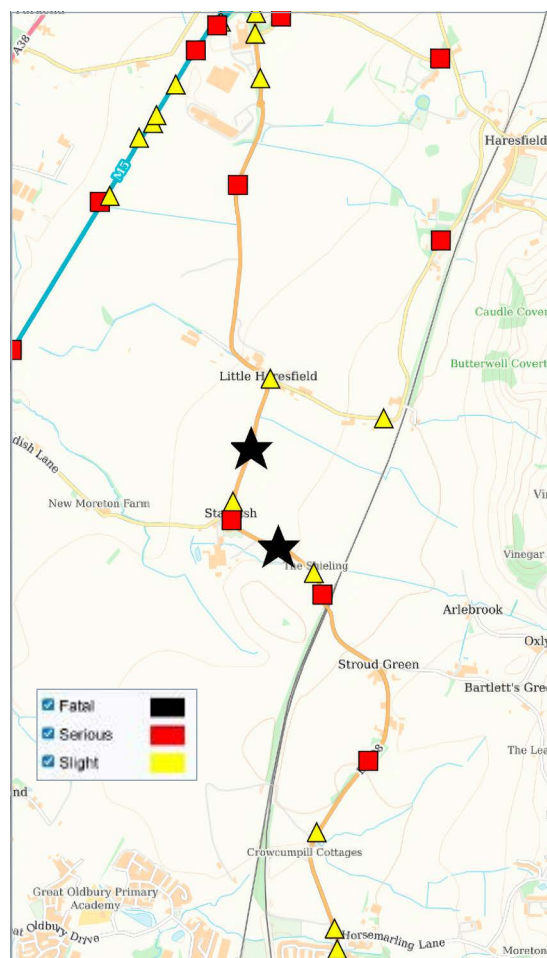


Figure 14. An extract from the Gloucestershire County Council collision map showing accidents at which police attended on the B4008 02/01/2021–30/04/2026. This can be viewed at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/roadsafety/collision-map/>.

108. It has been the highest priority for residents to improve safety on the B4008. Responses to consultations support achieving this priority by limiting additional traffic from new developments and by providing new, safe multi-user paths for non-motorised users. (See 2017 Safe and Sustainable Travel Questionnaire in Sustainable Travel Evidence Paper Appendix 4.1).

109. Local Plan Strategic Allocation PS19a indicates it will introduce 700 new dwellings and 8 travelling showpeople plots into the parish. Local Plan policies, such as CP1, CP4, CP5, CP6, CP8, HC1, DCH5, CP14, EI13 and DCP1, will all require this strategic development to significantly improve access for the new development to Stonehouse and within the development itself, particularly for walking and cycling. Stroud District Council has produced its Sustainable Transport Strategy which reflects the NPPF provision that planning has a role in seeking to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use (NPPF 2024, para. 124). The Stroud Sustainable Transport Strategy 2021 (p. 27) lists the sustainability measures required when PS19a is built, as follows:

- Masterplan to ensure connectivity through the site by sustainable modes to maintain public rights of way.
- Masterplan to connect into the Great Oldbury strategic allocation and provide walking and cycling routes to local facilities, including local centre, bus routes, employment and education.
- Contributions and support to sustainable transport measures on the A38 and A419 sustainable transport corridors.
- Contributions to enhanced bus service frequencies to key destinations including Stroud, Stonehouse, Gloucester, and Cam and Dursley Station. This should include service diversions into the site itself.
- Enhancements to off-site pedestrian and cycle routes to key destinations including Maidenhill

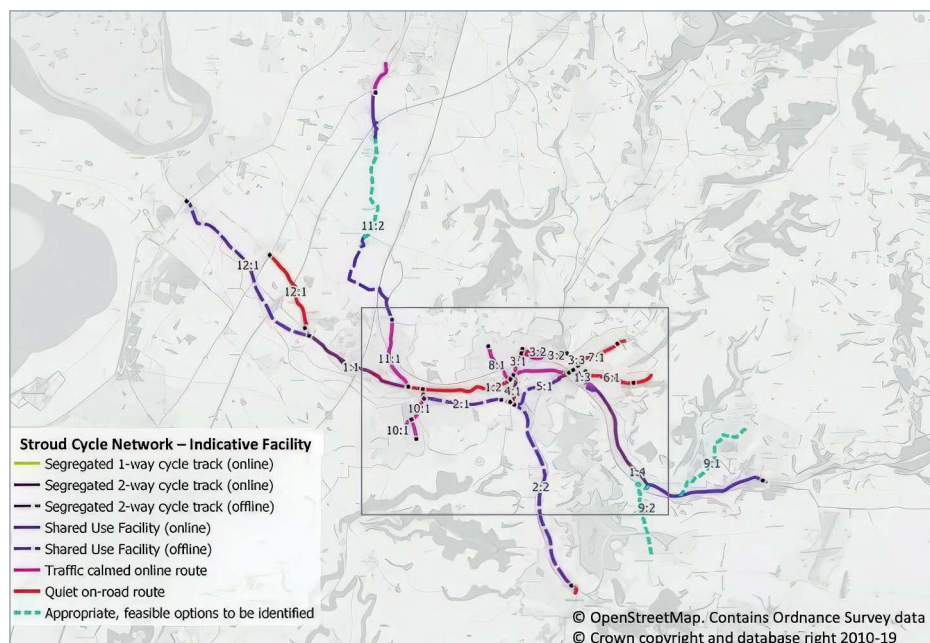


Figure 15. Indicative cycle facility for LCWIP Cycling Network – overview (subject to full feasibility assessment) (Stroud LCWIP p. 27).

School, Stonehouse Town Centre, Stonehouse Railway Station and cycle routes to Stroud.

- Provision of electric vehicle charging points in accordance with local parking standards.¹⁸

110. The second bullet point of Local Plan Core Policy DCP1 seeks to limit car use by delivering the highest possible share by the most sustainable travel modes.
111. Local Plan Site Allocation Policy PS19a criterion 12 and Delivery Policy EI13 will also require development to extend walking and cycling networks and provide new routes to connect to nearby established and proposed walking and cycling routes. Development adjacent to routes will be required to provide convenient access points and cycling parking where appropriate. Policy EI13 also requires strategic development to address “any part of the walking and cycling network highlighted through the Local Transport Plan or a district-wide walking and cycling strategy” and “any route identified through future cycling initiatives to create an integrated cycling network in the district”.
112. Gloucestershire County Council’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) identified a route from Stonehouse to Quedgeley as a Primary Route (see Route 11.2 in Figure 15 of that document). The LCWIP defines Primary Routes as “Desire lines that link large residential areas to trip attractors such as a town or city centre.”

18. https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/xmcf12s/stroud-sustainable-transport-strategy-main-report_redacted.pdf

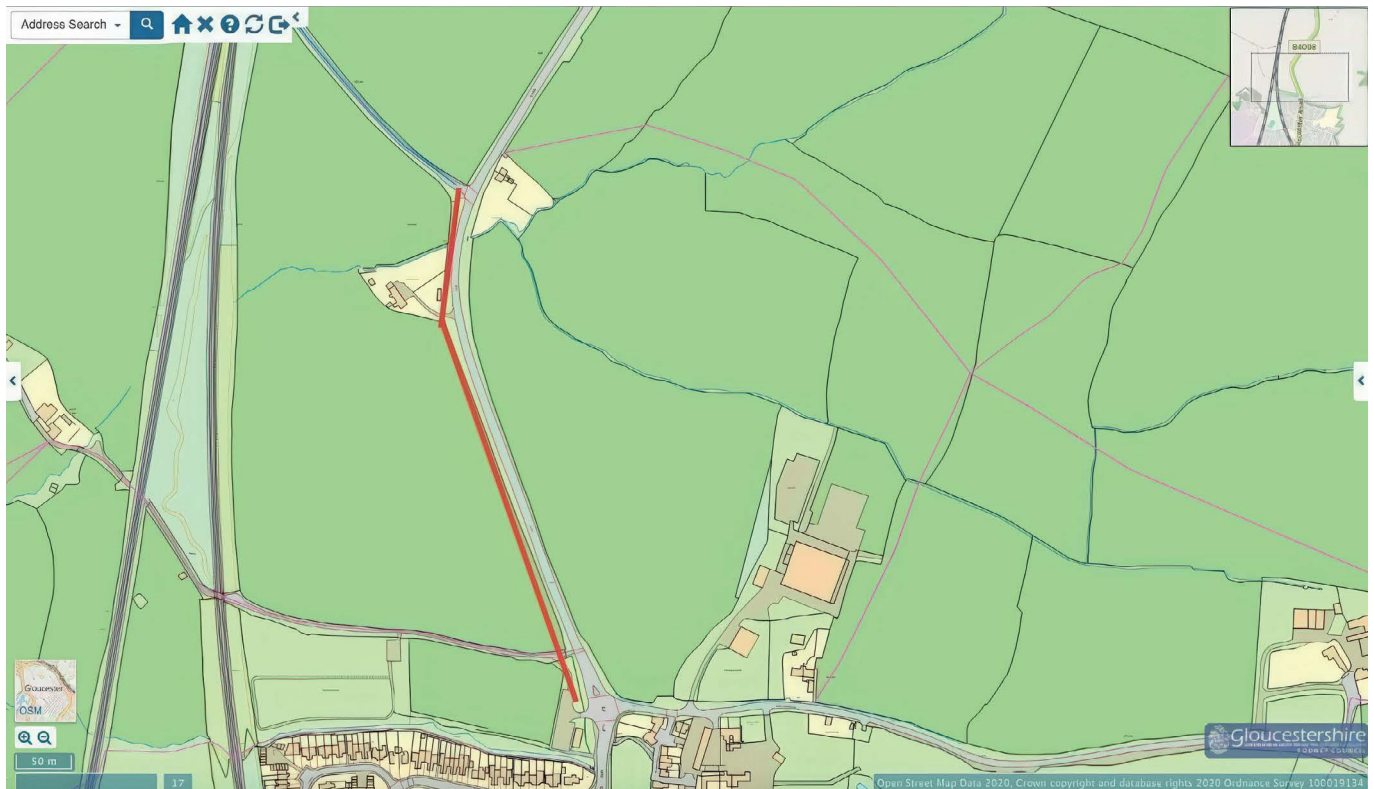


Figure 16. Map showing route from Horsemarling Roundabout to Black Bridge.

113. Many policies in Gloucestershire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2020–41 require sustainable travel options, including: LTP PD 0.1 Reducing Transport Carbon Emissions and Adopting to Climate Change; LTP PD 0.2 Local Environmental Protection; LTP PD 0.3 Maximising Investment in a Sustainable Transport Network; LTP PD 0.4 Integration with Land Use Planning and Development; LTP PD 0.5 Community Health and Wellbeing; LTP PD 0.6 Thinktravel – Influencing Travel Behaviour and Change; LTP PD 2.1 Gloucestershire Cycle Network; LTP PD 6.1 Gloucestershire Pedestrian Network; LTP PD 6.2 Right of Way; LTP PD 6.3 Pedestrian Asset Management; LTP PD 6.4 Pedestrian Safety.
114. The LTP Table CPS5 (b) “Stroud – Active Travel (Walking/Cycling) Scheme priorities up to 2031” (p. 179) includes the following at Ref. 6: “Access improvements ‘Active Travel Route’ – B4008 between Little Haresfield (M5 J12) and Stonehouse corridor”.
115. In 2022 the Parish Council started discussions with Gloucestershire County Council to identify how our aspirations for a multi-user path alongside the B4008 in Standish fitted in to their plans for this strategic active travel link. In due course the County Council confirmed that part of their planned route would follow the B4008 through Standish. The LCWIP states that, following consultation, Route 11.2 from Stonehouse to Quedgeley is “Re-classified as a primary route forming part of a link between Stroud



Representatives of Parish, District and County Councils at the opening of Standish Multi-User Path.

and Gloucester. Realigned to follow the off-road route (*being developed by Standish Parish Council*) parallel to B4008 as it offers more opportunity to provide an attractive route.”

116. Within this context, in 2020 the Parish Council commissioned a detailed feasibility study for the optimal route between Horsemarling Roundabout and Black Bridge (see Figure 16 – previously referred to as the Sherborne Trail in Sustainable Travel in Standish Evidence Paper Appendix 4.2). This is the route that has now been endorsed by Gloucestershire County Council. As well as providing an important section of the County Council's proposed active travel link, this 500-metre multi-user path provides the potential to link with the new housing proposed at PS19a and at Stagholt Farm,

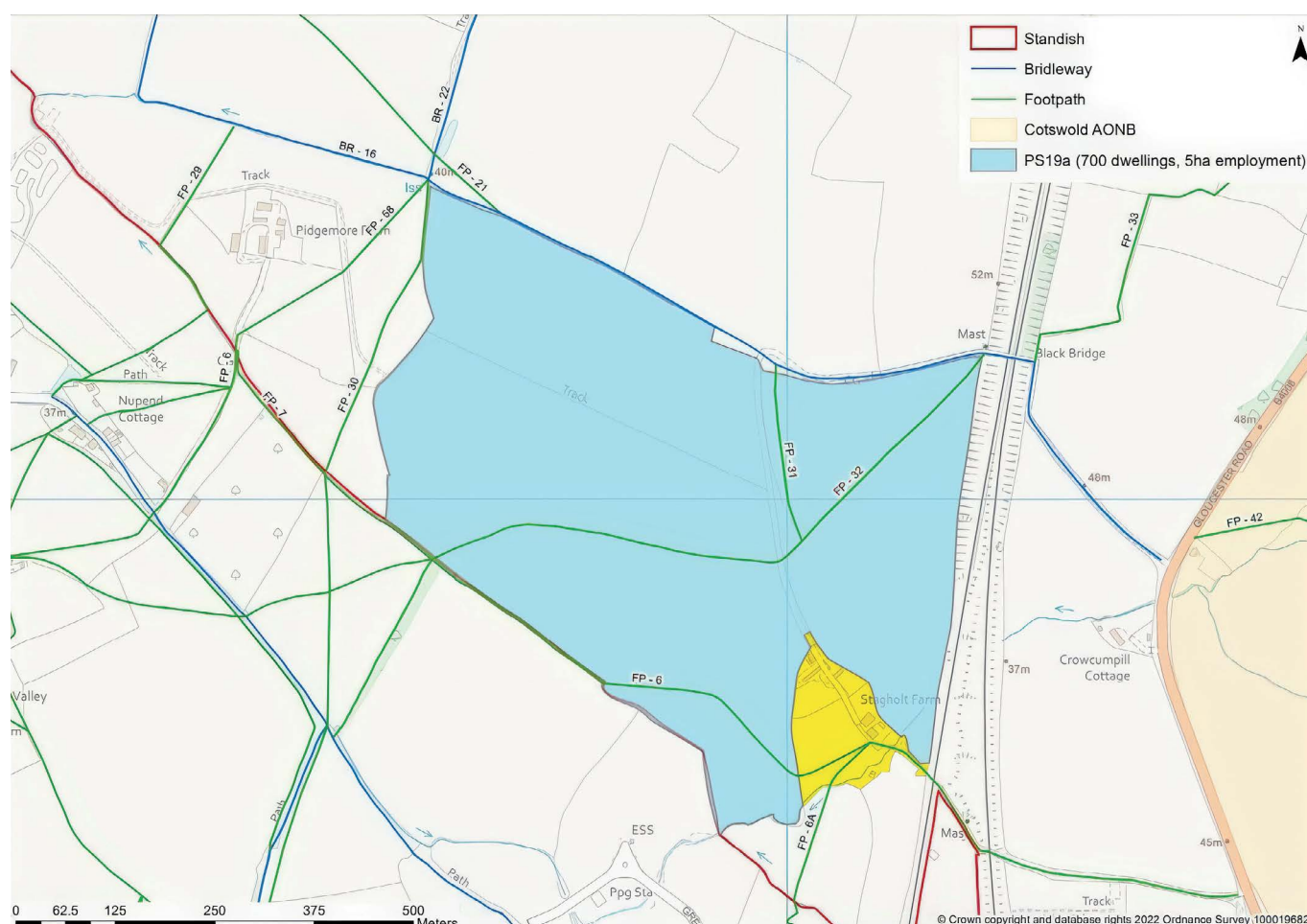


Figure 17. Section from the Gloucestershire Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.

and the existing development at Great Oldbury, via Standish footpath 6 – providing a safe off-road route of approximately 1 mile between PS19a/ Stagholt Farm and Stonehouse.

This section will be significant for the local community, enabling safe non-motorised travel within Standish to new facilities in PS19a, and from Great Oldbury, PS19a and local hamlets to and from schools, employment, the railway station and the other facilities in Stonehouse. It will also enable residents to access the existing network of footpaths and bridleways more safely. Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council provided funding to commission the final design stage, enabling “shovel-ready” plans to be produced in financial year 2023/24. Further funding was allocated from a Section 106 pot and from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. Part of the multi-user path was delivered in July 2025, with a further stage to be completed in 2025/26. The first stage of the path was formally opened in September 2025 (see Sustainable Travel in Standish Evidence Paper Appendix 4.3 for media release).

117. The Standish Multi-User Path provides the first tranche of a scheme which will be further developed by Gloucestershire County Council, and

this Neighbourhood Development Plan supports the principle of a long-distance strategic multi-user route from Horsemarling roundabout, through Standish parish, towards Gloucester (without specifying a particular route).

118. There is a well-developed public rights of way (PROW) network in the parish, and the Standish countryside provides necessary and desirable green spaces that offer opportunities for healthy activity in a tranquil environment for existing and future residents of the parish and the surrounding area. The Standish community undertook a comprehensive audit of the condition of the PROW network in the parish in 2019. This is set out in detail in Sustainable Travel in Standish Evidence Paper Appendix 4.4. Wherever possible, future strategic developments should work with the Parish Council to ensure that improvements are delivered which are proportionate and reasonable to the development proposed.
119. The area of Strategic Allocation PS19a overlays several local footpaths, as does the proposed Protected Area of Search (PAS) at Stagholt Farm (see Policy 6 of the NDP). These are shown in Figure 17. The potential PS19a development site is shaded as blue and the Stagholt Farm development site is

shaded in yellow. The map shows that the following footpaths either cross the sites or form part of their border:

- Eastington Footpath 7
- Standish Footpath 6
- Standish Footpath 6A
- Standish Footpath 21
- Standish Footpath 30
- Standish Footpath 31
- Standish Footpath 32
- Standish Footpath 58
- Standish Bridleway 16
- Standish Bridleway 22

120. To conform with this NDP policy, all the footpaths within the proposed PS19a development and the proposed Stagholt Farm PAS (should it be developed) should be conserved, linking to

improved and well-maintained paths in the surrounding countryside. Local Plan Delivery Policy DES2 – “Green Infrastructure” broadly supports this approach of providing corridors of connectivity between biodiversity assets.

121. Local Plan policy CP6 sets out how infrastructure will be delivered. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is not charged for strategic development in Stroud District as these sites should be able to accommodate necessary mitigation and enhancement. Opportunities to fund necessary improvements for the PROW network, including links to the Standish Multi-User Path (the highest priority of the NDP Sustainable Travel Policy), will be sought, together with contributions towards the strategic cycling and walking route between Gloucester and Stroud, as part of the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.

POLICY 4 – SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL IN STANDISH

Any strategic development in Standish and any future development at Stagholt Farm should incorporate the footpaths crossing or adjacent to these development sites as part of wider sustainable transport provision for those schemes.

Development should contribute towards improvements where necessary to accord with Stroud District Local Plan Policy El13, in particular multi-user links to the Standish Multi-User Path. (El13 states that “Major development should provide new cycle routes within the development and connect to nearby established cycle routes.”) Applicants will need to demonstrate compliance with the District Council’s latest Local Plan Evidence in respect of measures set out in the Sustainable Transport Strategy.

The development of a long-distance strategic multi-user route from Horsemarling roundabout through Standish towards Gloucester, by Gloucestershire County Council, is supported. The Parish Council will look at opportunities for its future delivery, working with partner organisations.

POLICY 5 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Objectives

Community Facilities

12. Improve the existing community facility provision within the parish and support the provision of appropriate new community facilities.

Background and explanation

122. The Local Plan describes Standish as “amongst the most sparsely populated parishes in the District, with a strong rural character”. It is deemed to be “countryside”, sitting outside settlement development limits. Residents and visitors value the open countryside and its public rights of way (see Sustainable Travel Policy) as important community facilities. The characteristics of the area are described in detail in the Illman Young Landscape Appraisal (Standish Landscape Character Areas Appendix 1.1).

123. The parish has relatively few built facilities and these are described in this Community Facilities Policy. The sparsity of these facilities imbues them with an outsized importance. In an urban context, the loss of a single facility might be an inconvenience; in Standish, it could represent a catastrophic loss of a vital social node, eroding community cohesion and resilience. This policy recognises that the parish’s social infrastructure is as fragile and valuable as its environmental assets. It is designed to perform two critical functions: to protect the existing, often multi-functional, community assets that form the bedrock of parish life; and to strategically manage the introduction of new facilities generated by major growth, ensuring they integrate sensitively and add genuine value.

124. The town of Stonehouse, a Tier 1 settlement, sits adjacent to Standish and provides primary and secondary schools, GP surgeries, dentist and optician services, supermarket, pharmacies and a range of smaller shops, a library, a Post Office and cafés.

125. The built facilities in Standish parish are centred on the historic hamlet of Standish. They comprise Church House, which functions as the Village Hall and is leased from the Gloucester Diocese, and Standish Church. In addition, the churchyard/parish burial ground and the small village green function as public spaces.

Community facilities and assets (existing, in development and proposed)

- The Village Hall and car park (managed by the Village Hall Committee).
- Standish Church and churchyard (managed by the Parochial Church Council).
- Village green (managed by Standish Parish Council).
- Stagholt allotments and playing field (situated in Standish Parish but owned and managed by Stonehouse Town Council, where there are plans to extend the allotments and provide a community natural green space) – see Figure 18.
- Green Walk (former Standish Hospital site) natural play area (to be provided by the developer and managed, in due course; managed by the residents’ management committee – see Figure 19).
- Standish Wood, Shortwood, Haresfield Beacon and car park (owned and managed by the National Trust)
- Community facilities identified in the Local Plan for land northwest of Stonehouse (PS19a):
 1. New 1.5-form-entry primary school (incorporating early years provision) on a 2-hectare site.
 2. Recreation open space and natural green space, including built facilities.



Standish Village Hall with village green in the foreground. Standish Church House (now the Village Hall) is a Grade II listed building. The original building, probably built in the mid-1300s with additions in the 16th century, was a church meeting place and became the village school from 1839–1963.

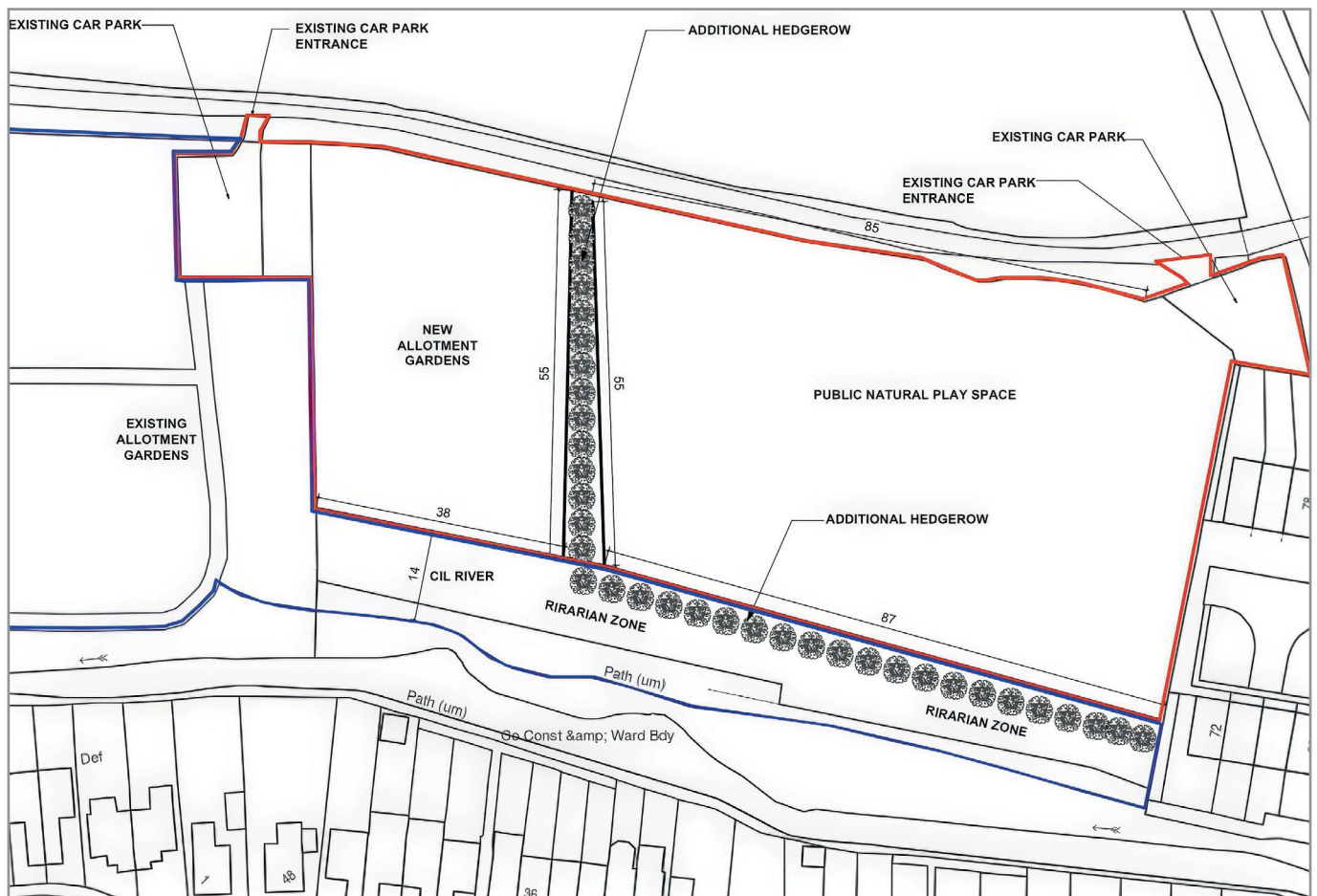


Figure 18. Plans for Stagholt allotments and playing field.

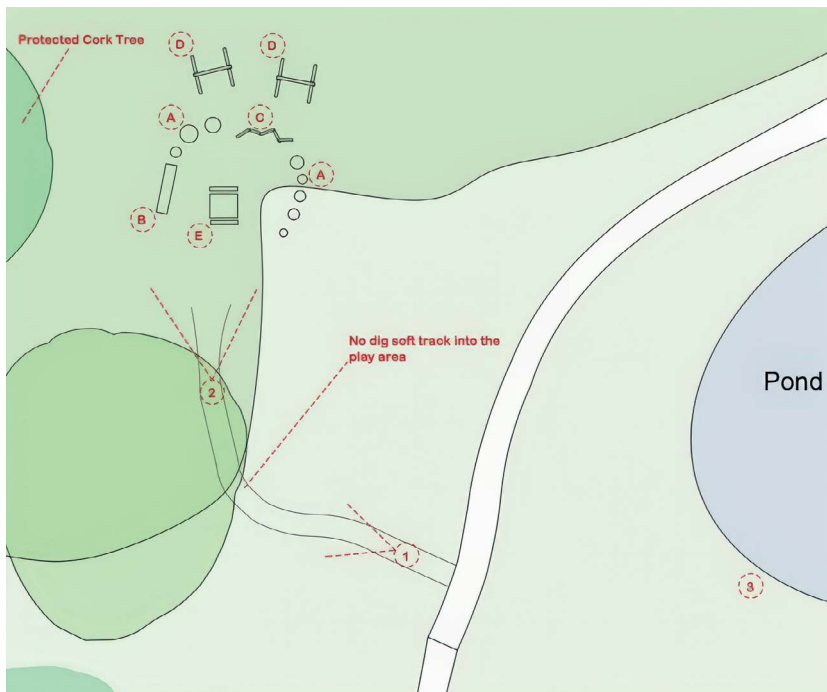


Figure 19. Natural play area at Green Walk.

■ Community facilities in the early stages of development

1. Stagholt playing field is currently little used due to flooding. In 2025, Stonehouse Town Council submitted a planning application S.25/0026/FUL (see Stroud District Council planning portal) to extend the allotment site and provide a community natural green space to include features such as a community orchard, a wetland area, tree planting, naturalistic play opportunities and areas for quiet contemplation. The application was permitted in June 2026.
2. A natural play area is soon to be constructed at Green Walk (former Standish Hospital site) as a requirement of the planning permission for the site. See planning condition 7 (Play Area) application number S.22/1317/VAR on the Stroud District Council planning portal.

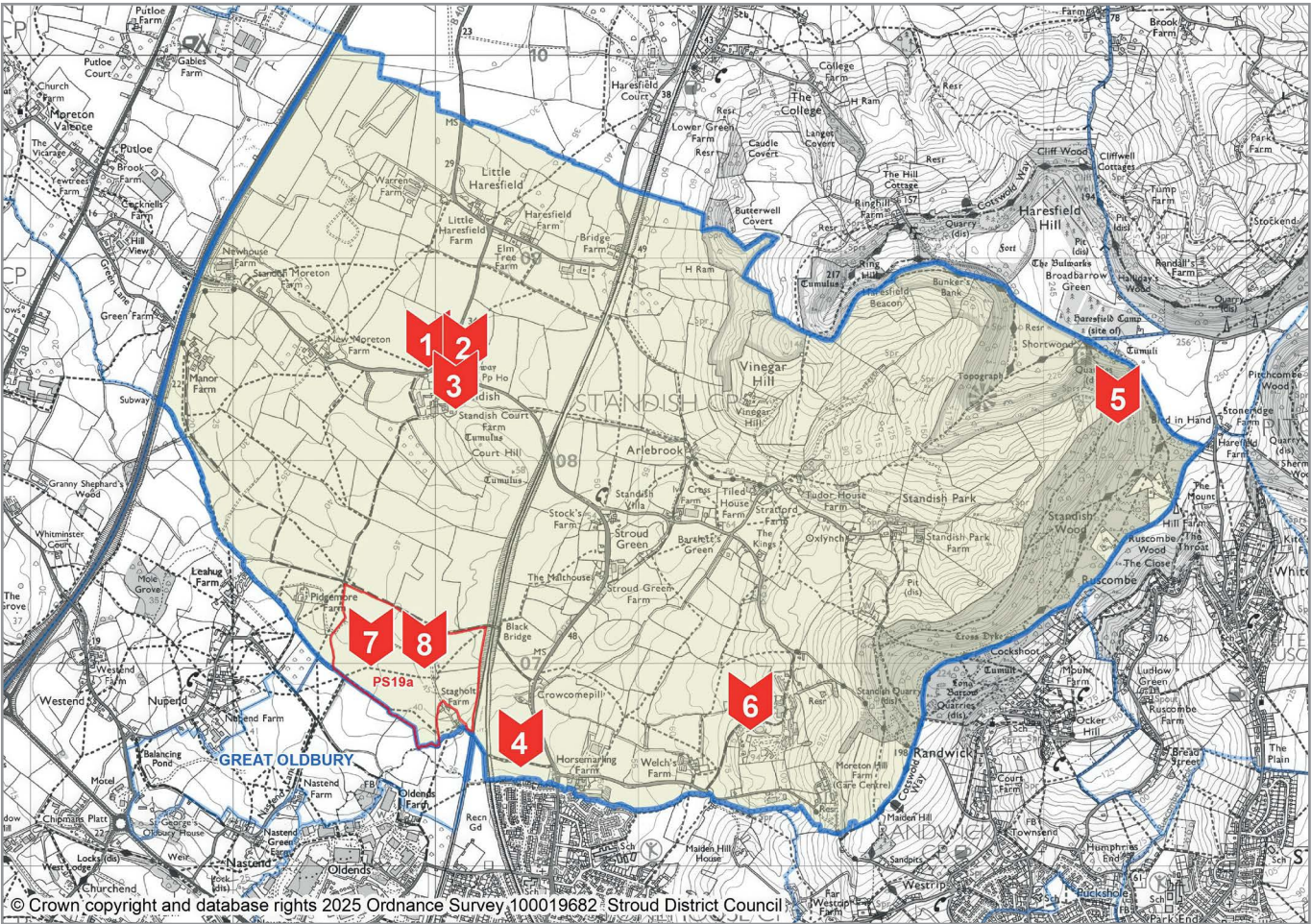


Figure 20. Map showing the location of community facilities and assets (existing, in development and proposed).

126. The policy seeks to ensure that existing community facilities are maintained, cared for and, where possible, enhanced. All facilities are valued by the residents of Standish. The Village Hall is booked regularly for training courses, private functions and community events. Standish Church holds weekly services but these are less well attended than in the past. However, the church building is used on a regular basis for choir practice, concerts and exhibitions. It is open in the daytime and provides a venue for quiet reflection, as does the churchyard. A well-attended meeting in autumn 2022 to discuss the church's future was concerned to find ways of keeping it open and functioning.

127. The village green provides a play area for children and a resting place for walkers and cyclists. Both the village green and the churchyard have maintained areas of wildflowers to support and encourage biodiversity. The allotments are fully subscribed and there are plans to increase and vary the use of the playing field, as indicated in Figure 18. The natural play area at Green Walk (Figure 19) will increase opportunities for children's play within the parish.

Key

1	Village Hall
2	Standish Church and churchyard
3	Village green
4	Stagholt allotments and playing fields
5	Standish Wood, Shortwood and Haresfield Beacon
6	Green Walk natural play area
7	Identified in Local Plan: new 1.5-form-entry primary school
8	Identified in Local Plan: recreational open space and natural green space including built facilities.

128. The policy recognises that additional community facilities will be required when the population of Standish grows with the development of 700 houses at PS19a, and these will be welcomed subject to the provisos set out here.

POLICY 5 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES POLICY

Existing community facilities should be safeguarded and, where appropriate, enhanced.

Development which involves the loss of, or impacts adversely on, the community facilities identified in this policy will not be supported unless:

- i. There is no prospect of continued community use or viability, which is demonstrated by appropriate evidence over a period of time agreed with the Parish Council; and
- ii. There are adequate similar facilities within the NDP area which cater for the needs of the local population.

Development proposals for new and/or improved community facilities must be in accordance with Core Policy CP15 of the Local Plan (“A quality living and working countryside”). They will be supported where:

1. the proposal would not have significant harmful impact on the amenity of surrounding residents; and
2. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the surrounding local environment (with regard to biodiversity, wildlife habitat and landscape character where appropriate); and
3. the proposal would not have significant detrimental impacts on the local road network (with regard to additional traffic volume/congestion, demand for parking, and pollution levels); and
4. the proposal would not have significant detrimental impacts on surface water run-off, water quality or flood risk in the immediate vicinity of the site; and
5. the proposed facilities are open to all residents of the NDP area.

POLICY 6 – SITE ALLOCATION PS19A and STAGHOLT FARM PROTECTED AREA OF SEARCH

Objectives

Landscape, Biodiversity and Climate Change

1. Ensure priority is given to protecting the quality, character and distinctiveness of the Standish countryside.
2. Maintain a strong rural identity and provide a “green lung” by acting as a green buffer between neighbouring built-up areas.
3. Ensure new development supports the retention and enhancement of local habitats, biodiversity, dark skies, wildlife corridors and linkages.
4. Ensure new development responds to the local landscape character and the parish’s situation as a transition between the Cotswolds National Landscape escarpment and the Severn Vale.
5. Ensure new development is of high quality, well designed and using carbon neutral technology. New development should be sensitive to the green environment and non-intrusive to the landscape.

Sustainable Travel and Connectivity

9. Ensure new development provides appropriate connectivity to the existing and proposed footpaths, bridleways, cycle routes and multi-user paths through the provision of new routes and enhancements to existing routes.
10. Support a new strategic active travel link between Gloucester and Stroud through Standish, thus providing a sustainable travel option from Standish to these towns.
11. Preserve and enhance as necessary access to Stagholt Farm and ensure it is accessible from any new surrounding development.

Site Allocation

13. Designate land at Stagholt Farm as a Protected Area of Search, to be released for housing development only if site PS19a is allocated in the Stroud District Local Plan or if a planning application for PS19a otherwise receives planning consent.

Background and Explanation

129. Ordinarily, a site allocation within a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) would involve a formal call for sites, followed by a thorough assessment to ensure all available options are fairly considered before determining the most suitable locations.
130. However, the Standish NDP was begun in the context of the Stroud District Local Plan Review’s Emerging Strategy (November 2018), which excluded Stagholt Farm as an unallocated “island” of land between allocated Strategic Allocation site SA2 and the proposed strategic site PS19a.
131. The landowners and the Parish Council seek to safeguard Stagholt Farm’s long-term future by designating it as a Protected Area of Search (PAS) within the NDP. This formal status will ensure the farm’s existing agricultural and environmental character can be maintained, protected from any development impacts arising from PS19a (particularly regarding access), whilst also giving its owners the option to bring it forward for development should they choose to do so if PS19a is developed. To achieve this, two separate policies are required: one to establish Stagholt Farm’s PAS designation and protection from ancillary development pressures, and another to govern the delivery of PS19a, ensuring the two sites are treated as distinct entities with independent planning considerations.
132. A Housing Site Assessment Form has been completed and may be found at Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site Evidence Paper Appendix 6.1.
133. PS19a itself falls under two ownerships: a private developer (represented by Pegasus Planning

and Robert Hitchins) and Gloucestershire County Council. The PAS designation for Stagholt Farm will prevent it from being considered as landlocked or incompatible with adjacent parcels, while still allowing for its continued agricultural use. The Standish NDP allocates the site with this protected status, recognising it as a separate component from the wider strategic allocation.

134. Critically, Stagholt Farm's only vehicular access is via Black Bridge, a single-track railway crossing. This access operates under a longstanding private arrangement which would not be extended more widely. In its current state, the bridge cannot sustain significant traffic, and no alternative access exists. The proposed PAS policy for Stagholt Farm will formalise its protected status and prevent any development that would compromise its current access arrangements or environmental value, while



Stagholt Farm (by Derek Harper).

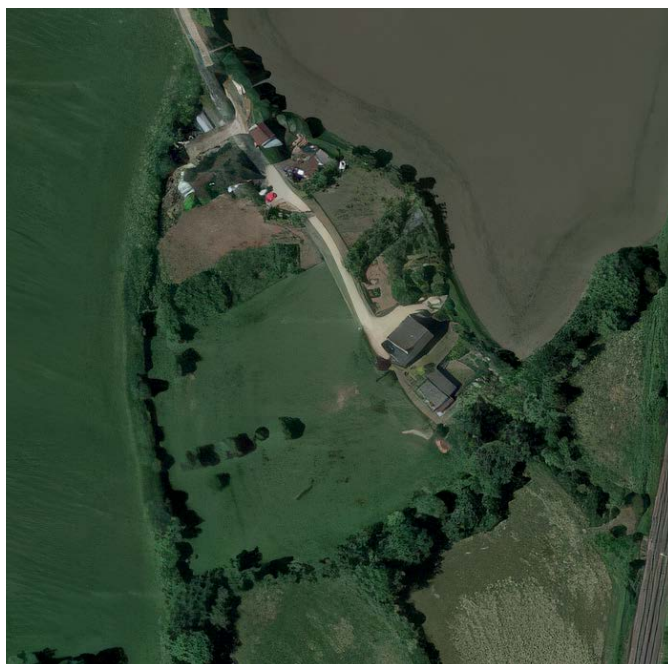
the PS19a policy should ensure no reliance on the farm's infrastructure, preserving its operational and environmental integrity. The Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site Evidence Paper provides more information about the PAS.

Description

135. The farm is relatively flat, though it slopes slightly to the south and east. A brook approximately marks the southern boundary of the site. There is access to a footpath which crosses the railway line in the southeast corner of the site. The main farmhouse buildings are located in the western portion of the site. Scattered buildings for agricultural and B class uses are located to the north of the site. The entire site is surrounded by mature hedges with interspersed mature trees.
136. The landowners at Stagholt Farm have lived there for many years and have raised their family and run a business there. During this time, they have made

many environmental improvements, particularly to land around the brook at the southern boundary of the site.

137. A Parish Council habitat survey of Stagholt Farm, led by experienced local naturalist Roy Widgery, was carried out in 2019. This survey is set out in full in Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site Evidence Paper Appendix 6.2, and the main points are summarised here. The habitats identified included meadows, mature hedgerows, running water (stream), pond, mature water margin, orchard, mature trees and arable agricultural land.



Aerial view of Stagholt Farm.



Figure 21. Stagholt Farm Boundary and Proposal Map showing land available for new housing allocation.

138. The hedgerows with the most species, and therefore the oldest, in the Stagholt survey were along the Lower Meadow and the arable agricultural area. These hedgerows could be between 900 and 1,300 years old as 11 woody species were recorded in 30 metres (see methodology in Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site Evidence Paper Appendix 6.2).
139. There were several mature trees, predominantly ash, in the area, mostly in the hedgerows.
140. The Lower Meadow at Stagholt had at least 11 different species of flowering plant per square metre making it “moderately species rich” (magnificent meadows) as defined in Stagholt Farm: Protected Area of Search Site Evidence Paper Appendix 6.2.
141. 7 species of butterfly were observed with an amazing 120+ butterflies recorded in this area. All of these areas supported a large diversity of bees, hoverflies, butterflies and some dragonflies were also observed.
142. The hedgerows, orchard and other trees provide food and shelter for a great many invertebrates, birds and mammals. The arable agricultural land was surrounded by mature hedgerows which supported a wide range of biodiversity.
143. Ponds, the stream and water margins provide vital habitats that support a wide range of species including birds, amphibians, fish and insects such as dragonflies. Long-established meadows, with their variety of wildflowers, support biodiversity by providing food, shelter and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. These pollinators are vital for pollinating food crops.
144. All these habitats provide rich areas for CO₂ sequestration. These carbon sinks are critical to managing the carbon levels in our atmosphere and ensuring that global warming is kept under control. Protecting and restoring carbon sinks is essential to maintaining a stable future environment.
145. Stagholt Farm is an area of rich biodiversity due in a large part to the care and stewardship of the landowners over many years.

POLICY 6A – PROTECTED AREA OF SEARCH STAGHOLT FARM

Land at Stagholt Farm, shown in Figure 21 Proposal Map, is allocated in this Neighbourhood Development Plan as a Protected Area of Search for new housing with no other principal use permitted. The owners may only offer the site for development if PS19a is allocated for development in the draft Stroud District Local Plan (currently at Examination in Public) and/or a planning application is approved for PS19a.

Any planning application should be supported by a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment and the necessary evidence to allow Stroud District Council, as the competent authority, to rule out adverse effects on integrity, alone or in-combination, for any European site. This may require mitigation measures to be incorporated into the application and contribution to any strategic mitigation scheme in place at the time.

The PAS site may **only** come forward for development if:

PS19a is under construction, planning is approved or completed, with evidence that:

1. Access is maintained through PS19a; and Critical infrastructure (roads, drainage, utilities) serving both sites is **secured** or **delivered**.
2. Vehicular access to be taken from the adjacent site PS19a allocated in the Stroud District Local Plan (currently at EiP). Access should be taken from the proposed allocation in a manner to be set out in the Masterplan for the allocation PS19a.
3. Density and layout should retain and complement the existing farm buildings, reflecting the historic layout of the allocation. This should include no more than 28 dwellings per hectare.
4. Density and layout should retain and complement the existing mature trees and areas of biodiversity contained within the allocation with betterment where possible (see Policy 2).
5. A Masterplan should be provided with the application to demonstrate integration with PS19a.
6. Early consultation with the Parish Council is encouraged to ensure designs include the highest standards of green infrastructure, walking and cycling routes, and the latest environmentally sustainable technology. Community facilities or contributions towards such facilities should be provided.

POLICY 6B – SITE ALLOCATION PS19a

To ensure the **Protected Area of Search (PAS)** remains developable and is not landlocked or subject to other ancillary development pressures by PS19a (whether or not the Stroud District Draft Local Plan is adopted), the following requirements shall apply:

1. Permanent Access Protection

Legally binding access corridors must be secured through a Section 106 agreement or planning condition on any development consented within PS19a, ensuring:

- i. A minimum 6m-wide (or as required by highways standards) permanent access route to the PAS, free from obstruction.
- ii. No built development, landscaping, or infrastructure on PS19a may impede future access to the PAS.
- iii. Future-proofed utility connections (drainage, electricity, water) must be reserved for PAS development.

2. Policy Application Regardless of Local Plan Status

- i. This policy shall apply irrespective of whether:
 - a. The Stroud District Draft Local Plan is adopted or withdrawn.
 - b. PS19a is granted permission under any other planning framework (e.g., outline permission, neighbourhood plan allocation).
- ii. The PAS cannot be rendered undevelopable due to PS19a's layout, design, or infrastructure.

3. Masterplan and legal safeguards

No development on PS19a will be permitted without:

- i. A binding legal agreement (S106 or unilateral undertaking) securing PAS access.
- ii. A highways-approved access strategy demonstrating no future constraints on PAS development.
- iii. An infrastructure delivery plan ensuring utilities, drainage, and transport links are future-proofed.

4. Enforcement and monitoring

- i. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) will maintain a PAS safeguarding register.
- ii. Breach of access protections will be treated as a material planning contravention.
- iii. Annual reviews will assess whether PAS remains developable.

