

# Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan 2019 - 2034 Pyrton Parish Council

## Planning for the future of the parish



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## 1. Foreword

1. Pyrton is a quiet rural parish with a community that cares deeply about its past and future. The parish has a rich and extensive history, reflected in its architecture and landscape, which are highly valued by both residents and visitors.
2. The quintessential Oxfordshire village of Pyrton, often used by film and TV programme makers, has survived and flourished since Saxon times, retaining its heritage until today, thanks in recent decades to the designation of the Pyrton conservation area. Its position at the edge of the Chiltern Hills (an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) provides versatile and fertile farmland, sustaining a vibrant agricultural economy.
3. The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan aims to conserve and enhance the unique qualities of the parish. The Parish Council, acting on behalf of the community, has sought the views of every resident of Pyrton on all aspects of the future of the parish. This consultation process has helped to ensure that local people have a voice on locally important topics, including future development.
4. Pyrton's Neighbourhood Plan articulates a clear vision for the area that embodies the views of residents with a strong interest in their community. The message in the following pages is that the unique, historic, and rural character of Pyrton should be conserved and enhanced, with the parish taking a positive approach to development on available and appropriate sites that respects the parish's distinct identity and character. Through this plan, Pyrton aims to develop and prosper as a community and be an even better place for residents to live and work in — and for visitors to enjoy.
5. Pyrton Parish Council and Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group wish gratefully to acknowledge the commitment and efforts of the following in the preparation of the plan: Eric Fellner, Edward Baker, Lucy Brittain, Wayne Burt, Peter Canavan, Michael

Crawford, John Curtis, Henry Findlater, Hugh Garforth-Bles, Colin Ludlow, Jeff Lowe, Joyce Marriott, Paul McNamara, Catherine Pinney, Philip Pinney, Jo Schofield, Ben Schofield, Luke Vallins, and Genevieve Young.

6. The Parish Council would like to thank those who have offered constructive and helpful comment during the various stages of consultation, including on the pre-submission version of the plan.

## 2. Executive summary

1. Pyrton is a small but remarkable historic village in a tranquil rural setting. Residents are determined to conserve and enhance its distinct identity and character, while enabling suitable residential development that helps cater for the housing needs of the district beyond Pyrton. The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) aims to reflect this balance and to offer a positive framework for the village's future.

### 2.1. Background to neighbourhood plans

1. Neighbourhood planning and the power granted to communities to prepare neighbourhood plans (NPs) emerged after the formation of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government in June 2010. This system has continued under the present Conservative government. Through the preparation of NPs, communities are able to create a shared vision to shape the development of their local area, set out local planning policies, and exercise influence over local planning decisions.
2. To be adopted and take effect, the preparation of a NP must conform to certain set procedures and be shown to reflect the wishes of residents, ultimately expressed through a local referendum on the NP. The NP also has to meet specific criteria. In particular it must be constructive and, in the case of this NP, aligned with South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)'s adopted and emerging Local Plan. Like the SODC Local Plan, this NP will apply until 2034. The Parish Council will review the NP periodically and update it, as required.

### 2.2. Preparation of the Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP)

1. The PNP steering group, consisting of parish councillors and Pyrton residents, decided to prepare a NP in early 2015. Thereafter, through successive consultation exercises to which a high percentage of Pyrton residents contributed, the steering group pinpointed the following objectives, which subsequently became the aims of the PNP:
  - a. To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the built and natural environment, reinforcing and improving Pyrton's historic character;
  - b. To manage sensitively any redevelopment or re-use of the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) site (PYR1) at the junction of the Shirburn Road (B4009) with the unnamed road leading down to Pyrton;
  - c. To deliver appropriate housing growth, commensurate with the size and character of the parish, to help address any district need for housing, including affordable housing;
  - d. To establish parish design principles to ensure the quality of future development;
  - e. To establish the principles for the future of planning policy for Pyrton charity lands and PYR2;
  - f. To work with relevant local and county authorities to develop measures to improve existing services and infrastructure, and help safeguard Pyrton from any adverse impact from increased levels of through-traffic.
2. Although most of these aims are addressed by policies within the PNP, some are reflected in future actions of the Parish Council listed in Chapter 7.

### 2.3. Sensitive local context

1. Development proposals under the PNP must take account of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) (most of the parish is in the AONB's setting, not in the AONB itself); the Watlington and Pyrton Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); Knightsbridge Lane Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); Pyrton conservation area; listed buildings (there are two grade II\* and eighteen grade II listed buildings in the village); Shirburn Castle registered park and garden; and Clare Copse ancient and semi-natural woodland. The Parish Council is committed to conserving key community assets, namely the village hall and St Mary's church, and aims to nominate these formally as Assets of Community Value, to help safeguard them for the Pyrton community.

### 2.4. Key factors bearing on the PNP

1. *Parishioners' view of Pyrton:* Parishioners value Pyrton's historic character, tranquility, location, landscape and setting, and separate identity, distinct from that of neighbouring Watlington. They wish to conserve and enhance the countryside in, and surrounding, Pyrton, the distinctive landscape character, the rural setting, and the openness and long-range, unobstructed views. They value the sense of a quiet and small community, the absence of street lighting and light pollution, single track roads, lack of pavements, and minimal through-traffic. They also support use of building materials in line with the local Chiltern vernacular. Their concerns include poor mobile reception, the lack of drainage/ sewerage, and the absence of effective restrictions on transit through Pyrton village by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Although most of these views are reflected in policies within the PNP, some are furthered through planned actions by the Parish Council listed in Chapter 7.
2. *Parishioners' priorities:* conserving and enhancing the distinct historic identity of Pyrton; conserving and improving the character and appearance of the local area; ensuring suitable residential development; protecting heritage features; working with local authorities to manage and minimise traffic movements and improve road safety; ensuring high quality building design in the local vernacular; and protecting local wildlife and habitats.
3. *Local and wider area housing needs:* SODC has not allocated any housing to Pyrton, which it categorises as an 'Other Village' in its adopted settlement strategy. A housing needs survey found no existing or immediate future parish need for more houses, but the PNP steering group supported a contribution of 15-20 houses towards the wider area housing need (as identified in the Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment [SHMA], 2014). Parishioners endorsed the group's recommendation and agreed the parish should put forward for development two sites to accommodate 3-5 houses (for both of which planning consent has since been given by SODC) and the former MoD site (PYR1) to supply up to 15 more houses. The sum of 18-20 houses would amount to a sizeable contribution by a parish with just 93 dwellings at present. Under PNP guidelines, the new houses should use materials and be in styles consonant with the Chiltern vernacular.

## 2.5. Proposed sites for development

1. PNP stance on individual sites considered for development within the parish:
  - a. Charity field by Pyrton Lane: the PNP underlines the community value of this open field and seeks to protect, preserve and enhance it as a ‘local green space’, in line with the requirements set out in paras 76-77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The preservation of this green space is designed to contribute to preserving Pyrton’s distinct identity by helping to prevent coalescence with Watlington. It will also help safeguard the views from and to the AONB, protect the neighbouring conservation area and heritage assets in Pyrton, and enable villagers to continue to draw value from use of the land for communal purposes
  - b. PYR2: For parishioners, it is vital to ensure there is no coalescence between Pyrton and Watlington and that Pyrton retains its distinct identity. PYR2 is therefore designated a ‘local gap’. This designation is also to help safeguard Pyrton’s setting, and ensure minimum damage to views to, and from, the AONB as well as to the settings of abutting Pyrton Manor, Pyrton conservation area, and Shirburn registered park and gardens. The PNP supports uses of PYR2 that minimise harm to its function as a rural buffer between the two settlements of Pyrton and Watlington or to its open character. Supported uses might include playing fields for Watlington primary school or Icknield Community College, a community sports ground, allotments or other like amenities for the benefit of the communities of Watlington and Pyrton. SODC included the safeguarding of a route for a mooted Watlington edge road on this site in its October 2017 Final Publication Version of the Local Plan. Because of question marks over the necessity, feasibility, deliverability and funding of this mooted edge road, and in the absence to date of a full supporting traffic assessment, the PNP does not reflect this safeguarding directly in its policies. The PNP makes an exception to the local gap policy for any necessary expansion of the Icknield Community College.
  - c. Former MoD site (PYR1): this is a ‘brownfield’ site that is run-down and unsightly. In principle, the PNP supports the construction on this site of houses at a density that would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area, with an appropriate proportion of affordable housing, as a community contribution to wider district housing needs. This site is now subject to a planning application for a care home, 37 assisted living units, and four staff accommodation units.
  - d. Field opposite Pyrton village hall: this horse paddock with its views into Shirburn park and to the Chilterns is to remain a ‘local green space’ in line with the requirements set out in paras 76-77 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This designation is crucial to maintaining the rural, open nature of the core village, consistent with criterion (ii) of SODC Policy H4.
  - e. Land between Old Vicarage Cottage and the Lodge House: SODC has given planning permission for the construction of two houses on this open two-hectare site.
  - f. Land at New Farm (‘infill’): SODC has given planning consent for 3 houses on this site.

### 3. Introduction and background

#### 3.1. Neighbourhood planning and its purpose

##### 3.1.1. *What is neighbourhood planning?*

1. After the formation of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government in May 2010, it quickly introduced reforms to the English planning system. Key elements were the 'localism' agenda and the resulting Localism Act. The Localism Act, which received royal assent in November 2011 and took effect from April 2012, amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
2. This Localism Act introduced new rights and powers for local communities to shape their future environment., including neighbourhood planning, which gave communities powers to prepare NPs, neighbourhood development orders, and community right to build orders. Specific regulations have been introduced to guide neighbourhoods through the NP process.
3. The NPPF<sup>1</sup>, issued in March 2012, advocates the value of neighbourhood planning and encourages communities to take advantage of the new powers offered by neighbourhood planning.

##### 3.1.2. *What is a NP?*

1. Neighbourhood planning provides communities with the power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Communities can shape development in their areas through the production of a NP, which once 'made' (adopted), becomes a statutory part of the development plan of a local planning authority, which in this case is SODC. Along with other development plan documents, the NP will act as a starting point for determining planning decisions.

##### 3.1.3. *What can a NP include?*

1. NPs offer communities an opportunity to set out a vision of for how they would like their local area to develop sustainably in the future, in ways that meet identified local needs desires and respect features of the built and natural environment that residents value. The plan can establish planning policies to help deliver that vision, as well as influence the development that residents would like to see.
2. The plan should be a constructive document, as required by paragraph 16 of the NPPF, which addresses the development and use of land. It should align with the strategic policies, needs and priorities for the wider area within which it is situated. In the case of Pyrton, this means SODC's adopted development plan, in particular the saved policies of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011<sup>2</sup> and its adopted Core Strategy (December 2012)<sup>3</sup>, along with the reasoning and evidence informing the emerging South Oxfordshire Local Plan. NPs allow for individuality and responses to local needs, and they can provide more, but not less, development than that promoted through SODC's Local Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> National Planning Policy Framework March 2012

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-2011>

<sup>3</sup> SODC Adopted core strategy 2011

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/core-strategy/adopted-core-strategy>

### 3.1.4. Basic conditions for a NP

1. Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to NPs by section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, outlines the basic conditions that a NP must adhere to in order to proceed to a referendum and be 'made'.
2. "A draft plan meets the basic conditions if: –
  - a. It has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
  - b. The making of the plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
  - c. The making of the plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);
  - d. The making of the plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations;
  - e. Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the plan."
3. The Pyrton Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) steering group has considered each of these conditions from the outset so as to ensure progress with the draft NP and prevent delay. It has prepared and submitted a separate Basic Conditions Statement to demonstrate how the PNP meets each of these conditions.

### 3.1.5. Neighbourhood plan area

1. Pyrton Parish Council decided to embark on a PNP in early 2015 and an application to designate the full parish boundary as the 'neighbourhood plan area' was submitted on 1 April 2015, in line with Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
2. The submitted area related to the parish boundary before the changes that came into effect on 1 April 2015. It therefore included a sports field on the northern edge of Watlington, adjacent to Shirburn Road. This is shown as the 'original' rather than the 'amended' parish boundary in Fig.1 below.
3. The steering group decided to include this land, as it was not covered by Watlington's NP area designation (designated at an earlier date), and would otherwise have resulted in the sports field not forming part of either NP area.
4. SODC publicised the Pyrton NP area application on 21 May-23 June 2015, in line with Regulation 6 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). Watlington Town Council objected. The issue was resolved by SODC concluding that both NPs should reflect the new parish boundary. This led to an amendment to Watlington's designated NP to include the sports field.
5. The neighbourhood area application submitted by Pyrton Parish Council was amended by SODC and the whole area of the parish (as defined at July 2015) was designated a neighbourhood area on 2 July 2015.

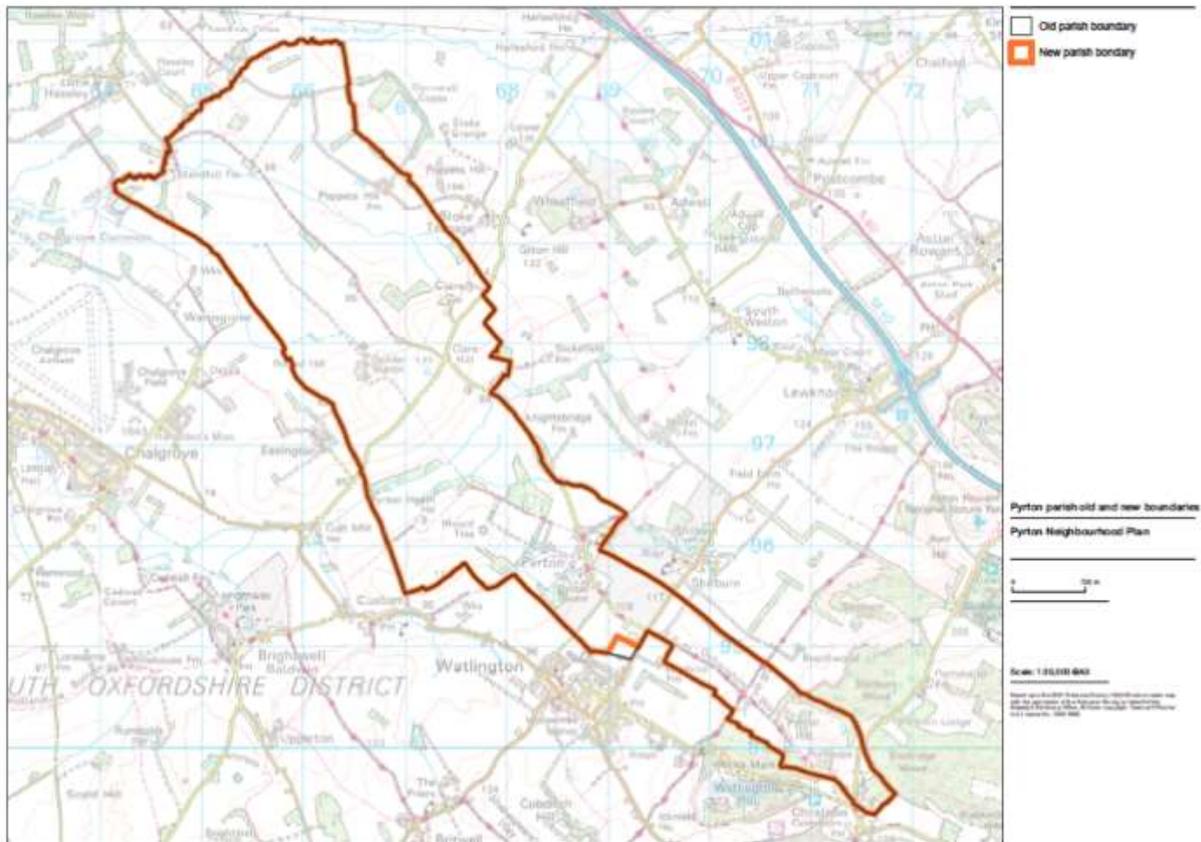


Fig.1: Old and new Pyrton parish boundary

### 3.1.6. Reasons for preparing a NP

1. The PNP has been prepared by the PNP steering group acting on behalf of, and representing, the Parish Council, the parish and its residents, with consultancy assistance from the planning, design and environmental practice Terence O'Rourke Ltd. The steering group consists of members of Pyrton Parish Council and parish residents, who have taken the lead with preparing the plan and engagement with other parishioners.
2. Initial discussions between members of the steering group highlighted the following topics that parishioners might wish to cover in the PNP:
  - a. How to conserve and enhance historic Pyrton, its conservation area, AONB, proximity to the Chilterns, and heritage;
  - b. Principles for redevelopment of the former Ministry of Defence (MoD) site (PYR1) to contribute to district housing needs;
  - c. Establish a design policy so that new development and the enlargement of existing dwellings are in keeping with the local area;
  - d. Demand for affordable housing;
  - e. Identification and prioritisation of measures to improve existing services and infrastructure;
  - f. The future of Pyrton charity land.

3. Following consultation, the steering group investigated these areas to inform its vision, aims and objectives for the NP. These are outlined and discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 below.
4. In pursuing the PNP, the steering group and Pyrton residents have sought to conserve and enhance the particular character of Pyrton and its distinct identity and nature, while supporting residential development to help meet district needs.

### 3.1.7. *Structure of the plan*

1. The remainder of the plan is structured as follows:
  - a. Chapter 4 introduces and provides a description of the parish, including the planning policy context.
  - b. Chapter 5 sets out the purpose of the plan.
  - c. Chapter 6 details the planning policies to be taken into account in the determination of planning applications, along with a site allocation.
  - d. Chapter 7 sets out the actions that the Parish Council commits to undertake.
2. Chapters 3 and 4 of the PNP provide the context behind the policies in Chapter 6 of the plan, which are to be read alongside the supporting text for each policy. These chapters describe the make-up of the parish and views on specific topics that have been identified during consultation and evidence gathering. Further specific policy justification is set out in the supporting text for each policy to avoid repetition.

## 4. Description of Pyrton Parish

### 4.1. Introduction

1. Pyrton is a settlement with a long documented history stretching back to the ninth century. It has a rich heritage with 20 listed buildings and 39 sites of archaeological interest (as listed in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record). It is home to about 93 dwellings and 227 residents. Its main facilities are St Mary's Church and the village hall. It is an 'Other Village' according to the settlement strategy in SODC's published Local Plan, and therefore has no set housing allocation. Applicable designations include the Chilterns AONB, Shirburn Castle registered park and gardens, the Pyrton conservation area and listed buildings, the Watlington and Pyrton Hills SSSI, and Knightsbridge Lane SSSI.
2. Pyrton conservation area was first designated on 11 December 1984. As was then usual, no appraisal document was produced at that time, nor had the boundaries of the designated area been reviewed by SODC thereafter. As a result of the considerable interest residents showed in Pyrton's heritage through surveys conducted for the PNP, Pyrton Parish Council commissioned a conservation area assessment in April 2017. This led to a Conservation Area Appraisal, which was subject to public consultation in June-July 2018 and adopted by SODC on 18 December 2018. This defines the special interest of the Pyrton conservation area and extends the boundaries of the previously designated area (see Fig. 2 for adopted boundaries) to include all of the Pyrton Manor estate and some other properties.

### 4.2. Location

1. Pyrton lies approximately 12 miles to the south-east of Oxford, 13.5 miles to the north of Reading, and 11 miles north-west of High Wycombe. The parish is 6 miles south-east of Thame, 6 miles to the north-east of Wallingford, and immediately to the north-west of Watlington.
2. It is separated from Watlington by a stretch of agricultural land (PYR2) that is valued locally for preventing the erosion of the separate identities of Pyrton and Watlington and for its vista of the Chilterns.
3. In terms of its relationship to other parishes, Pyrton is to the north of Watlington, east of Cuxham with Easington and Chalgrove, south of Great Haseley and Stoke Talmage and southwest of Shirburn.
4. Pyrton is described as a 'strip parish' due to its long and narrow form, and extends to approximately 1,327 hectares from the Haseley Brook to Christmas Common. It is made up of the village of Pyrton, hamlets of Clare, Golder and Standhill, and part of the hamlet of Christmas Common.

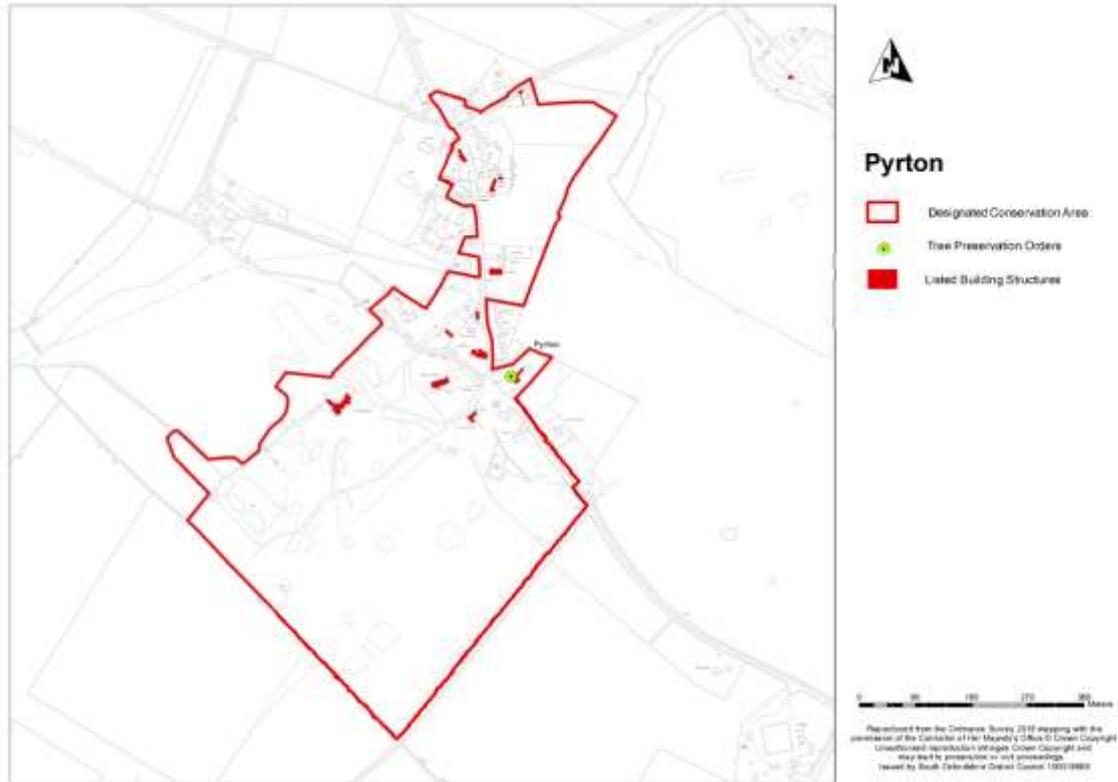


Fig.2: Map of designated conservation area boundary

#### 4.3. Historical context

1. Pyrton is a rare surviving example of an ancient village that has been conserved and enhanced. The parish has a rich and extensive history, clearly visible in its architecture and landscape. This heritage is greatly valued by residents and visitors.
2. The history of the parish dates back to the first century A.D., as shown by the discovery of a late Iron Age cremation burial ground at Pyrton Heath.<sup>4</sup> There is also a Saxon burial place at Christmas Common, suggesting 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century settlement in the district. There is little doubt that by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century the parish was already in existence<sup>5</sup>
3. The parish retains its original 'strip' form, which probably originated between 571 and the 8<sup>th</sup> century. It extends to approximately 1,327 hectares, from the Haseley Brook to Christmas Common. It is made up of the village of Pyrton, hamlets of Clare, Golder and Standhill, and part of the hamlet of Christmas Common. It has been a single administrative unit for many centuries.
4. Pyrton parish was one of the few 'Hundreds' (an ancient administrative unit used by the Crown to collect taxes, award apprenticeships, regulate alehouses and poor relief) to be listed in the Domesday book and originally comprised Pyrton, Shirburn, Pishill, Stoke Talmage, South Weston, part of Wheatfield, and the market town of Watlington (see

<sup>4</sup> H.Case, "A Late Belgic Burial at Watlington, Oxon" in *Oxoniensia*, Vol XXIII, 1958 p.141.

<sup>5</sup> Lobel, M. ed., *The Victoria History of the Counties of England - The County of Oxfordshire*, Volume VIII, Lewknor and Pyrton Hundreds, 1964, Pyrton Hundred, p.157.

Fig.3). Pyrton was chief of the Hundreds and the hundred court was held in the village every three weeks.



Fig.3: The Hundred of Pyrton

5. The Anglo-Saxon origins of Pyrton parish are documented in a charter dated 887, which records boundary sections and landmarks that still survive. These include the Haseley Brook (rappan broc), Pyrton Heath (on pone haep) and Knightsbridge (cnihta bricce), surviving as Knightsbridge Lane. Pyrton was anciently named 'Readanora' (red slope).<sup>6</sup>
6. The village is situated at the crossroads of two ancient tracks which were important thoroughfares in Saxon times: Knightsbridge Lane or 'Ruggeway' (Ridgeway), as it was originally called, and the Lower Icknield Way.
7. The late 10th century charter boundaries of Pyrton Manor still remain and the names of Pyrton's surrounding hamlets derive from Saxon words: Golder from 'Goldora' (gold), Clare from 'Cleyora' (clay) and Standhill from 'Stan(ge)delf'. There is a round barrow also recorded in the parish at Mount Tree, Home Farm (formerly Slay farm).<sup>7</sup>
8. Within the parish there are 20 listed buildings and many houses from the 17th and 18th centuries remain in the village, built of local materials and in the traditional style as shown in Fig.4 (Manor Lodge Cottage and Hampden Cottage).
9. There are also a number of buildings within the village that are not statutorily listed but add considerably to the special historic character of the Conservation Area, as discussed in Section 6.4 of Pyrton's conservation area appraisal.

<sup>6</sup> Madeleine Hammond, "The Anglo Saxon Estate and Readnora and the Manor of Pyrton Oxfordshire" in *Oxoniensia*, Volume LXIII, 1998, p.28-33.

<sup>7</sup> Salman, L.F. (ed.), *The Victoria History of the Counties of England - The County of Oxfordshire*, Vol I, Early Man: Early Iron Age, 1939, p.285.



Fig.4: Manor Lodge Cottage and Hampden Cottage

10. The Pyrton conservation area was designated in 1984. The appraisal adopted in December 2018 identifies the features of special interest in the area and extends the boundaries of the area to include all of the Pyrton Manor estate and some other properties.
11. The Church of St. Mary's in Pyrton (Grade II\* Listed) (Fig.5) retains important Norman features, some rarely found in Oxfordshire, such as the South doorway, the font and the Chancel arch. There is a very rare Purbeck marble floor slab, dating from 1285, by the altar depicting the figure of a priest and medieval tiles in the south porch. The churchyard is now managed as a 'Living Sanctuary' and there are two listed late 18th century chest tombs in the churchyard.
12. A moated manor house has existed in Pyrton since at least 1327. The present Elizabethan manor house (Grade II\* Listed), which stands in 40 acres of parkland, was constructed either between 1582 and 1601 by John Symeon or soon after in 1604 by Edmund Symeon. Originally, the manor estate coincided with the extent of parish lands. By the late 15<sup>th</sup> century portions had been sold off to the four sub-manors in the parish at Clare, Golder, Stonor and Standhill. A photo of the manor today is supplied in Fig.6.



Fig.5: St Mary's Church



Fig.6: Pyrton Manor

13. The Vicarage (now The White House) (Fig.7) provides evidence of a medieval community existing in Pyrton. The original pilgrims' dormitory remains, albeit encased by a later 17<sup>th</sup> century building (with 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century additions).



Fig.7: The White House

14. Other buildings of local importance that contribute to creating a sense of place and local identity – as set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal – include Shirburn Old Vicarage, the Court House, Pyrton village hall and the former Plough public house.

15. The parish is described in the Victoria County History (VCH) as being of interest “for the number of sites, some of which have not yet been located, of deserted medieval hamlets”. These hamlets include the medieval shrunken settlements of Golder, Clare and Standhill, which have been identified by the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record and Historic England National Monuments Record as likely to be of high archaeological potential and interest.
- a) Clare (Clarora), its name meaning ‘clay slope’, was, in medieval times, Pyrton’s largest hamlet and a township of 517 acres (1066-1539 AD). There were seventeen tenants in 1279 and lands in the ‘vill and fields’ are mentioned in 1422. There were small enclosures here between 1500-16, but following this it was depopulated through plague. It now consists of ten cottages and one farmhouse. There are banks near the Cuxham-Stoke Talmage road that perhaps indicate the sites of earlier buildings. Of the few buildings that remain, some have Grade II listed status: Hamlet House (1-4, late 16th or early 17th century) and Lower Farm Cottages (1 & 2, mid-18th century).
  - b) Golder, in the north of the parish, was a sub-manor of Pyrton and a medieval township of 659 acres, which was depopulated some time between c.1450-1700, possibly as a result of enclosures. It made a slight recovery in the 19th century, but now only consists of 6 cottages and the manor house (Grade II listed). The present manor house stands on the site of a medieval moated homestead and is approached by a sunken road where other medieval dwellings once lay (Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record no.5284). The VCH notes that there are clear indications on aerial photographs of abandoned sites.
  - c) Standhill, another of Pyrton’s lowland hamlets, was prosperous in the Middle Ages and there are records of its 13th century manor house where courts were held, and of its chapel, which was ruined by 1745 but stood until circa 1870 (Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record no.5399). The hamlet was seriously depopulated by the plague and is now an almost completely deserted site. Only Lower Standhill Farmhouse and some farm sheds at Upper Standhill remain. There are medieval ridge and furrow earthworks and also some later post medieval earthworks in the vicinity of the farm at Lower Standhill (Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record no. 5643). The VCH notes that traces of old habitations and the line of the hamlet’s street can be clearly seen on the ground and in aerial photographs.
16. The PNP area also includes part of the Shirburn conservation area, some of which is designated as a registered park and garden of special historic and horticultural interest.
17. The parish has a village hall, which is now a central meeting place within the parish and hosts a range of activities and events. The hall was built in 1895 and, before being used as a village hall, was the village school until its closure in 1932.
18. A historic map of the village from 1898 is shown in Fig.8 and, when compared to the current landline (Fig.9), it can be seen that the village has changed little. This is supported by the Historic Landscape Character Assessment. As noted in the VCH, “the secluded position of Pyrton village and single ownership has enabled it to preserve its ancient character”. Further details of the parish’s heritage are set out in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

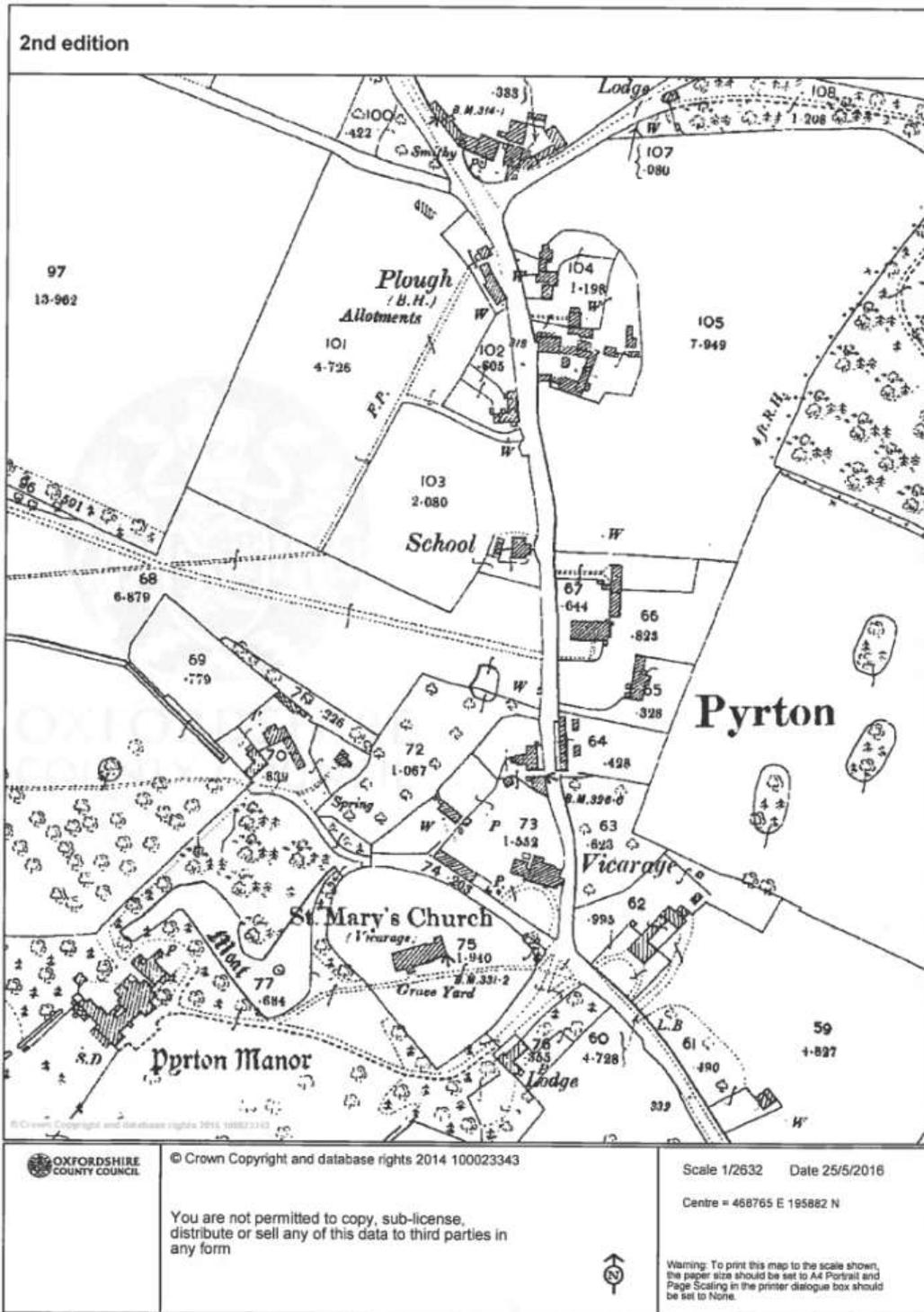


Fig.8: Map of Pyrton dated 1898

Current Landline

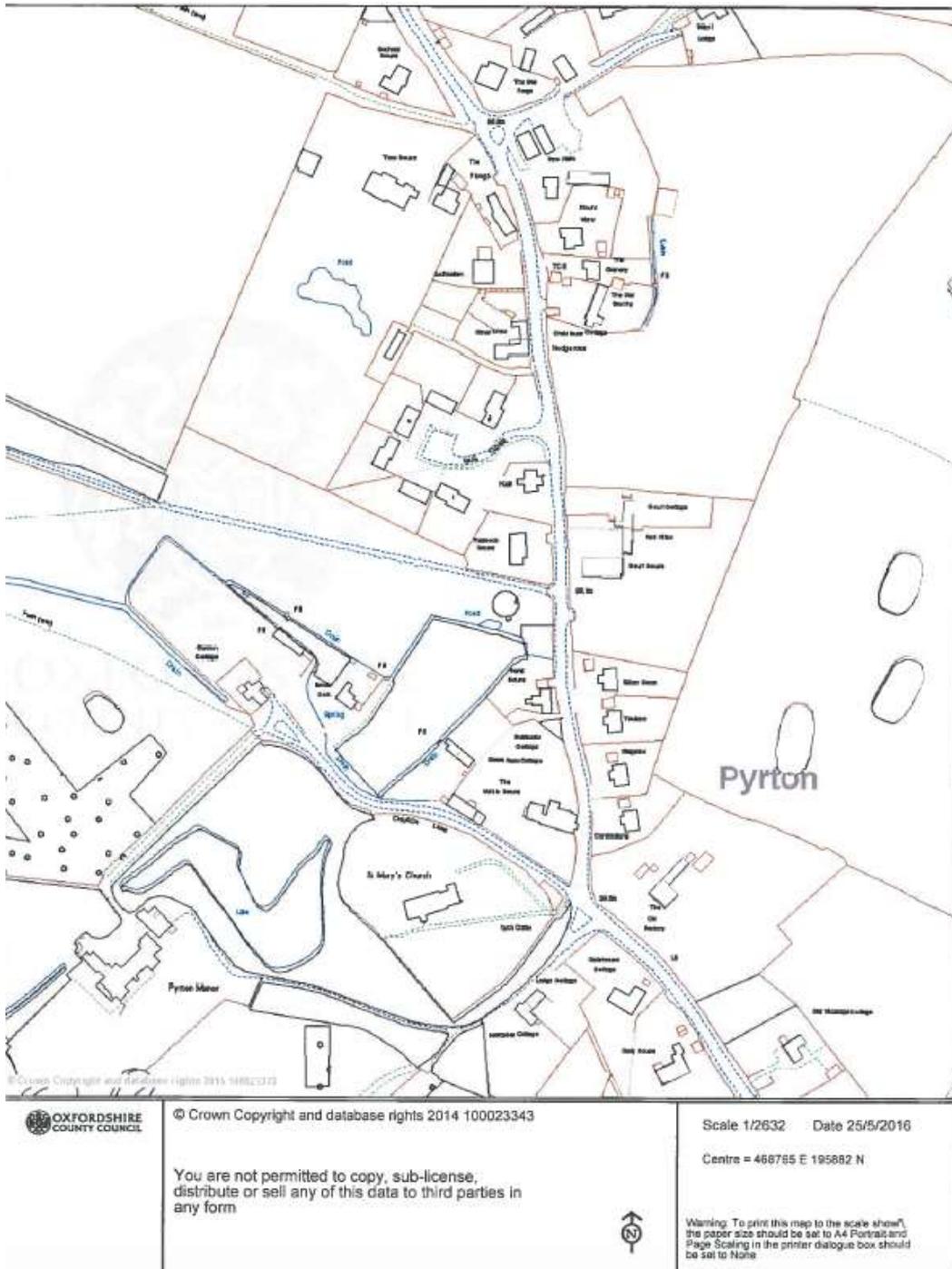


Fig.9: Pyrton, Current Landline

#### 4.4. Demographics

1. The parish is home to about 93 dwellings, and has a population of 227 residents according to the 2011 census<sup>8</sup>.
2. The age pattern of the parish at the time of the census was as follows<sup>9</sup>:
  - a. 21.1% within the ages 0-15
  - b. 7% within the ages 16-24
  - c. 17.2% within the ages 25-44
  - d. 33.9% within the ages 45-64
  - e. 20.8% of the age 65+.
3. Most parish residents (54.7%) were 45 years of age and over at the time of the census, with the greatest number in the age bracket 45-64. Although many residents were 65 years of age and over (20.8%), the parish had a sizeable young population with 21.1% in the age bracket 0-15.

#### 4.5. Local services and facilities

1. As it is a small agricultural parish, Pyrton is home to few local services and facilities. Key local services and facilities, which consultation with parishioners has shown they value highly, include the Church of St. Mary and Pyrton village hall (Figs.5 and 10). There is also a small and much valued market garden, which sells vegetables, fruit and plants.
2. Most local services and facilities are supplied in Watlington, including public houses, sports facilities, surgery, school and college, as well as local shops, restaurants and other services. These, as well as those of other local towns, are used regularly by Pyrton residents.



Fig.10: Pyrton village hall

#### 4.6. Employment

1. Pyrton has limited employment opportunities, save in agriculture and with home working, although the former MoD site (PYR1) was traditionally an employment site. This

<sup>8</sup> Population Density 2011 - Pyrton - NOMIS:

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170217819>

<sup>9</sup> Age structure, 2011 - Pyrton - NOMIS:

[https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170217819#section\\_6\\_1](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170217819#section_6_1)

brownfield site (Figs.11, 25) contains buildings associated with its origin as an MoD warehouse constructed at the outbreak of World War II.

2. A certificate for the lawful use of the site as a warehouse and distribution (B8) use was granted in 2002 (ref. P02/S0324/LD). In 2005 planning permission was granted for the temporary siting of a single storey portacabin for office accommodation on the site for a period of one year (ref. P05/E0228/RET).
3. The site is included in SODC's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) (July 2013) and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (October 2017) as a potential site for housing development and is included in the July 2013 (latest) version of that document.
4. The market garden business mentioned in para 4.5.1 above is owner-managed.
5. Anecdotal information gathered through consultation found that most parishioners were retired. Those still employed worked in various locations, including from home in Pyrton, nearby in Chinnor, Watlington, Long Crendon, Eastfield, High Wycombe and Oxford, and in London and the south-east generally.



Fig.11: Former MoD site (PYR1)

#### 4.7. Other notable sites within parish

1. Other sites of note in the parish have been flagged during public consultation exercises. These include areas of charity land in Pyrton village and Christmas Common (Fig.12), and an agricultural field on the edge of the Pyrton parish boundary, off Pyrton Lane (PYR2).
2. The areas of charity land in Pyrton village and Christmas Common are under single ownership under the terms of a Charity Commission Scheme (dated 25 July 1973), to be administered by the Pyrton Charities Trust. Both sites are on short-term leases to a local farmer and neighbouring properties respectively. The Charities Trust has indicated that these two charity sites are to be reserved for the benefit of parishioners.
3. PYR2 is a relatively large stretch of prime agricultural land situated to the north of the Watlington recreation ground, west of Shirburn Road and east of Pyrton Lane (Fig.21). A final decision is awaited on an outline planning application (P16/S2576/O), currently under consideration and appeal, for the construction of up to 100 residential dwellings.
4. Since the lodging of that application, SODC has safeguarded a route across PYR2 as part of its emerging Local Plan to provide for the possibility of an edge road around Watlington. The PNP underlines the importance of PYR2 continuing to serve as a local gap or buffer between Watlington and Pyrton.
5. Work on the PNP has identified this site and the charity land in Pyrton village that runs along Pyrton Lane as playing a vital role, in their current form, in conserving the separate identities of Pyrton village and Watlington and preventing their coalescence and

Watlington sprawl. They also play an important part in ensuring uninterrupted views to and from the Chilterns AONB. The charity land is designated a ‘local green space’ in the PNP and warrants protection accordingly, while the PNP categorises PYR2 as a local gap (see Chapter [6.2.4 Policy BNE3: Local green spaces](#) and [6.2.5 BNE4: Local gap](#)). Fig.13 shows a view of PYR2 from Watlington Hill (AONB).

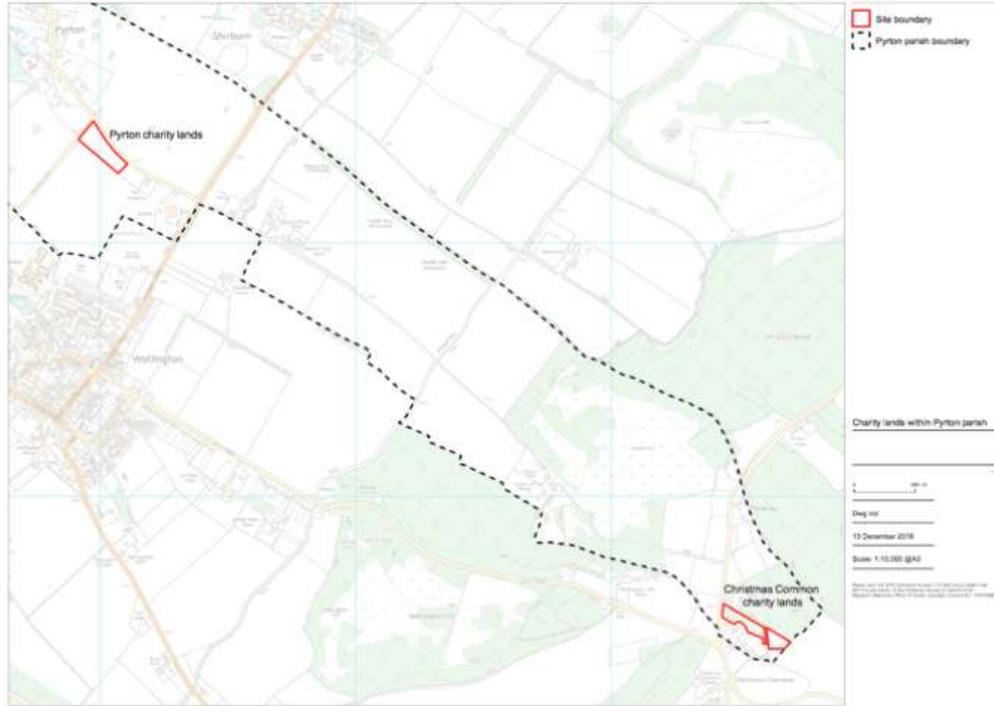


Fig.12: Pyrtou charity lands



Fig.13: View of PYR2 from Watlington Hill (AONB)

## 4.8. Planning policy context and applicable designations

### 4.8.1. Policy context

1. Pyrton is situated within the local planning authority area of SODC. The key adopted development plan documents containing policies that affect the future of the district comprise the following:
  - a. South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (adopted December 2012);
  - b. Saved policies of the Local Plan 2011 (adopted January 2006).
2. According to Appendix 4 of the adopted Core Strategy, which outlines the settlement strategy for South Oxfordshire, Pyrton is identified as an 'Other Village'. As the hierarchy below shows, this is the lowest level of settlement (with the exception of 'All other places not listed'), when considering the distribution of new housing development:
  - a. Towns
  - b. Larger Villages
  - c. Smaller Villages
  - d. Other Villages.
3. This means that, in accordance with policy CSR1 of the Core Strategy, the appropriate scale and nature of housing development for Pyrton, to contribute to its present and future economic, environmental and social sustainability, includes infill developments on sites of up to 0.1 hectares and the delivery of rural exception housing, if a need is shown.
4. Pyrton is not identified as a location appropriate for housing allocations, which the Core Strategy explains are to be focused in the district's four 'Towns' and 'Larger Villages'. The parish therefore does not have a specific housing requirement that it is required to deliver over the Core Strategy's plan period.

5. SODC is preparing a new Local Plan, which is likely to be adopted in 2019. As noted within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), *“although a draft neighbourhood plan or Order is not tested against the policies in an emerging Local Plan the reasoning and evidence informing the Local Plan process is likely to be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which a neighbourhood plan is tested”* (paragraph: 009; Reference ID: 41-009-20160211).<sup>10</sup>
6. The emerging Local Plan, Appendix 7, does not suggest that villages currently within the ‘Other Villages’ category will have a different position within the settlement hierarchy.
7. Paragraph 044 (Reference ID: 41-044-20160519) of the neighbourhood planning section of the NPPG<sup>11</sup> explains that: *“A neighbourhood plan can allocate additional sites to those in a Local Plan where this is supported by evidence to demonstrate need above that identified in the Local Plan.”* There is therefore the potential for the PNP to allocate sites on the basis of evidence demonstrating a need for this development.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

4.8.2. Planning and environmental designations

1. There are a number of planning and environmental designations that have influenced the preparation of the PNP.
2. They include (see Fig14):

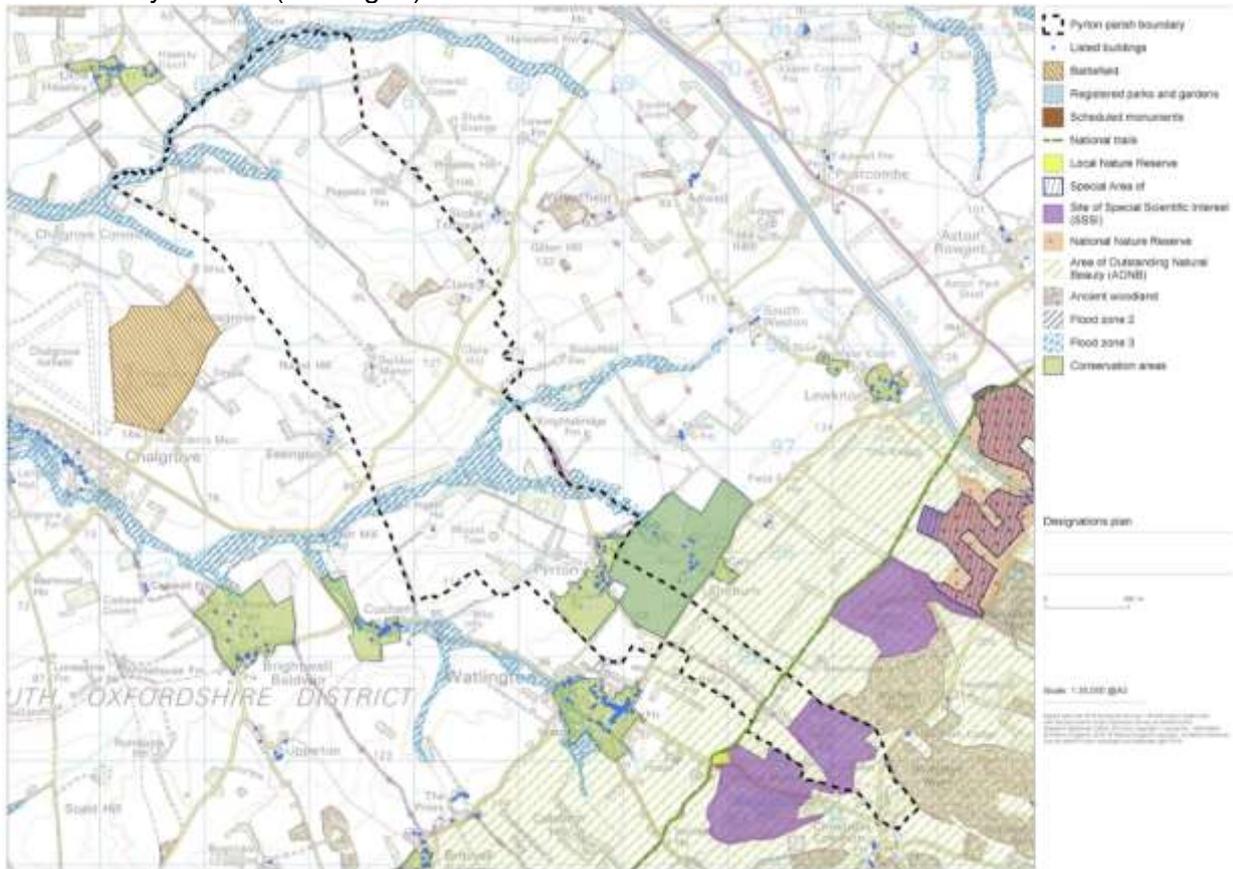


Fig.14: Planning and Environmental Designations

- a. Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): the shaded light green/yellow area shows that the south-east part of the parish falls within the Chilterns AONB, which extends across much of South Oxfordshire. The Chilterns are recognised for containing some of the finest landscapes in England worthy of a high level of protection, to ensure that they are conserved and enhanced.<sup>12</sup> This part of the parish is therefore sensitive, although the remainder of the parish falls within the setting of the AONB and is therefore also highly valued.
- b. Watlington and Pyrtou Hills Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): the purple areas show that the south-east part of the parish falls within the Watlington and Pyrtou Hills SSSI. Natural England defines an SSSI as “one of the country’s very best wildlife and/or geological sites”<sup>13</sup>. A detailed description of the Watlington

<sup>12</sup> Chilterns AONB, About the Chilterns: <http://www.chilternsaonb.org/about-chilterns.html>

<sup>13</sup> Natural England, Sites of Special Scientific Interest: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140605090108/http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/our-work/conservation/designations/sssi/default.aspx>

and Pyrton Hills SSSI and the reasons for its notification can be accessed via the link in the footnote.<sup>14</sup>

- c. Knightsbridge Lane Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): the pink area on Knightsbridge Lane (Home Farm side) was designated an SSSI because it supports one of the largest populations of the very rare plant species ‘Green Hound’s Tongue’ (*Cynoglossum Germanicum*).
  - d. Pyrton conservation area: the green areas show that the centre of Pyrton village is within the Pyrton conservation area. This means the area has been designated because of its special architectural or historic interest and the character and appearance of this area should be preserved or enhanced.<sup>15</sup> SODC adopted the Conservation Area Appraisal on 18 December 2018 and extended the area to cover all of the Pyrton Manor estate and some other properties. This is shown as light green in relation to Pyrton on the plan.
  - e. Listed buildings: the small blue circles indicate the location of listed buildings within the parish boundary. There are 20 listed buildings in the parish, including the Grade II\* listed Church of St. Mary and Pyrton Manor, and a series of Grade II listed buildings. Listed buildings are granted this status as a mark and celebration of their special architectural and historic interest, but also to ensure consideration is given to their future within the planning system.<sup>16</sup> They are designated heritage assets.
  - f. Shirburn Castle registered park and garden: these surround the blue circles in the Shirburn conservation area, marked in dark green on the plan. They fall partly within the centre of Pyrton, but also extend outwards, to the north-east, into the adjoining parish of Shirburn. The types of sites that receive such status include “gardens, grounds and other planned open spaces, such as town squares” of special historic interest.<sup>17</sup>
  - g. Clare Copse ancient and semi-natural woodland: the mottled brown circles indicate the presence of ancient woodland. Within Clare, towards the north of the parish, there is a small area of ancient and semi-natural woodland, known as Clare Copse. Ancient woodland is defined as “any wooded area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD” and includes plantations of ancient woodland sites, or in this case, ancient semi-natural woodland, which is “mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration”.<sup>18</sup>
  - h. Areas at risk of flooding from rivers: the areas shaded light blue show the areas within the parish boundary potentially at risk of flooding from rivers.
3. The landscape character of the parish is set out in Fig.15, taken from the [Oxford Wildlife and Landscape Study for Pyrton](#) with detail on wildlife habitats and biodiversity.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Natural England, Watlington and Pyrton Hills: [HYPERLINK](#) "http://www.sssi.naturalengland.org.uk/citation/citation\_photo/1000525.pdf"

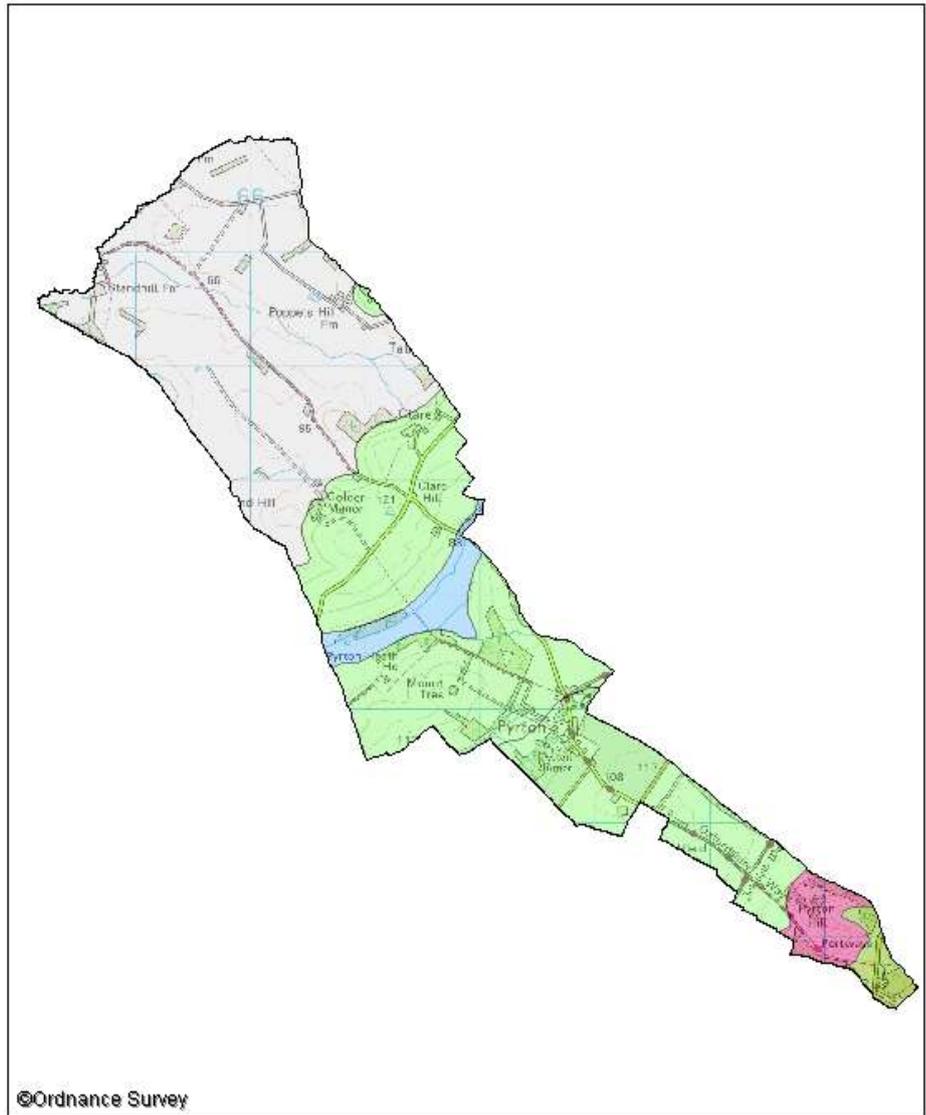
Historic England, Conservation Areas: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/has/conservation-areas/>

<sup>16</sup> Historic England, Listed Buildings: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/listed-buildings/>

<sup>17</sup> Historic England, Registered Parks & Gardens: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/>

<sup>18</sup> Natural England and Forestry Commission, Ancient woodland and veteran trees: protecting them from development: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-and-veteran-trees-protection-surveys-licences>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Chilterns-Escarpment-North-CTA1.pdf>



**Landscape Types**

- Clay Vale
- Estate Farmlands
- River Meadowlands
- Wooded Estate Slopes and Valley Sides
- Wooded Farmland

Fig.15: Oxford Wildlife and Landscape Study, Pyrtton

4. The [Chiltern Escarpment North Target Conservation Area](#) describes some of the neighbouring landscape character and biodiversity, as illustrated in Fig.16.
5. A more detailed description and assessment of the district and parish landscape character and features are contained in the Landscape and Green Space Appraisal prepared in support of the PNP as one of its accompanying documents.

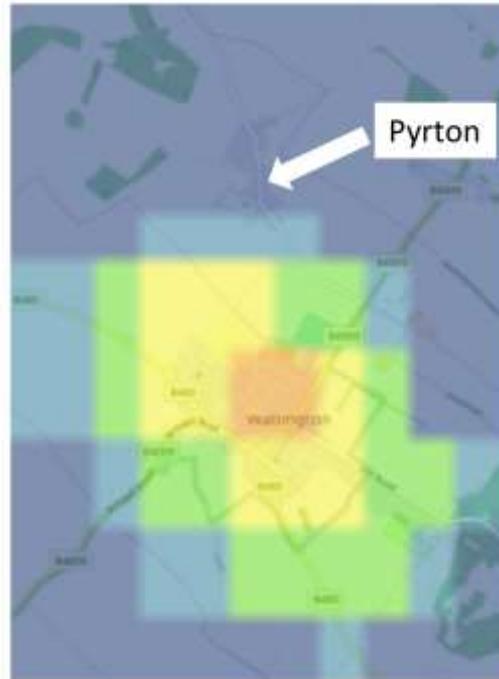
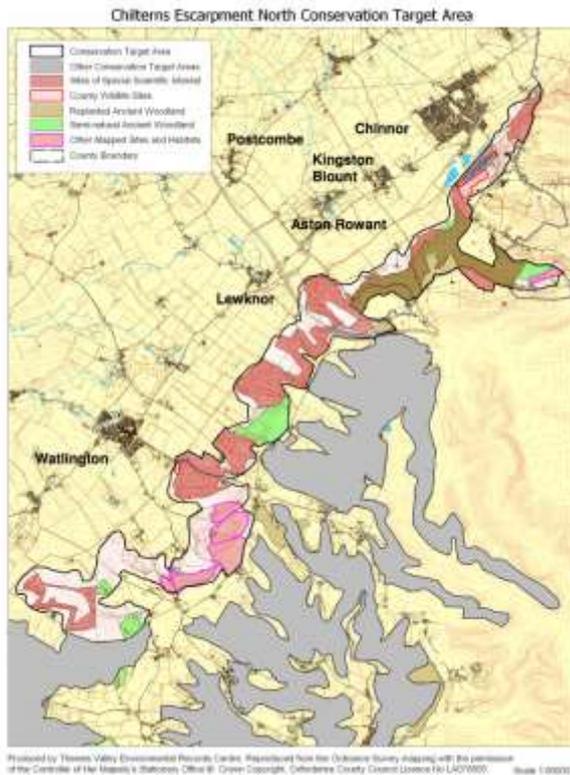


Fig.16: Chilterns Escarpment North Conservation Target Area Fig.17: CPRE Study of Light Pollution, Watlington and Pyrton

6. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) study on [Light Pollution and Dark Skies](#) shows that Pyrton village remains on the fringes of, but still largely unaffected by, light pollution from Watlington (Fig.17).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <http://nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

## 5. Purpose of the plan

### 5.1. Introduction

1. The purpose of the PNP is to express the wishes of Pyrton’s parishioners in relation to the development and use of land, drawing on the findings of a series of consultation exercises. This chapter sets out some of the main findings from these, which have informed PNP policies.
2. The PNP extends over the same plan period as the emerging SODC Local Plan, i.e. until 2033.
3. To ensure the PNP remains a current and an up-to-date part of SODC’s adopted Local Plan, the PNP will be reviewed and updated by Pyrton Parish Council at appropriate intervals, as outlined in Chapter 7.

### 5.2. Consultation and data collection

1. To ensure the PNP reflected parishioners’ wishes, the steering group conducted a series of consultations.
2. From early in the PNP process the steering group arranged meetings with residents, questionnaires and surveys, leaflets, letters, and a website. It further pursued contact with residents by email, electronic surveys, and word of mouth, while arranging a local traffic survey to be conducted, managed and staffed by local residents. Full details of the ways in which parishioners were engaged in the plan-making process are outlined in the consultation statement.
3. Consultation with parishioners and discussions at steering group meetings identified the matters to be covered or addressed in the PNP. The following is an overview of the main findings.

#### 5.2.1. *What do residents value in Pyrton?*

1. The key qualities local people value about Pyrton are its historic character and heritage assets, tranquillity, location, landscape, and setting. The main features of its character and appearance that are appreciated are its setting and landscape. Parishioners identified the following as of particular value:
  - a. The undeveloped land between Pyrton and Watlington, which separates the two settlements;
  - b. The countryside in and surrounding Pyrton;
  - c. The distinctive landscape character, feel and rural setting;
  - d. Openness and long range, unobstructed views;
  - e. Quiet and small community;
  - f. Building materials that match the local vernacular;
  - g. Absence of street lighting and lack of light pollution;
  - h. Single track roads, lack of pavements and minimal through-traffic.
2. The above are rural features that reflect the countryside feel of Pyrton parish.

#### 5.2.2. *How to conserve and enhance the quality of the built and natural environment in Pyrton?*

In order of preference, parishioners selected the following priorities:

- a. Conserving the character and appearance of the local area;
- b. Managing residential development;
- c. Protecting heritage features;

- d. Managing and minimising traffic movements;
- e. Ensuring high quality design;
- f. Protecting local wildlife and habitats.

### 5.2.3. *Quality of facilities, services and infrastructure*

1. Deficiencies in the existing facilities, services and infrastructure in Pyrton included the following:
  - a. Mobile phone reception;
  - b. Broadband connection and speed (now corrected in the core village);
  - c. Surface water drainage;
  - d. Sewerage;
  - e. Poor signage and the absence of restrictions to prevent road use by heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).
2. This list of deficiencies is the obverse of the list of services or infrastructure parishioners would like to see improved, with the mobile phone reception and sewerage system the most frequently raised items.

### 5.2.4. *Future residential development*

1. Parishioners have identified the following as important in relation to any future residential development in the parish:
  - a. Generally to be in keeping with the village/existing buildings;
  - b. Traditional designs and materials;
  - c. High quality sustainable construction;
  - d. Off-street parking and garages;
  - e. Sympathetic use of natural materials;
  - f. Maintaining the architectural style of Pyrton;
  - g. Gardens of a generous size that contribute to the rural character of the area.
2. Most respondents preferred more traditional housing styles reflecting those already used in Pyrton and Watlington, rather than modern housing styles.

### 5.2.5. *Former MoD site (PYR1)*

1. Parishioners agreed early on that the PNP should address the future of the former MoD site (PYR1). It was acknowledged that any proposal for the site would have to take account of its location next to the AONB and Shirburn registered park and garden.
2. When asked for their preferred use for the redevelopment of the site, respondents agreed it could be put to beneficial use by helping to meet district housing need. Parishioners considered that a residential scheme, including up to 15 detached and semi-detached new and affordable homes, was the most suitable option.

### 5.2.6. *Pyrton charity field*

Parishioners reported that they valued this site in its role as contributing to a clear open green space that assisted in conserving and enhancing the separate identities of Pyrton and Watlington, and preventing their coalescence. It also had the amenity value of providing a parking area for the village fete, weddings, and other well attended local functions. Parishioners wished to see it designated a local green space with the future option of enhancing it as a wildlife reserve.

### 5.2.7. PYR2

The larger PYR2, which lies alongside the Pyrton charity field, is greatly valued by parishioners for providing a clear rural buffer or local gap between Watlington and Pyrton and preventing their coalescence. It also has the amenity value of providing a rural footpath that is popular amongst dog walkers with clear views to and from the Chilterns AONB. It enables Pyrton parishioners to access the facilities of Watlington on foot and Watlington residents to enjoy tranquil walks into Pyrton. The open and rural character of this land, along with the Pyrton charity field, contributes to conserving and enhancing the setting and character of the Pyrton conservation area (see the Conservation Area Appraisal), and the settings of Pyrton Manor and the Shirburn registered park and garden. The Landscape and Green Space Appraisal includes further detail on this.

### 5.2.8. Housing delivery

1. As noted earlier, given its place in the district settlement hierarchy, SODC does not identify a specific housing requirement for Pyrton that should be delivered.
2. Consultation with parishioners found that they would support the delivery of around 15-20 new homes in the parish. They considered this would be appropriate and make best use of the land, having regard to the available sites, character of the area, and planning and environmental designations. In the absence of an identified existing housing need in Pyrton, such development would represent a positive contribution towards wider residential needs in the district, as identified in the SODC Core Strategy and Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (April 2014), taking account of delivery against SHMA targets.
3. The Core Strategy outlined a target of delivering 547 homes per year over the plan period 2006-2027. The SHMA later declared that South Oxfordshire had an overall housing need per year from 2011 to 2031 of 725 to 825 new homes, with a mid-point range of 775 new homes per year. It is this figure that has been adopted in the emerging Local Plan.
4. An appropriate density of development has been broadly established, based on the existing density of development in the parish. A high-level review of the density of development across the core village (Fig.18) shows the density to range between 4.4 and 7.4 dwellings per hectare:
  - a) There are 43 dwellings in the village core as a whole, which covers an area of around 7.57 hectares, equating to circa 5.7 dwellings per hectare.
  - b) There are 6 dwellings in Hall Close, which covers an area of around 0.82 hectares, equating to circa 7.3 dwellings per hectare.
  - c) There are 19 dwellings south of Hall Close, which covers an area of around 4.35 hectares, equating to circa 4.4 dwellings per hectare.
  - d) There are 18 dwellings north of Hall Close, which covers an area of around 2.42 hectares, equating to circa 7.4 dwellings per hectare.
5. The density of the development should avoid an adverse impact on the character of the area and on the parish's heritage assets.



Fig.18: Density plan

### 5.2.9. South Oxfordshire housing register

1. The steering group enquired of SODC in August 2016 how many people were on the housing register in Pyrton. An email response from SODC's Housing Needs Manager on 9 August 2016 confirmed "there are no applicants on SODC's housing register currently resident in Pyrton."

### 5.2.10. Census data

1. Census data has been reviewed to illuminate the changes in the parish between the completion of the 2001 and 2011 censuses and to signal how the population might develop in future.
2. Census data shows that in 2001 the total number of people living in the parish was 217. In 2011, this increased slightly to 227, demonstrating a very small increase of 10 people over the 10-year period. The number of households in the parish increased from 87 in 2001 to 90 in 2011. This represents an increase of 3 households over the 10-year period.
3. There has been a small rise in the number of dwellings in the parish between the census dates. In 2001 88 dwellings were recorded, while in 2011 this figure had risen to 93. This represents an increase of 5 dwellings over the 10-year period. There is believed to be only one additional dwelling since the census.

### 5.3. Vision

The PNP is designed to secure a sustainable future for the parish that will conserve and enhance for future generations the features of Pyrton valued by today's residents, along with those who visit and appreciate the qualities of the parish.

### 5.4. Aims

1. Taking account of the views, opinions and preferences identified during consultation events, the steering group agreed the following aims for the PNP:
  - a. To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the built and natural environment in Pyrton, including its history, heritage assets and landscape, for the benefit of residents, visitors and future generations;
  - b. To support the growth of the parish through the delivery of new homes, commensurate with the character of the parish, to contribute towards district housing needs, including affordable housing;
  - c. To establish principles for the redevelopment of the former MoD site (PYR1) to enable the site to return to positive use;
  - d. To establish parish design principles to guide and maintain the quality of future development in the parish;
  - e. To establish the function of the charity land in Pyrton village to the east of Pyrton Lane and in Christmas Common, and PYR2;
  - f. To identify measures to improve existing services and infrastructure.
2. Each of these aims is supported by policies within the PNP, although the last aim is generally reflected in the Parish Council's proposed future actions listed in Chapter 7. This is because they generally do not address directly the development and use of land and may not therefore form part of a NP policy.

### 5.5. Objectives

1. For each of the aims identified above, there are the following objectives:
  - a. To conserve and enhance the quality and character of the built and natural environment in Pyrton, including its history, heritage assets and landscape, for the benefit of residents, visitors and future generations:
    - i. Maintain the present 'open buffer' or 'local gap' between Pyrton and Watlington in order to retain their respective identities and character;
    - ii. Ensure any new development respects, complements and enhances the existing built and natural environment;
    - iii. Ensure any new development conserves and enhances, where relevant, the parish's conservation area, listed buildings, Shirburn registered park and gardens, the Watlington and Pyrton Hills SSSI, Knightsbridge Lane SSSI, and the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and, where relevant, their respective settings;
    - iv. Conserve and enhance key community assets.
  - b. To support the growth of the parish through the delivery of new homes, commensurate with the character of the parish, to contribute towards district housing needs, including affordable housing:

- i. Demonstrate that the number and density of new homes will tie in with, and relate well to, existing development;
  - ii. Deliver an appropriate mix of new housing types and tenures commensurate with district requirements.
- c. To establish principles for the redevelopment of the former MoD site (PYR1) to enable the site to return to positive use:
  - i. Confirm the allocation of the site for housing;
  - ii. Ensure that an acceptable relationship is achieved with the neighbouring land off Pyrton Lane (PYR2);
  - iii. Ensure that the site is carefully designed so it does not have an adverse impact on the character of the built and natural environment in Pyrton.
- d. To establish design principles to guide and maintain the quality of future development in the parish:
  - i. Ensure any new development generally accords with local architectural design styles and principles, without stifling the potential for high quality innovative design.;
- e. To establish the function of the charity land in Pyrton village to the east of Pyrton Lane and Christmas Common, and PYR2:
  - i. Confirm the role of the charity land to the east of Pyrton Lane and PYR2 in conserving and enhancing the separate identities of Pyrton and Watlington;
  - ii. Ensure the Pyrton and Christmas Common charity lands continue to play a valuable role for the parish, including enhancing Pyrton's setting, and benefit the local community.
- f. To identify measures to improve existing services and infrastructure:
  - i. Determine which aspects of the existing services and infrastructure within the parish require improvements;
  - ii. Identify proposals that may be funded by CIL in order to improve, sustain and enhance existing services and infrastructure;
  - iii. Take this opportunity to develop an Action Plan to include matters that do not necessarily fall within the scope of land use and development, but which are important to the parish.

## 6. Planning policies

### 6.1. Introduction

1. To deliver the vision, aims and objectives for the PNP, planning policies have been formulated to cover the following topics below:
  - a. Built and natural environment (BNE)
  - b. Community (C)
  - c. Housing (H)
  - d. Design (D)
  - e. Site allocations (SA).

### 6.2. Built and natural environment policies

#### 6.2.1. Introduction

The built and natural environment in Pyrton is highly valued by parishioners and contributes significantly to their enjoyment of parish life. Parishioners are therefore keen to secure the future of the built and natural environment, ensuring that it is retained and that any new development sits comfortably within the local area. A protocol, adopted by the Parish Council, covers consultations between the Parish Council and prospective developers.

#### 6.2.2. Policy BNE1: Historic Environment

##### 6.2.2.1. Policy

1. The designated and non-designated heritage assets in Pyrton, along with their respective settings, should be conserved and enhanced so as to protect their historic significance and importance, both nationally and locally.
2. Planning permission will be granted for extensions and revisions to listed properties, or to other properties that, while not listed, make a positive contribution to the character of the area, if these are demonstrated to be appropriate and sensitive to the local built and natural environment.

##### 6.2.2.2. Supporting Text

1. As outlined in Chapter 4, Pyrton has a rich and extensive cultural heritage, which is a key element that local people value about the parish, as evidenced by the consultation process undertaken for the PNP.
2. The designated heritage assets in Pyrton, namely its twenty listed buildings, Shirburn registered park and garden, and the Pyrton conservation area, along with their respective settings, should be conserved and enhanced so as to protect their historic significance and importance, both nationally and locally. There are also a number of non-designated heritage assets that are valued locally and contribute towards the character of the parish (as shown by the Conservation Area Appraisal).
3. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Pyrton approved on 18 December 2018 was produced in order to help inform planning applications and proposals by defining the special interest of the conservation area and by extending the area to cover the full extent of Pyrton Manor grounds and some other properties. It explains the significance of the area and seeks to ensure that its special interest and character is preserved and enhanced. An appreciation of this is essential in managing change within the

conservation area and its wider setting. The assessment underlying the Appraisal was part of the evidence base for the PNP, setting out the heritage features within the parish that fall within the conservation area, along with further areas of merit and non-designated heritage assets that have been identified.

### 6.2.3. Policy BNE2: Landscape character

#### 6.2.3.1. Policy

1. The distinctive landscape character of the parish, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting within Pyrton, should be protected and enhanced. Every effort should be made to ensure new development is in keeping with the local landscape character, has regard to published landscape character assessments, and conserves and enhances the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its setting in Pyrton. Planning decisions should ensure sufficient protection is in place before new development is permitted.
2. All development proposals that could have an impact on the AONB or its setting within Pyrton should be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal in support of any planning application.
3. Other protected areas within the PNP area include a significant proportion of Shirburn's registered park and garden, the SSSI on Knightsbridge Lane, which supports one of the largest populations of the very rare plant species, Green Hound's Tongue 'Cynoglossum Germanicum' and, to the north-west, an area of ancient woodland at Clare Copse. These areas should be conserved, enhanced and managed. Any application for development that may have an impact on them should be subject to appropriate landscape and environmental assessments.
4. Development proposals should set out details of how they have been designed to take into account any key views into Pyrton from the surrounding countryside or from Pyrton to the surrounding countryside, by way of their scale, height, position within the application site, the use of materials, and external lighting.
5. Development proposals will be supported, if they are shown to avoid the unnecessary loss of mature trees, hedgerows or other form of wildlife corridor, either as part of a landscape scheme and layout, or as part of the construction works of a development scheme.
6. With regards to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, development proposals within the PNP area should demonstrate that they have sought to include:
  - a. habitat restoration, re-creation and expansion;
  - b. improved links between existing ecological sites;
  - c. buffering of existing important ecological sites;
  - d. new biodiversity features within the development; and
  - e. management for long-term enhancement of biodiversity.

#### 6.2.3.2. Supporting Text

1. One of the principal characteristics of Pyrton is its close relationship with the landscape. Grass verges, trees, green spaces between buildings, and views out across open countryside are as much a part of the character of the village as traditional materials and historic buildings. A detailed Landscape and Green Space Appraisal has been prepared in support of the PNP and is an accompanying document for the plan.
2. According to the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (adopted July 2003), Pyrton falls within Landscape Character Area 5 (LCA5): the Eastern Vale Fringes. It notes in relation to the area: "Large-scale development of any kind will be inappropriate within open countryside areas. The ability of the landscape to

accommodate smaller-scale development will depend upon: the potential impacts on distinctive landscape and settlement character; the potential impacts on intrinsic landscape quality and valued features and the overall sensitivity of the landscape to change; the visual sensitivity of the receiving landscape.”

3. The section of the LCA in relation to the Eastern Vale Fringes (LCA5) notes the following conclusions in relation to the potential suitability of development proposals within those Fringes:
  - a. the high quality parkland landscapes within this area are particularly sensitive to change and least able to accommodate new development;
  - b. the semi-enclosed rolling downs landscapes benefit from a more intact landscape structure and the strong backdrop of the Chilterns escarpment, but their scenic quality (part AONB) and visual prominence makes them sensitive to development;
  - c. development within the open arable downs landscapes will be highly prominent unless closely associated with existing built form;
  - d. landscapes with strong landform and a mature structure of woods and hedgerows are less visually exposed and may be more able to absorb change but they are generally of higher landscape quality and therefore sensitive to development;
  - e. special attention should be paid to creating strong landscape ‘edges’ to settlements to reduce the urbanising influences of development on adjacent countryside and to prevent ribbon development and the coalescence of settlements.
4. Part of the PNP area is within the ‘Chilterns Escarpment North’ Conservation Target Area (CTA). This policy has been designed to help achieve the aims of this CTA. Included within Pyrton parish are important areas of chalk downland on the northern slopes and valley sides and lowland meadows, which support populations of rare butterflies, with adjacent arable land supporting nationally important areas for rare arable plants and arable birds.
5. This policy is in line with the AONB’s Statutory Management Plan and is supported by para 109 of the NPPF, which supports a net gain in biodiversity.

#### 6.2.4. Policy BNE3: Local Green Spaces

##### 6.2.4.1. Policy

1. Two spaces comply with the tests set out in the NPPF (paras 76-77) for designation as Local Green Spaces, giving special protection against development, and are put forward for this designation:
  - a. Pyrton charity field (as outlined in Fig.19);
  - b. Field opposite Pyrton village hall (as outlined in Fig.20).

##### 6.2.4.2. Supporting text

1. Consultation with the local community has identified two open spaces considered important because they perform a valuable function in the parish. These are in need of special protection against development. These two spaces comply with the NPPF criteria.

#### 6.2.4.2.1. Pyrton Charity Field:

1. This comprises an undeveloped parcel of land that, together with PYR2, helps to provide a green buffer between Pyrton and Watlington. This is an important area of land to retain in an open form so as to help prevent coalescence between the two settlements. It also serves to safeguard the distinctive character and identity of Pyrton village, and conserve and enhance the settings of Pyrton Manor, the Pyrton conservation area, and Shirburn registered park and garden. This is supported by both the Landscape and Green Space Appraisal and Pyrton's Conservation Area Appraisal. The latter states in the introduction that "the fields between Watlington and Pyrton perform a vital role in separating Pyrton from its larger, urban neighbour and helping to prevent their potential unwelcome coalescence".

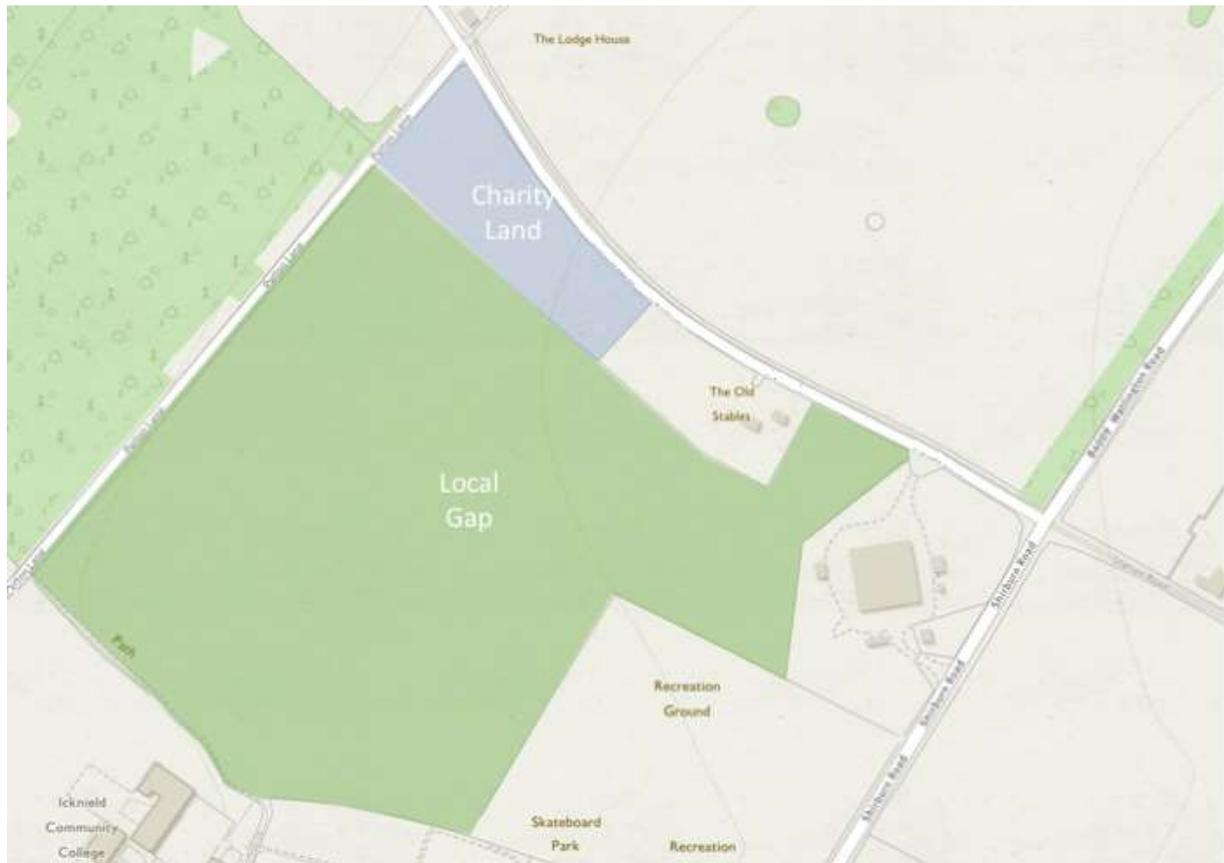


Fig.19: Pyrton Charity Field located at junction of Pyrton Lane and the 'unnamed road' leading to the B4009

1. Paras 76 and 77 of the NPPF refer to local green spaces, with the former para noting that communities should be able to identify, through neighbourhood plans, green areas of particular importance to them for special protection. The latter para notes that this designation should only be used where three criteria are met:
  - “where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
  - where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and

where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.”

2. The charity land mentioned lies on Pyrton Lane at its intersection with the unnamed road leading to the B4009 in close proximity to the centre of Pyrton village, where most parishioners live. It is demonstrably special to the local community as shown by the consultation process conducted for the PNP, because of its open character, views to and from the AONB, and ability to serve as an amenity for the community, as well as its potential for wildlife and flood storage capacity. The field is local in character and at 1.507 hectares does not represent a large tract of land.

#### 6.2.4.2.2. Field Opposite the Village Hall

1. This field lies adjacent to the Shirburn registered park and garden and within the Pyrton conservation area. Most local residents, as evidenced through the PNP consultation process, would like it maintained as a local green space to conserve the rural, open nature of the core village.



Fig.20: Field opposite Pyrton village hall

2. This field also meets the NPPF criteria for a local green space. It is located on Knightsbridge Lane in the centre of the core village opposite the village hall. It is valued by the community for conserving the rural, open and tranquil nature of the parish and for offering open views of Shirburn registered park, the AONB and the Chiltern Hills to the east. This is supported by Pyrton’s Conservation Area Appraisal, where it is identified as an important open space and a vital element of the character and historical development of the area, contributing to the setting of nearby listed buildings. The Appraisal states that “there is undoubtedly a more

open feel than there is to the more enclosed village core to the south, this clear difference in character being even more evident on OS maps of the late 19th and early 20th centuries...the dwellings smaller and more humble with large open spaces formed by the paddocks on the eastern side of the road across which there are fine views". At 1.1 hectares, it does not amount to an extensive tract of land.

### 6.2.5. Policy BNE4: Local Gap

#### 6.2.5.1. Policy

1. Land off Pyrton Lane (PYR2), as outlined in red in Fig.21 and marked as 'Land off Pyrton Lane', is identified as a 'local gap', designed to prevent the coalescence of the two villages of Pyrton and Watlington and provide a strong edge to Watlington settlement.
2. Development proposals should ensure the retention of the open character of the local gap and should not harm this, either individually or cumulatively. Such proposals should demonstrate that any diminution of the gap will not lead, visually, perceptually or physically, to coalescence between Pyrton and Watlington. A Landscape and Visual Appraisal must accompany any development proposal and show no reduction in the openness of, or detriment to the views to and from, this local gap.
3. Planning permission will be given for agricultural and forestry-related development, playing fields, agricultural allotments, and other open land uses that might benefit local communities and help preserve the separation between Pyrton and Watlington and the retention of their individual identities. Any structures associated with outdoor sport or recreation must meet the criteria set out above in para 6.2.5.1.2.
4. Since the site is in an area of rural land that shares intervisibility with the Chilterns escarpment and contributes directly to its setting, the Chilterns AONB Management Plan should be a material consideration in determining any application. That plan emphasises the need to value the setting of the AONB as "an integral part of the efforts to conserve the landscape of the AONB itself".
5. Exceptionally, planning permission will be given in the case of any necessary expansion by Icknield Community College, provided this is limited in area and minimises its impact on the open and green character of the gap. A safe route should be provided for walkers and cyclists between Pyrton and Watlington to replace the public footpath on PYR2 that currently skirts Icknield College on its present site.

#### 6.2.5.2. Supporting text

1. This policy seeks to prevent coalescence between the separate settlements of Pyrton and Watlington and to protect their distinctive individual characters and settings by maintaining a clear rural buffer between the two settlements. It does not seek to prevent development or open land uses that may otherwise be suited to a countryside location. Its purpose is to ensure that no proposal results in the integrity of the gap being undermined.
2. The concept of the local gap is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the SODC adopted Local Plan 2011, which refers to important open gaps between settlements as a consideration in its development management policies. The concept also conforms to the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy, which is highly protective of the countryside.
3. The NPPF does not refer to local gap policies, but a principle of national policy (NPPF, para 17) is to "take account of the different roles and character of different areas ...

recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it”. The justification for the application of the local gap designation in relation to PYR2 is given in sub-para 6-11 below.

4. The criteria for a local gap are different from those for a local green space. As noted in para 6.2.4.2.2. above, the criteria for a local green space under the NPPF are that the space must be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, that it must be demonstrably special to the community and hold a particular local significance, and that the area must be local in character and not an extensive tract of land. The criteria for a local gap are that it is demonstrably special to the community and holds a particular local significance, and that it acts as a buffer, preventing coalescence of built areas and defining the settlement character of the area. It does not need to meet the other criteria for local green spaces. In defining the extent of a gap, no more land than is necessary to prevent the coalescence of settlements should be included for the purposes of maintaining their physical and visual separation.
5. The local gap is shown outlined on the policy map (Fig.21). It has been drawn to include the minimum essential area to achieve the policy objective.



Fig.21: Land off Pyrton Lane (PYR2) designated as Local Gap

6. That PYR2 is special to the community is demonstrated by the consultation of Pyrton residents during the PNP process. This showed that most Pyrton residents strongly support safeguarding the distinct identities of Pyrton and Watlington and preventing the coalescence of the two settlements, and see the retention of the open and green character of PYR2 as crucial to securing this objective.

7. The local gap on PYR2 is also valued by Pyrton and Watlington residents for the enjoyment it offers of the open countryside, including long-range views towards the Chilterns AONB (for example, from Pyrton Lane, Oxfordshire Way National Trail, Shirburn Road (B4009) and footpath 325/6/10). This land can be clearly viewed from the Chilterns AONB and is appreciated by recreational users of Watlington Hill (National Trust inalienable land), of a public right of way on Shirburn hill (approximately 2.5km to the south-east of this site), and of the Ridgeway National Trail/Swans Way Long Distance Bridleroute.
8. The local gap holds particular local significance because of the sensitivity of this element of the landscape to development. While the site is not within the Chilterns AONB, it is in close proximity to it. It is stated in para 109 of the NPPF that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. As previously noted, the South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment (adopted July 2003), in relation to Landscape Character Area 5 (LCA5): the Eastern Vale Fringes, into which Pyrton falls, declares: “Large-scale development of any kind will be inappropriate within open countryside areas. The ability of the landscape to accommodate smaller-scale development will depend upon: the potential impacts on distinctive landscape and settlement character; the potential impacts on intrinsic landscape quality and valued features and the overall sensitivity of the landscape to change; the visual sensitivity of the receiving landscape.”
9. The section of the LCA in relation to the Eastern Vale Fringes (LCA5) notes the following conclusions in relation to the potential suitability of development proposals within those Fringes:
  - a. “the high quality parkland landscapes within this area are particularly sensitive to change and least able to accommodate new development;
  - b. the semi-enclosed rolling downs landscapes benefit from a more intact landscape structure and the strong backdrop of the Chilterns escarpment, but their scenic quality (part AONB) and visual prominence makes them sensitive to development;
  - c. development within the open arable downs landscapes will be highly prominent unless closely associated with existing built form;
  - d. landscapes with strong landform and a mature structure of woods and hedgerows are less visually exposed and may be more able to absorb change but they are generally of higher landscape quality and therefore sensitive to development;
  - e. special attention should be paid to creating strong landscape ‘edges’ to settlements to reduce the urbanising influences of development on adjacent countryside and to prevent ribbon development and the coalescence of settlements.”
10. The Evidence Base for this policy includes a detailed [Landscape and Green Space Appraisal](#) prepared in support of the PNP. It establishes a visual baseline and covers the predicted landscape and visual effects of development in the local gap. The introduction of the Conservation Area Appraisal notes that “the open, undeveloped nature of this field [PYR2] is...clearly vital to protecting the setting of the extended Pyrton Conservation Area”.
11. In this context, the local gap functions as an open buffer between Watlington and Pyrton Manor (Grade II\* listed) grounds (located within the parkland and estate landscape type), maintaining the latter’s rural and isolated setting.
12. It is recognised that SODC’s emerging Local Plan proposes the safeguarding of land off Pyrton Lane for the routeing of an edge road around Watlington. At present this safeguarding does not yet amount to an edge road proposal or policy, and the evidence

that supports an edge road's necessity, feasibility, and funding is yet to be submitted and tested. The case for an edge road is also not yet supported by the requisite evidence-based traffic analysis and assessment. In the absence of an adopted planning or transport policy, the local gap policy of the PNP does not reflect the safeguarding of the route directly.

13. An exception to the local gap policy is made for any potential expansion of Icknield Community College at its current Watlington site that is the consequence of prospective district residential development. But the area devoted to this purpose should be limited and not substantially affect the open and green character of the designated local gap.

## 6.2.6. Policy BNE5: Flood risk and drainage

### 6.2.6.1. Policy

1. Development proposals should demonstrate, through the provision of flood risk assessments, how the risk of flooding resulting from the prospective development will be managed, so that the risk of flooding within the village of Pyrton will not be increased and that opportunities to reduce flood risk, for example, through the use of sustainable drainage systems, are exploited, where possible.
2. Where new development will result in the generation of additional foul sewerage, developers should ensure that they demonstrate how an appropriate foul drainage strategy can be delivered, and then ensure that it is delivered.

### 6.2.6.2. Supporting text

1. Development proposals should consider the potential impact on the risk of flooding in the local and surrounding area. Where a potential risk has been identified, appropriate measures that take full account of likely climate change should be put in place to ensure that there is no enhanced risk of flooding. This is because any future development is likely to create additional impermeable surfaces.
2. An Environment Agency local flood zoning map shows key risks:

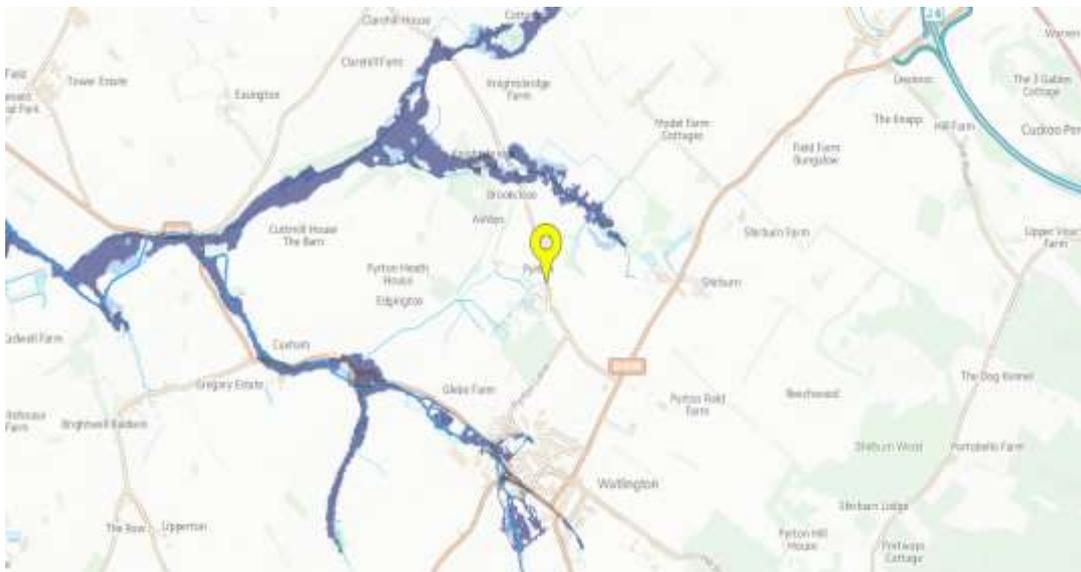


Fig.22: Environment Agency map of flood zones (dark blue is zone 3, and light blue zone 2).

3. In Pyrton village where most residents live, there is an extremely high groundwater table due to runoff from the Chilterns. Surface water running off the unnamed road between the Shirburn Road (B4009) and Pyrton Lane, and Pyrton Lane itself, leads to regular

winter flooding on Knightsbridge Lane in the core village. Evidence of recent flooding is shown in Figs.23 and 24.



Fig.23: Flooding on PYR2 (February 2014)



Fig.24: Flooding on Pyrton Lane (February 2014)

4. Currently Pyrton village, with its 20 listed buildings, lacks the infrastructure to deal with ground and surface water flooding, a regular winter hazard that climate change may exacerbate. Listed buildings in the parish have been flooded in the past.
5. As the parish is not connected to the mains wastewater sewerage system, all properties in the parish are served by septic tanks or individual waste management systems. Foul drainage should be considered in relation to all new developments which will generate additional foul sewerage. The Parish Council is ready to discuss the existing foul drainage system and potential future options for any new development with prospective developers. Further details can also be obtained directly from Thames Water, the local sewerage undertaker.

### 6.2.7. Policy BNE6: Footpaths and bridleways

#### 6.2.7.1. Policy

1. Developments should respect and conserve the parish's footpaths and bridleways, ensuring that they do not harm them or their ambiance significantly, unless an appropriate alternative can be delivered.
2. Developments should be designed to support and encourage active travel as the first-choice mode of transport for local residents, with provision of benches and accessible gates to increase accessibility.

#### 6.2.7.2. Supporting text

1. The Countryside Service at Oxfordshire County Council maintains a definitive map of public rights of way for Oxfordshire, which records rights of way within the parish. The parish features many footpaths and bridleways, including the Icknield Way and the Oxfordshire Way, which are a part of the heritage of the local area. These are important features of the parish and parishioners wish to ensure they continue to provide benefits to the local community and visitors.
2. Developments should be designed so that local residents and visitors can use safe pedestrian and cycle routes to neighbouring settlements, with appropriately spaced benches and the use of accessible gates instead of stiles.

## 6.3. Community policies

### 6.3.1. Policy C1: Community Assets

#### 6.3.1.1. Policy

1. Development proposals that will result in either the loss of or significant harm to a designated Asset of Community Value, as may be identified in the parish, will be resisted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the asset, or the ongoing delivery of the community value of the asset, is no longer financially viable.
2. Proposals to improve the viability of a designated Asset of Community Value, or of any other established community use by way of the extension or partial redevelopment of buildings and land will be supported, provided the design of the scheme and the resulting increase in use are appropriate and will not harm the amenities of adjoining residential properties.
3. Any future proposals or decisions regarding the future of the charity land in Pyrton village and Christmas Common should be subject to full consultation with parishioners to ensure that the land can continue to deliver benefits to the whole community.

#### 6.3.1.2. Supporting text

1. Assets of Community Value are buildings or land nominated by eligible organisations (e.g. a parish council) that they believe are important to their community well-being.
2. The Parish Council intends to nominate the Church of St. Mary and Pyrton village hall, two important local sites (Figs.5 & and 10), for the status of Community Assets. This is explained in the Action Plan in Chapter 7 below.
3. As the Pyrton village and Christmas Common charity lands are reserved for the benefit of parishioners, it is right they should continue to have a say in their future.

### 6.3.2. Policy C2: Development contributions

#### 6.3.2.1. Policy

1. Site-specific planning obligations, in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations, will be sought in relation to development proposals where deemed necessary by SODC, in consultation with the Parish Council.
2. The share of CIL income received from applicable development in the PNP area will be spent on projects to be agreed by the Parish Council in consultation with parishioners.

#### 6.3.2.2. Supporting text

1. So as to ensure development proposals do not affect the local area adversely, it may be necessary for SODC to secure planning obligations, provided they meet the requirements set out within Regulation 122 (2) of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). This stipulates:
  - a. *“A planning obligation may only constitute a reason for granting planning permission for the development if the obligation is—*
  - b. *necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;*
  - c. *directly related to the development; and*
  - d. *fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.”*
2. Consultation as part of the preparation of the PNP has indicated that the area where there may be a need for site-specific obligations to support and/or facilitate new development in the parish relates to local highways/cycleways.

3. Regulation 59A of the CIL regulations (as amended) states that, where all or part of a chargeable development is within an area that has a NP in place, the charging authority (i.e. SODC) must pass 25% of the relevant CIL receipts to the Parish Council for that area.
4. Consultation with parishioners has identified a range of infrastructure projects on which they would potentially like to spend CIL receipts. Should the Parish Council receive CIL payments, it would consult parishioners at a special Parish meeting and through a survey on suggested proposals for expenditure, subject to detailed investigation of feasibility and costing and after consultation with SODC. Potential priority infrastructure projects include:
  - a. Improved drainage for the core village;
  - b. Mains sewerage for the core village;
  - c. Traffic calming measures on Knightsbridge Lane and on Pyrton Lane (if any Watlington edge road is built);
  - d. Improved mobile phone coverage.
5. Less essential projects include:
  - a. Connection to gas mains;
  - b. Maintenance of the church;
  - c. Recreational facilities on the charity land on Pyrton Lane;
  - d. Buried power and telecommunication cables;
  - e. Improvement to local cycling routes and footpaths;
  - f. Planting of trees for nature conservation
6. The Parish Council will liaise with SODC to establish a robust method for agreeing when and where to spend CIL monies. This will include a mechanism for monitoring CIL receipts and reporting on expenditure.

## 6.4. Housing policies

### 6.4.1. Introduction

1. As explained, Pyrton is a small parish with 93 dwellings and an overall population of 227 residents according to the 2011 Census.<sup>21</sup> In addition, Pyrton is regarded within the Core Strategy as a village that is only suitable for small infill developments on sites of up to 0.1 hectares, and the delivery of rural exception housing, if a need is shown.
2. Pyrton is not identified as a location appropriate for housing allocations, and it does not have a housing requirement for delivery over the Core Strategy's plan period. The emerging Local Plan does not suggest a change to the scale and nature of the housing development envisaged for Pyrton.
3. Parishioners are nonetheless open to limited growth within the parish to contribute to meeting district needs and have identified the opportunity to accommodate new homes. In line with paragraph 044 (Reference ID: 41-044-20160519) of the neighbourhood planning section of NPPG, the PNP seeks to allocate additional sites to those in the adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan.

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<sup>21</sup> Pyrton Parish, Population Density, 2011 NOMIS - Pyrton  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=1170217819>

## 6.4.2. Policy H1: New homes

### 6.4.2.1. Policy

1. Planning permission will be granted for residential houses, to be delivered at the former MoD site (PYR1) at a density that would not have an adverse effect on the character of the area and on the parish's heritage assets. SODC has recently given planning permission for new homes to be delivered on sites already identified by the PNP process as suitable for development, viz. at New Farm and on land between Old Vicarage Cottage and The Lodge House. Details of the remaining site allocation are given in Chapter 6.6 below.

### 6.4.2.2. Supporting text

1. The parish acknowledges the district housing need, as outlined in the Oxfordshire SHMAA and adopted Core Strategy. Consultation with parishioners showed support for delivery of around 15-20 new homes, seeing this as an appropriate contribution to meeting that need, having regard to the available sites, character of the area, and planning and environmental designations.
2. Parishioners identified sites they viewed as suitable to accommodate this level of housing growth and details of those site allocations are set out in Chapter 6.6 below.
3. In addition to the former MoD site (PYR1), up to three new homes were deemed suitable for development at two sites in the core village. In July 2017 planning permission was granted at one of these sites (land adjacent to New Farm) for three new homes as infill (refs. P16/S4045/FUL and P16/S4046/FUL). In view of these permissions, the New Farm site is no longer included in the PNP site allocation. Likewise, SODC gave planning consent in January 2018 for two houses to be constructed on the land between Old Vicarage Cottage and The Lodge House (ref. P17/S4039/FUL). This site is therefore also no longer included in the site allocation. The outcome of these consents is that the total number of new homes in the core village will increase by five.

## 6.4.3. Policy H2: Type of new homes

### 6.4.3.1. Policy

1. The type of new housing should be in keeping with the area, avoiding any adverse impact on its character and on the parish's heritage assets.

### 6.4.3.2. Supporting text

1. This seeks to ensure that proposals are appropriate for the area and integrate suitably with it.
2. This provides opportunities for a range of accommodation and tenures in a built form that reflects the established pattern of local development. It will contribute towards SODC's identified housing needs in a manner appropriate to the parish.

## 6.5. Design policies

### 6.5.1. Introduction

1. Pyrton residents are committed to ensuring that future homes and development in the parish are of high quality design, consonant in materials, layout and density with neighbouring properties. This is reflected in the design policies outlined below.
2. This chapter contains a set of policies to guide the design of any future development in the parish.

### 6.5.2. Policy D1: Detailed design criteria

#### 6.5.2.1. Policy

1. Development proposals should ensure high standards and quality of design, having regard to the site, site constraints and the surrounding area, including, where relevant, the Conservation Area.
2. Development should accord with the following design criteria:
  - a. Predominantly a maximum number of two-storeys;
  - b. Designs that are generally influenced by the Chiltern vernacular architectural style featuring brick, flint and tiles, and local conditions;
  - c. High quality and energy efficient construction, using environmentally sensitive materials;
  - d. Observance of 'lifetime home' standards, where possible;
  - e. All development proposals should take into account the importance of dark night skies across the parish and those that include external light fittings will be expected to demonstrate that the chosen light fittings minimize light pollution. Outside lighting needs to be regulated (where planning permission is required) to be neighbourly in its use. This can be achieved by ensuring lighting is deflected downwards rather than outwards or upwards, that it is switched off at midnight at the latest and that movement-sensitive triggers are regulated to reduce illumination periods to a minimum. Unless it is a requirement of a statutory body, all new roads built as part of a development must not feature street lighting.

#### 6.5.2.2. Supporting text

1. The conservation and enhancement of the built and natural environment in Pyrton and its relationship to the surrounding area are of fundamental importance to parishioners. The design of any proposed developments should therefore be of high quality, sympathetic to the conservation area, where relevant, and consonant with the existing built and natural environment.
2. Parishioners consider that, given the limited extent of existing residential development in Pyrton and the village's heritage, any new residential development should generally accord with the design of existing properties and the use of materials characteristic of those properties, especially brick, flint and tiles, as reflected in the Chilterns Building Design Guide 2010. This is to conserve and enhance local distinctiveness in line with national planning policy.
3. A key characteristic of the rural character of Pyrton are dark nights. The area currently enjoys limited light pollution and the local community is keen to prevent the introduction of unnecessary light pollution in a dark rural area.
4. The creation of artificial light is a factor that threatens the survival of protected and threatened local wildlife and tranquillity.

### 6.5.3. Policy D2: Infill design criteria

#### 6.5.3.1. Policy

1. Planning permission will be granted for infill residential development in line with the following design criteria:
  - a. Small-scale developments generally consonant with the existing density of the 'core village' and of suitable scale, bulk, height and mass;
  - b. Designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers without doing unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;
  - c. Generally individual designs in vernacular styles that enhance local distinctiveness;
  - d. Space between each plot that respects the local character;
  - e. Set back from the road with front and rear gardens.

#### 6.5.3.2. Supporting text

1. SODC's adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan defines infill development as: *"The filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings."*
2. Given that infill development, by definition, will be located in close proximity to existing built development, parishioners consider it important that it is sympathetic to nearby housing and the overall character of the conservation area, where appropriate.
3. The infill design criteria offer a guide to assist in the formulation of proposals.

### 6.5.4. Policy D3: Extension of existing properties

#### 6.5.4.1. Policy

1. Planning permission will be granted for extensions to existing properties (where planning permission is required), provided they accord with the following design criteria:
  - a. They are of a suitable scale, bulk and mass, having regard to the size of the existing property;
  - b. They are designed and laid out so as to secure a reasonable degree of privacy for the occupiers that does not unacceptably harm the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, daylight or sunlight;
  - c. They maintain the existing space between plots in Pyrton;
  - d. They are generally of a similar design and materials as the existing property, unless contemporary additions can be well integrated;
  - e. Particular care should be taken to ensure that extensions to listed buildings do not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities of the building, and do not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### 6.5.4.2. Supporting text

1. Parishioners support enabling parish residents to extend their properties. It is important they do so in a way that is in keeping with their existing property, and does not affect adversely neighbouring properties or the conservation area, where appropriate.

## 6.6. Site allocation policy

### 6.6.1. Introduction

1. This chapter provides details of the site allocated for development within the parish, including a description of location, and of the policies applicable to development proposals. This site is the former MoD site (PYR1). Two sites, previously identified, are now covered by planning consents and are therefore no longer included in this section.

### 6.6.2. Policy SA1: Former MoD site (PYR1)

#### 6.6.2.1. Policy

1. The redevelopment of the former MoD site (PYR1), as outlined in Fig.25 below, for residential development, along with associated landscape and infrastructure works required to support the scheme, will be supported in principle provided:



Fig.25: Former MoD site (PYR1), marked A

- a. Consultation takes place with the local community from the outset and throughout the planning process. Any planning application should explain the nature of the consultation so far undertaken, the percentage of parishioners involved, the views of parishioners, and how those views have been taken into account in formulating a development proposal.
- b. Affordable housing will be sought in line with SODC's adopted requirements, subject to viability.
- c. Vehicle access to the site is off the Shirburn Road (B4009), as now.
- d. Design and access statement as required by SODC's adopted Validation Checklist, should be prepared and submitted as part of any application. In addition to the statutory expectations for a design and access statement, the statement should:

- i. Draw on relevant precedents and demonstrate how and why they are related to the proposed development, and how these have influenced the proposal in formulating an appropriate scheme;
  - ii. Include sufficient drawings, photomontages, viewpoints and illustrations to allow a realistic appreciation of the proposal;
  - iii. Explain how and why the building types, scale, appearance and materials have been selected and are appropriate for the environment;
  - iv. Demonstrate how the proposed development responds to on-site and surrounding heritage, landscape and environmental opportunities/constraints/ designations. In particular, proposals should demonstrate how management of the existing boundary vegetation would maintain the visual containment of the site and lighting management would reduce light pollution from the site.
  - v. Demonstrate a prospective net gain in biodiversity on the site through appropriate ecological surveys.
- e. Planning applications must take into account the recommendations of the SODC Landscape Capacity Study (2015) in relation to this site and be accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

#### 6.6.2.2. Supporting text

1. Parishioners support the principle of redeveloping this circa 1.9-hectare site for residential development, to contribute towards meeting district needs. It would have a density that did not have an adverse impact on the character of the area.
2. The site is previously developed land. It has not made a significant contribution to employment needs in recent years in view of long periods of vacancy, the poor quality of accommodation at the site, and temporary low quality usage. These suggest the site is not viable as a pure employment location. Having regard to national policy, the need for new homes in South Oxfordshire and the location and potential of this site, it is considered that a change of use to residential or mixed residential/employment represents a positive planning response to an underused site. The site benefits from pavement linkages to services and facilities in Watlington, in reasonable proximity to the site. It is therefore in a sustainable location, although any development is likely to lead to additional local traffic.
3. The potential of the site for residential development has previously been considered by SODC, the results of which are presented in its Landscape Capacity Assessment Report, 2015.<sup>22</sup> It is identified as a site that is potentially suitable for housing, subject to landscape and visual mitigation and the protection of the adjacent AONB. In relation to the potential capacity of the site, the assessment makes the following key points:
  - a. Redevelopment of a similar area of floorspace or of a similar mass and scale would be detrimental to the local landscape and settlement character and the setting of the AONB and Shirburn park.
  - b. The site could be considered further provided that any development is no higher than the existing and the mass and scale of the built form is reduced.
  - c. It is important that any new development not only conserves the landscape and visual status quo but enhances the character of the site to be in keeping with the pattern of loose knit low numbers of houses in small groups in the open countryside.

<sup>22</sup> South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Capacity Assessment for Additional Sites on the Edge of the Larger Villages in South Oxfordshire, Addendum August 2015 to Main Report, May 2014, Part 1 Main Report

- d. Any access should be off Shirburn Road using the current access to the site. Green infrastructure should be provided.
- e. A full detailed landscape and visual impact assessment will be required to inform the final capacity of the site. Inappropriate visual intrusion from the built form and significant harm to the rural character of this area should be avoided.
- f. Parishioners' preference would be for a detailed planning application (as opposed to an outline application) to be submitted when bringing forward this site, so that they are able to review full details of any proposal.
- g. The Oxfordshire HER does not contain any findspots or archaeological information in relation to this site.
- h. This site is subject to an outline planning application P18/S0002/O, lodged on 2 January 2018, for 37 assisted living units, a care home and four staff accommodation units.

## 7. Action Plan

### 7.1. Introduction

The Parish Council will act as custodian of the PNP on behalf of the community. To help safeguard the future of the parish, the Parish Council undertakes to pursue the following actions:

### 7.2. Actions

#### 7.2.1. *Work with developers*

1. To ensure that any new development proposals are appropriate for the parish, the Parish Council commits to working with developers and providing constructive feedback to assist in the formulation of suitable proposals.
2. The Council adopted a Pre-Application Community Involvement Protocol on 19 December 2017.

#### 7.2.2. *Nominate assets of community value*

1. To ensure parishioners have a say in the future of buildings of community value, the Parish Council will prepare nominations by March 2019 to designate Pyrton Village Hall and the Church of St. Mary as Assets of Community Value (ACV).
2. The Council will re-nominate these assets at the end of each five-year period of validity, as appropriate.

#### 7.2.3. *Prepare survey of Grade II listed buildings in the parish*

1. Within one year of the PNP being made, the Parish Council will prepare a short survey of Grade II buildings in the parish to ascertain their condition and establish whether any are at risk from neglect, decay or other threats.

#### 7.2.4. *Address traffic and any air quality issues*

1. The Parish Council will liaise with the local highways authority (Oxfordshire County Council) and SODC to identify and, if appropriate, pursue measures to minimise traffic levels in the parish, especially on Knightsbridge Lane in the core village to prevent this becoming a commuter rat-run to the B4009. This is to ensure that Pyrton retains its rural character, and to minimise potential effects on local air quality.
2. The Council will consider the potential for measures to limit speeding along Knightsbridge Lane (speed restrictions) and access to Knightsbridge Lane for HGVs (width restrictions). It will also consider the local potential for a 'quiet lanes initiative' and its applicability to Pyrton Lane, should a Watlington bypass be built on PYR2.

#### 7.2.5. *Monitor the PNP*

1. To ensure effective implementation of the PNP and its policies in relation to planning decisions and the future of the parish, the Parish Council commits to monitoring the appropriateness and effectiveness of the PNP on a continuing basis, with the Council dedicating one meeting to a formal review once a year.
2. The community will be kept up to date through website updates and the annual meeting of the parish.

#### *7.2.6. Amend the PNP, as required*

1. To ensure the PNP remains an up-to-date part of SODC's adopted Local Plan, and carries weight in planning decisions, the Parish Council commits to reviewing and updating the plan formally one year after it is made and then as necessary thereafter.