

Ducklington Neighbourhood Plan

Baseline Survey Report

September 2026

DRAFT

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This Baseline Assessment has been prepared in support of the production of the Neighbourhood Plan for Ducklington Parish and associated planning policies.

The Baseline Assessment is formed of four key sections, which consider the Parish as a whole; the Village; the Village Fringe; and the wider Countryside.

The structure of the report is as follows:

The Parish

- Location and context
- Population profile
- Classifications and designations
- Transport and connections

The Village

- History
- Settlement Extent
- Housing
- Business
- Religion
- Education
- Sport and Leisure
- Community Space
- Community Events
- Green Spaces
- Nature Recovery Strategy

The Village Fringe

- Allotments
- Business and Retail
- Infrastructure and Housing

The Countryside

- Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes
- Bampton Vale

Figures have been prepared in support of the baseline survey, as listed below. These are included at full-scale at the end of report, and insets of the plan are included within the body of the text.

SECTION 2: THE PARISH

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Ducklington Parish is located within West Oxfordshire District. The Parish boundary is broadly defined as follows:

- The northern boundary follows the A40 dual carriageway, between the Sewage Treatment works and Witney Lake.
- The north-eastern boundary follows the River Windrush, between Witney Lake and Gill Mill gravel pits.
- The south-eastern boundary follows woodland and water courses, between Gill Mill gravel pits, Cokethorpe Park and Claywell Farm.
- The south-western boundary runs broadly parallel with the Yelford Road, between Claywell Farm and Coursehill Farm.
- The north-western boundary runs broadly parallel with dismantled railway, between Coursehill Farm and the Sewage Treatment Works.

The Parish boundary – which forms the Neighbourhood Plan area - is shown on **Figure 1**.

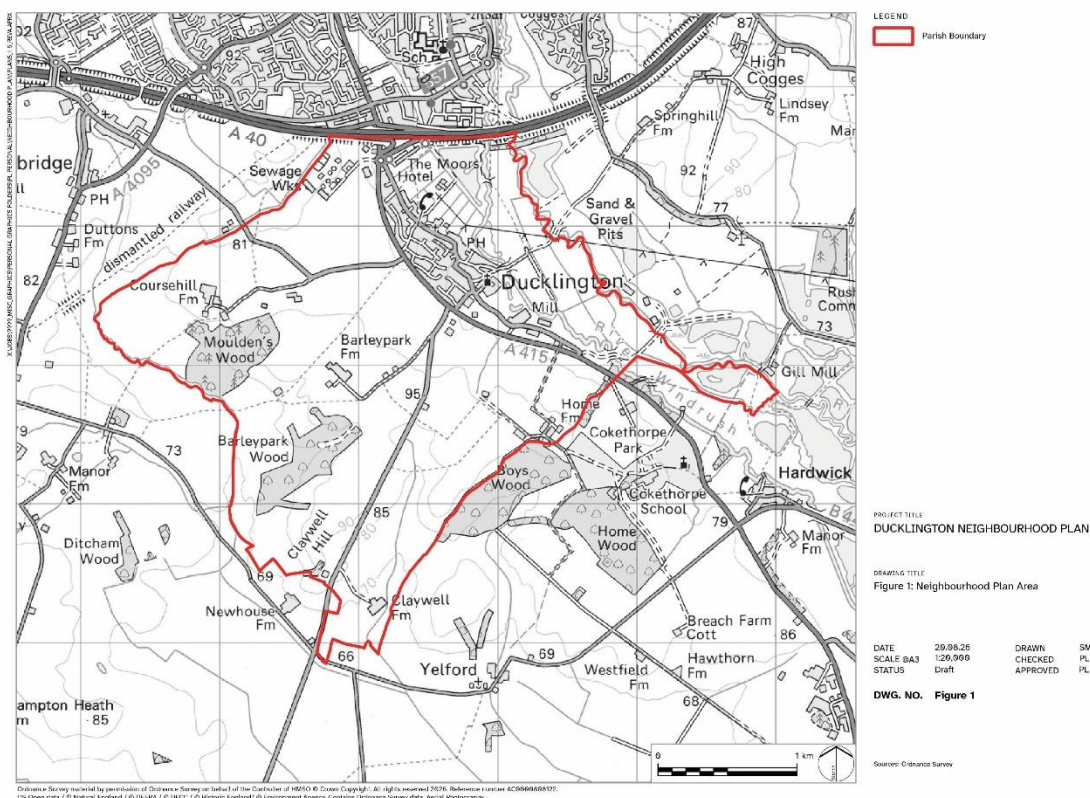


Figure 1: Neighbourhood Plan Area (Parish Boundary)

The village of Ducklington is located to the north-east of the Parish. It is largely contained between the A415 and the River Windrush. In this location, the River Windrush runs in twin meandering courses, with the outer / eastern course forming the Parish boundary; and the inner / western course running close to the built up area of the village. The land between the river courses is predominately pasture, with planned areas of gravel extraction.

Land to the south of the village / A415 comprises undulating farmland, with a number of farmsteads, areas of woodland, and minor roads and footpaths.

POPULATION PROFILE

The 2021 census provides demographic, social and economic data across England, and data can be analysed at a variety of different area levels. This is supplemented by other non-census data sets, some of which are more current than the 2021 census data. A summary of key statistics is set out below.

Demography and Households

Ducklington Parish has a population of some 1,819 people, across 675 households. There is a broadly equal split between males and females, which is typical of the national 'average' (across England)

The age profile of residents is broadly typical of the national average, with relatively even distribution across age categories. However, there is a slightly higher proportion of over 60's.

Of those aged over 16, around half of the population are married or in a registered civil partnership, which is higher than the national average.

Household sizes in this area comprise 1 person (24.4%); 2 people (40.7%); 3 people (16.9%); 4 or more people (18.1%). In comparison with the average across England, this represents a lower proportion of single person households, higher proportion of 2 / 3 person household; and slightly smaller proportion of 4 people + households. The majority of households are single family households.

Household deprivation is based on four dimensions of education, employment, health and housing. The vast majority of households are not deprived or deprived in only one dimension; and in all categories, the measures of deprivation are less than the national average.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish has an aging population; has a large proportion of family households; and households have relatively little deprivation.

Economy and Employment

In comparison with the national average, slightly more people travel further work (over 10km) or work from home. Of those travelling to work, the vast majority drive to work.

Economic activity status is broadly similar to the rest of England (circa 60% in employment and circa 40% economically inactive). Within those that are economically inactive, there is a relatively small number of those unemployed and this is lower than the national average.

In comparison with the national average, there are a generally larger proportions of higher / intermediate occupations, and a smaller proportion in lower / routine occupations.

The vast majority of people work full time, and the distribution of part-time / full-time is similar to national average.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish has relatively low unemployment and people mainly work in higher / intermediate occupations

Education and Skills

Of those people aged 16 or over, a slightly larger proportion have Level 1 – 3 qualifications (typically GCSE's and A-levels) and a slightly smaller proportion have Level 4 qualifications and above (typically higher education and degrees)

Of those people aged five and over, around 15 % are students, which is slightly lower than the national average.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish has levels of education and skills that are typical of the national average.

Ethnicity and Religion

The vast majority of people identify as white and have a UK identity, which is higher than the national average

The vast majority of people are also born in the UK and hold a UK passport. Again, this is higher than the national average.

The vast majority of people have English as their main language.

Around half of people identify as Christian, which is above the national average, while around 40% identify as having no religion.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish is predominately made of people born in / identify as being from the UK, and with English as their main language. Christianity is the predominant religion.

Health and Wellbeing

The majority of people are considered to be in very good or good health, and this is above the national average. Only a small proportion of in bad / very bad health, and this is below the average.

The majority of people are considered not disabled (under the Equality Act) and this is slightly higher than the national average.

Of those over 3 year old, the vast majority (around 90%) provide no unpaid care.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish is predominately in good health.

Housing and Accommodation

The vast majority of people live in a house or bungalow (over 90%), and this is higher than the national average. Relatively few people live in a flat, maisonette or apartment, which is lower than the national average.

There is a large proportion of car or van ownership, and – in comparison to the national average – there are more people who own 2 or more vehicles.

There are relatively few 1 bedroom houses, and a relatively even split between 2, 3 and 4+ bedrooms. In comparison to the national average, there are more 4+ bedroom houses.

Around half of people own their household outright, which is higher than the national average. A comparable amount own their household with a mortgage, while there is a lower proportion of those under social or private renting.

The vast majority of people do not have a second address, and the proportions are similar to the national average.

Overall this illustrates that Ducklington Parish predominantly live in houses or bungalows and have some form of home ownership. There are generally higher levels of larger homes and multiple car ownership.

CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGNATIONS

Within the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan, Ducklington is defined as a 'large village'. Large Villages are those settlements that have a population of over 1,000 residents and that score favourably in the Council's updated Settlement Sustainability Report (SSR).

Part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area due to its special architectural or historic interest. The Conservation Area contains 24 Listed Buildings. St Bartholomew's Church is Grade I listed – i.e. of national importance and exceptional interest. All others are Grade II listed – i.e. of special interest. There are no buildings of

Grade II* classification, which is intended for buildings of more local importance. This is described in more detail in **Section 3: The Village**.

The land to the east of the village, between the river courses, is predominately pasture, with planned areas of gravel extraction. This area falls within the River Meadowlands landscape character area (as defined by Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), 2004). This is described as a flat, low-lying landscape occupy the floodplain of the River Windrush.

Land to the west of the village / A415 comprises undulating farmland, with a number of farmsteads, areas of woodland, and minor roads and footpaths. This areas falls within the Lowland Village Farmlands landscape character area. This is described as a gently rolling landscape, with large-scale, regularly shaped fields; a strong hedgerow structure; and overall with an attractive and unspoilt rural character.

These two character areas broadly coincide with the more localised character areas of the ‘Lower Windrush Valley’ and ‘Bampton Vale’ as defined by the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA) (1998), which informed the OWLS study. Further details on landscape character can be found in **Section 5: The Countryside**.

Landscape character is shown on **Figure 2** below,

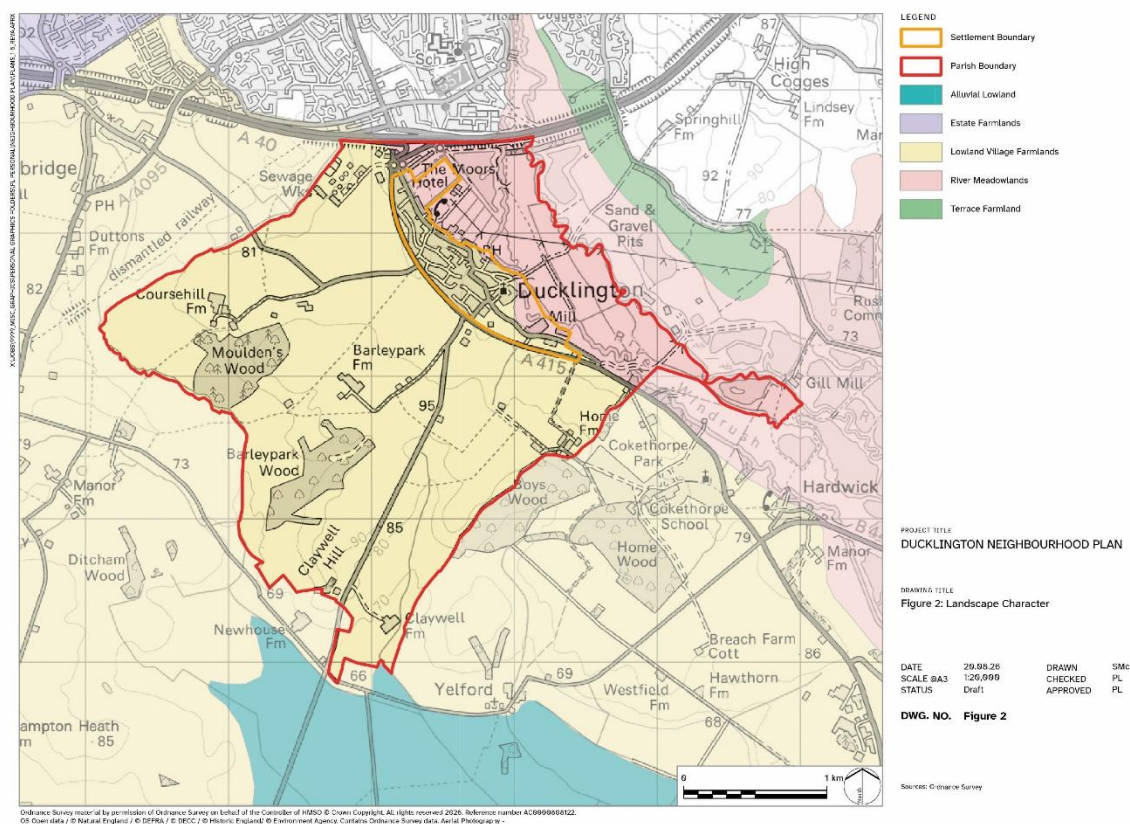


Figure 2: Landscape Character

Land to the east of the built-up area of the village all falls within the River Windrush floodplain. The Environment Agency updated the flood mapping in Autumn 2023, which extended the floodplain around Ducklington. The floodplain effectively covers the entire eastern edge of the Parish, between the settlement edge; the with the outer / eastern course of the River Windrush (the Parish boundary) and beyond. This is described in more detail in **Section 5: The Countryside**.

Much of the floodplain coincides with the 'Lower Windrush Valley Project Area' – an area identified for special landscape protection and enhancement. Policy WIT3 / Windrush Valley of the Regulation 19 Local Plan describes this area as providing “.....a *distinctive setting for many of the district's settlements and contains a rich network of habitats, historic landscapes, watercourses and recreational assets.*” The Lower Windrush Valley is also identified as part of an area identified for 'Natural Recovery and GI Opportunities' within the Witney Strategic Development Framework, contained within the Regulation 19 Local Plan.

Plates 1 and 2 below – extracted from the Regulation 19 Local Plan - show the Windrush Valley; Lower Windrush Valley Project Area; and the Witney Strategic GI network.

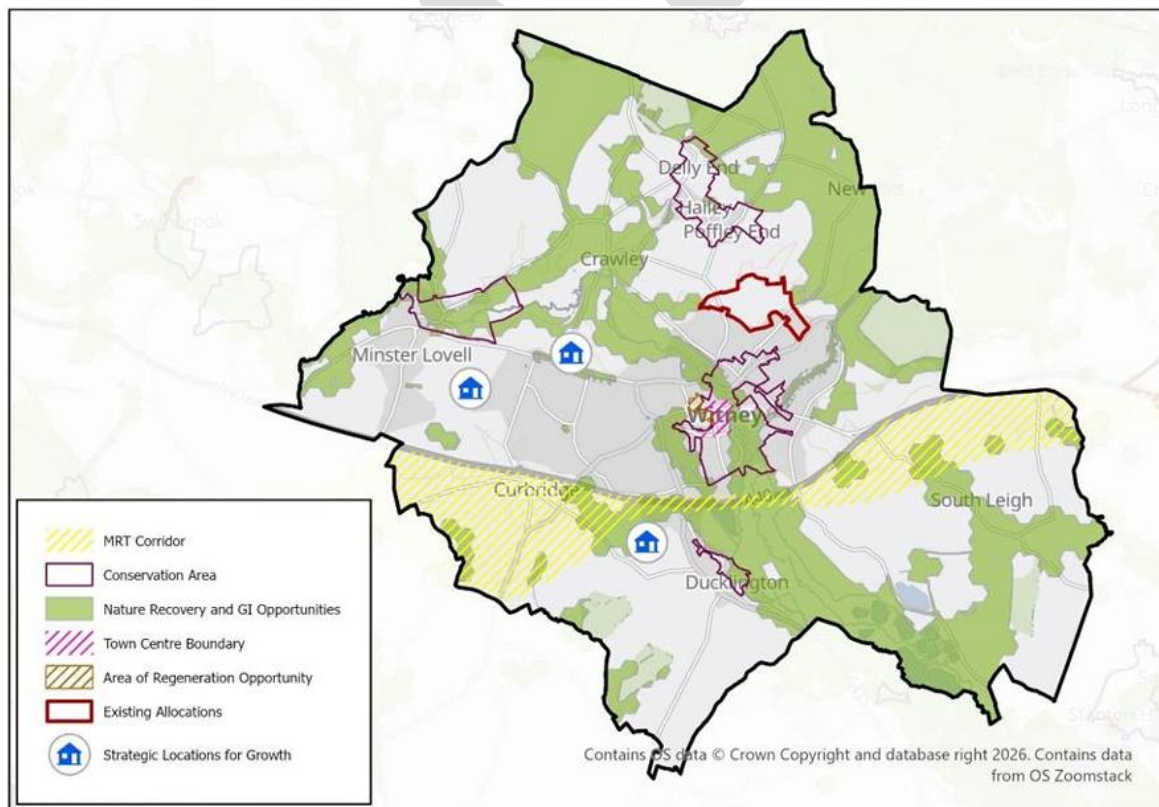


Plate 1: Witney Strategic Development Framework

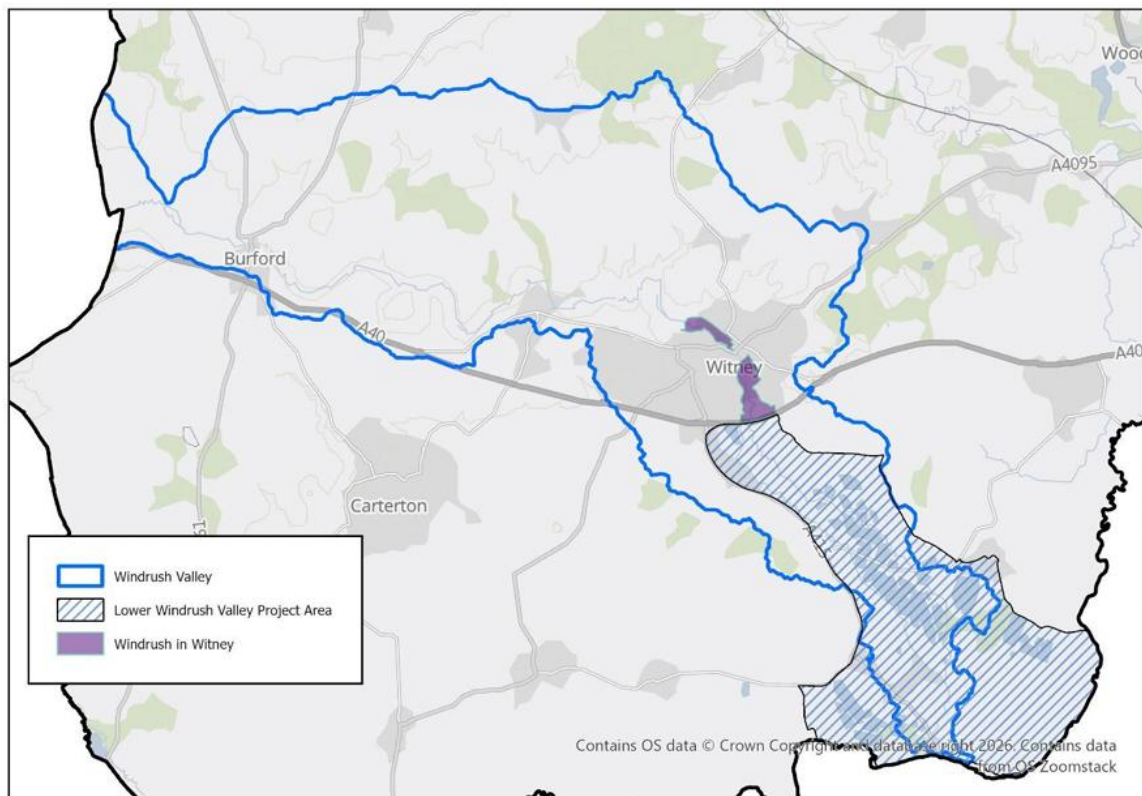


Plate 2: Windrush Valley and Project Areas

A field to the east of the village, between the River Windrush courses, is designated as a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) – Ducklington Mead. This is a traditionally managed meadow is known for its diverse flora, including the rare snake's-head fritillary. This is described in more detail in **Section 5: The Countryside**.

Witney Lake is located to the east of the Village, along the River Windrush. This is referred to a 'Country Park' was classified as Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in March 2025. This is described in more detail in **Section 5: The Countryside**.

Key environmental designations are shown on **Figure 3** below.

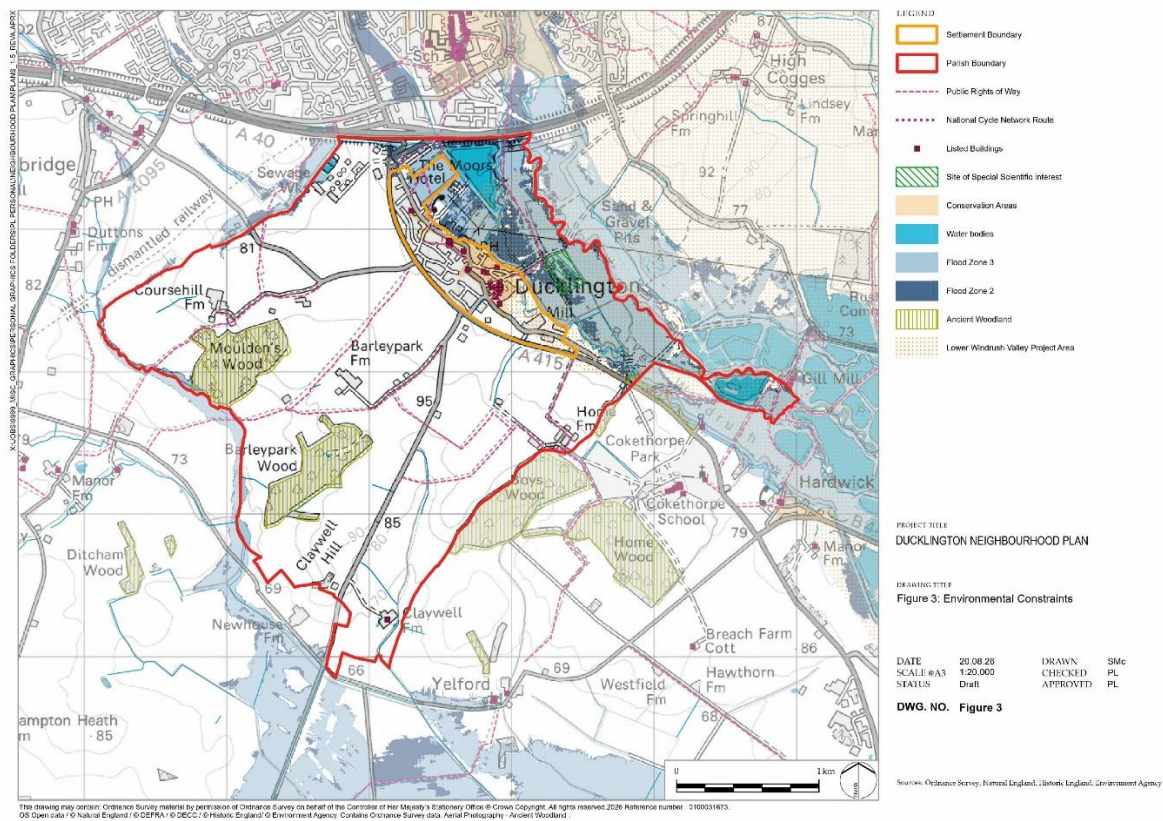


Figure 3a: Environmental Constraints

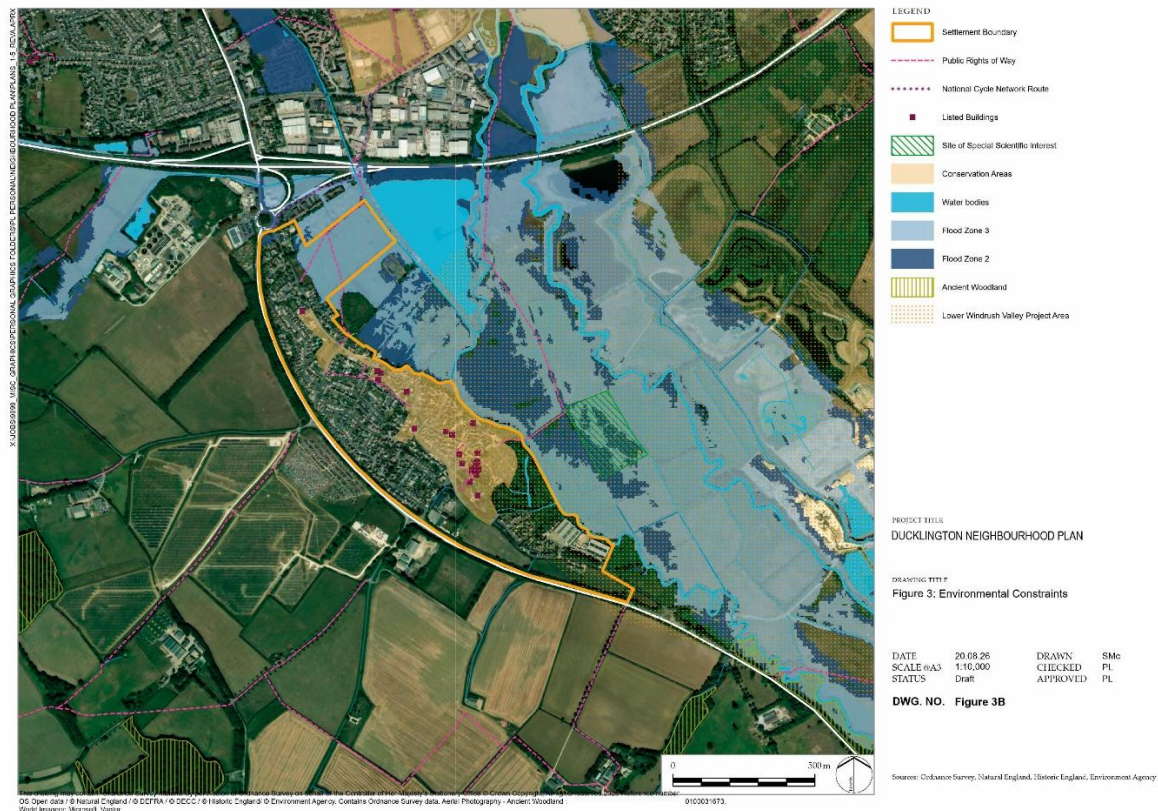


Figure 3b: Environmental Constraints (zoom in)

There are currently two ‘live’ major planning applications in the village for new housing. To the north of the village, Outline Planning Permission has been granted for up to 120 new homes on land - referred to as ‘The Moors’ – along Witney Road (Ref 1/03405/OUT). At the time the application was determined - at Appeal - the Site was outside of the floodzone, and was approved on this basis. Since this time, the Environment Agency has revised the floodzones to included the majority of the ‘The Moors’. A Reserved Matters application (Ref 24/02878/RES) has been submitted for the site, but – at the time of writing – remains undetermined while going discussions with the Environment Agency (and West Oxfordshire District Council) are ongoing. This is described in more detail in **Section 3: The Village**.

To the south of the village, Outline Planning Permission has been granted for up to 36 new homes on land along Standlake Road (Ref 25/00423/OUT). This site is also a draft allocation in the emerging West Oxfordshire Local Plan. This is described in more detail in **Section 3: The Village**.

These two permitted housing development on shown on **Figure 4** below, along with an outline of the ‘settlement boundary’, which defines the built-up area of the village.

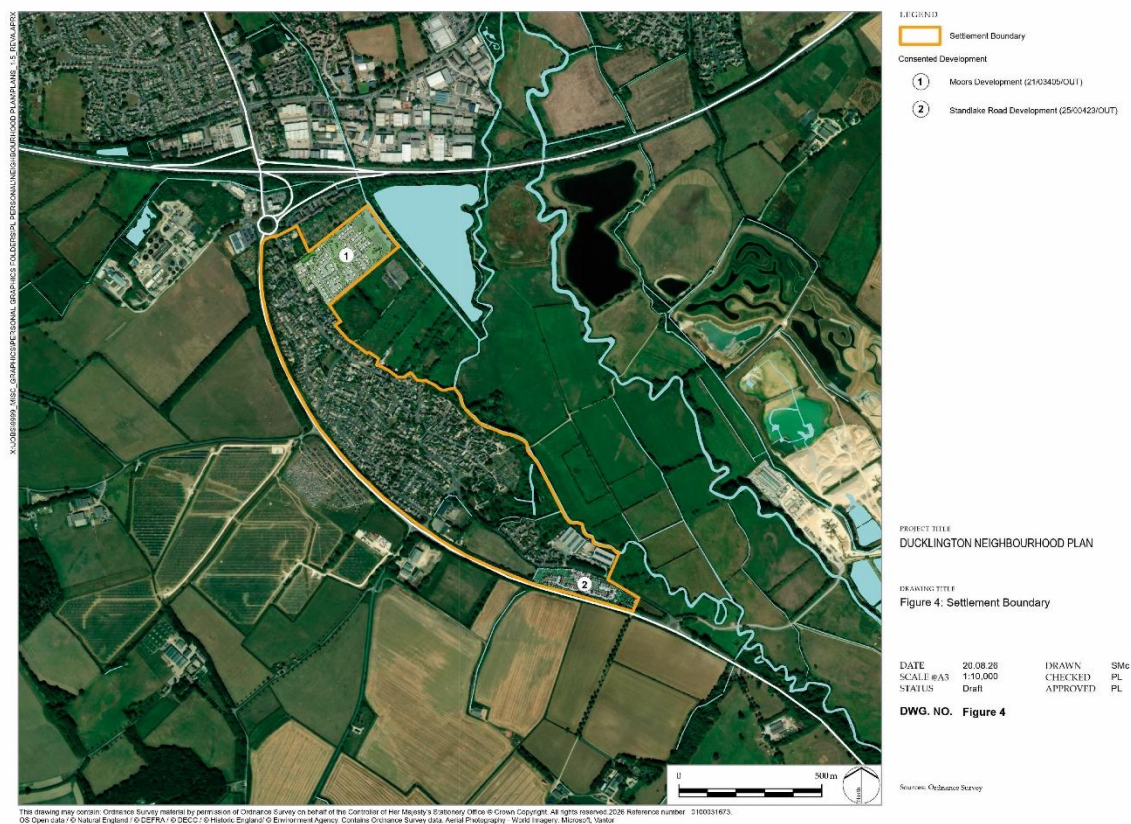


Figure 4: Settlement Area

The Regulation 19 Local Plan also identifies a potential strategic housing allocation to the north-east of the Parish for some 600 – 800 homes. The summary text in the Local Plan recognises that the site is relatively unstrained in landscape / heritage terms and accessible from the A40, however, is ‘disjointed’ from the built-up area of Witney (by virtue of the A40) and there are various constraints, including surfacing water flooding and proximity to the sewage treatment works / abattoir.

Plate 3 below - extracted from the Regulation 19 Local Plan - shows the Witney sub-area strategic housing allocations, which includes an allocation to the west of Ducklington

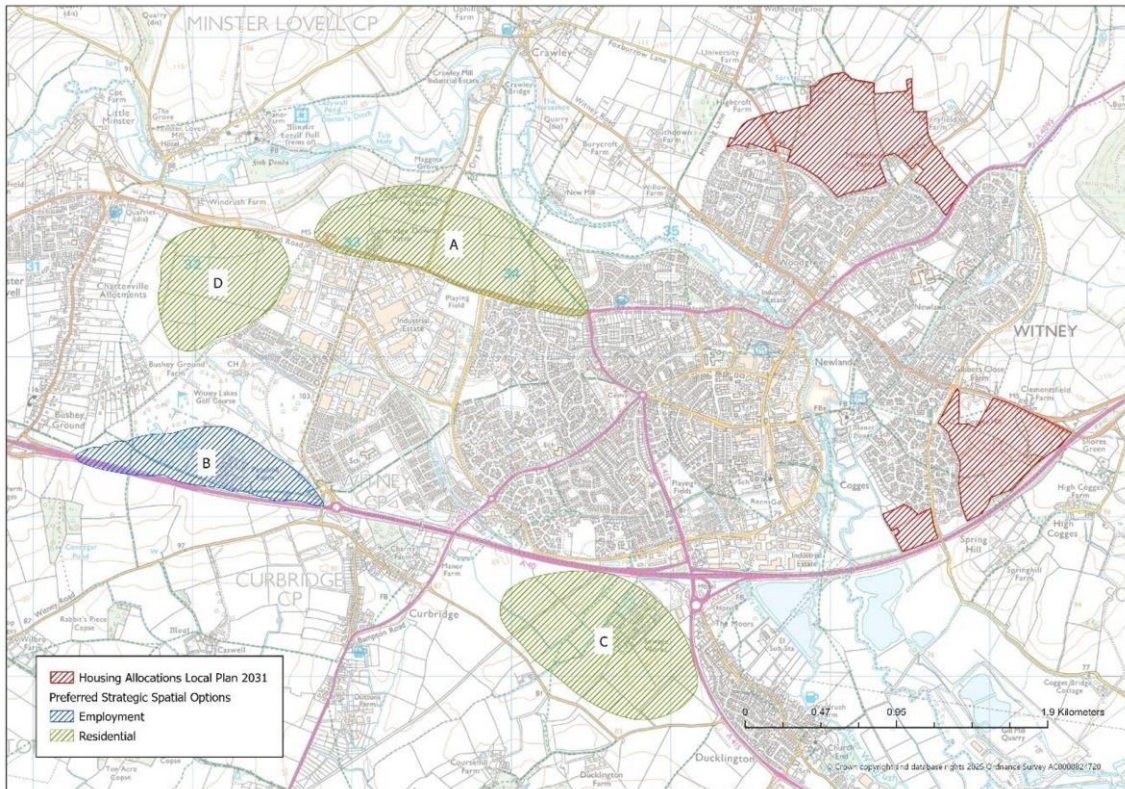


Plate 3: Witney Preferred Strategic Spatial Locations

TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIONS

The key route with the Parish is the A415, an A road which runs from Berinsfield (in south Oxfordshire) to Witney, passing through Abingdon, Marcham, Kingston Bagpuize and Standlake.

The route originally ran through Ducklington, however, a by-pass was created in 1975, taking the A415 around the western edge of the village.

The A415 connects to the large roundabout ('Ducklington Roundabout') at the northern end of Parish / Village, which provides access to local services (see Section 4: The Village Fringe); the A40 dual carriageway; and towards Witney.

Local roads run from the villages of Curbridge / Aston (to the west) and connect to the A415. The Aston Road, although crossed / staggered by the A415, continues into the village. The Curbridge Road terminates at the A415, however, there remains a section of route with the village that now serves as a minor that serves more modern areas of housing.

The main route through the village is the Witney Road / Standlake Road. This would have been the principle between Witney and Standlake before the construction of the bypass.

The Standlake Road connects with the A415 at the south-eastern end of the village, and extends to approximate centre of the village, at the junction of Church Street. From this point, the Witney Road continues through the village to join the Ducklington Roundabout.

A number of bus services run through the village, with stops along the Witney Road / Standlake Road. This includes the X15 service (Oxford Bus Company) between Witney and Abingdon; and the 19 services (Pullmans) which connects Witney, Ducklington, Standlake and Carterton.

There are currently no services between Ducklington and Aston or Curbridge to the west.

There are no dedicated cycle paths within the village itself, however, there is section a dual cycle / pedestrian path that runs from the northern edge of the village / Ducklington Roundabout; along the A40 slip road; and connects under the A40, providing an accessible route to Witney.

Pavements are typically located throughout the village, and along the majority of the Witney Road / Standlake Road. At the south-eastern end of the village, the pavement terminates around the Philip Dennis Depot.

There are numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the Parish:

- To the south-west of the Village, beyond the A415, there a series of PRoW that broadly run across the countryside between the A415 and Yelford Road.
- To the north of the Village, two PRoW cross 'The Moors', providing a connection between Ducklington and Witney.
- To the north-east of the Village, PRoW 194/03/10 extends eastwards from the village, before heading north, through Witney Lane and Country Park and towards Witney.
- Within the Village itself there are several PRoW running through the built-up area including close to the Church / around the Village Green; alongside The Bell Public House; and along Tristram Road and connecting paths.

A number of permissive / informal route also exist. These include:

- PRow 194/03/10 forms part of the 'Cross Valley Way' – an east-west route between Ducklington and Stanton Harcourt Road (beyond the Parish boundary)
- Circular routes around Witney Lake.
- A concrete track between Witney Road, Ducklington and Witney Lake, that serves as the access to the electricity substation.

Public Rights of Way and key routes within the Parish are shown on **Figure 3**.

A train line originally ran between Oxford and Witney, as part of the **Oxford, Witney and Fairford Railway**. The route would have originally run to the north-east of the Parish, across land that has subject to gravel extraction; and to the north-west of the Parish, just to the north of the sewage works. British Railways closed the line to passenger traffic in 1962. The section between Oxford and Witney only remained open to goods traffic until 1970, when it was closed completely.

There have been initial feasibility studies to consider the potential to create a Carterton—Witney—Eynsham—Oxford rail line, in part utilising remaining / dismantled sections of the former route. While no route has been defined, the route is likely to pass to the south of Witney, close the A40 corridor and Ducklington Village. The Regulation 19 Local Plan seeks to ensure any strategic housing allocations along this route safeguards land for any future mass transit infrastructure. **Plate 4** below - extracted from the Regulation 19 Local Plan - shows the indicative mass transit corridor.

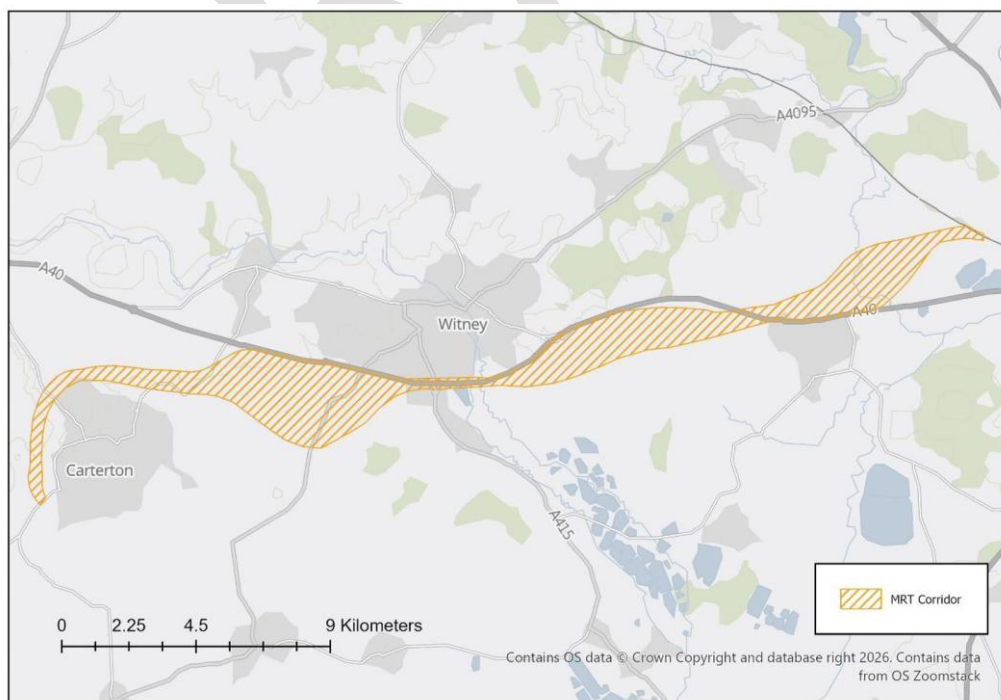


Plate 4: Mass Transit Corridor

SECTION 3: THE VILLAGE

Introduction

The Parish comprises some 675 homes, the vast majority of which are within the village itself. The village also includes businesses, community facilities and green spaces.

History

A brief history of Ducklington is set out within the Conservation Area Appraisal:

The area has attracted occupation since the earliest times. Evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement has been found in the landscape to the west, and a Romano-British settlement of the 2nd to 4th centuries was excavated during road construction immediately to the south-east of the village. The discovery of 7th century graves just to the north of Church Street and also near Windrush Cottage indicates that there was a substantial Anglo-Saxon presence on the current site – and it is notable that the name Ducklington (which is first recorded in AD 958), may well be derived from the Anglo-Saxon name ‘Ducel’s Tun’, meaning the manor or mansion of Ducel.

‘A history of St Bartholomew’s Church’ provides an alternative interpretation that the name ‘Ducklington’ has been translated from Ducel’s Farm or as ‘The farm of the sons of Docca’. It goes on to describe the history of the Church:

The Following the Norman Conquest, Ducklington was in the possession of Robert d’Oily, friend of William I and builder of Oxford Castle and Osney Abbey. The earliest part of the church dates from this time. Indeed, the present plan of the church was established during the 12th century (apart from the chancel, which was added a little later). However, changes (particularly to the doors and windows) were made during the 13th century, and major development of the north aisle was undertaken in the first half of the 14th century. The tower dates from the 15th century.

The Conservation Area Appraisal continues:

The village seems to have been originally concentrated around the site of the current church, where many of the oldest buildings are found today. It is known that there was a medieval manor house here, which was probably located just to the north of the church, and that a later manor house stood on the south side of Church Street. In the 11th century a mill was recorded on the Windrush immediately to the north of The Square, and it is also thought that The Old Rectory occupies the site of a medieval predecessor.

From this nucleus the village appears to have spread along the main route towards Witney, reaching almost to the junction with the Curbridge Road by the 17th century. There was a separate outlying group known as ‘Little Ducklington’ further still to the north; surviving houses here date from the late 17th century. By the early 19th century

there was also an outlying group of cottages to the south-east at Ducklington Mill, itself probably of medieval origin.

Plate 5 below - extracted from the Ducklington Conservation Area - shows the extent of the Conservation Area; Listed Buildings; Locally Listed Buildings; Significant Boundary Walls; Significant Hedges; Significant Trees and Tree Groups; and Significant Views.



Plate 5: Ducklington Conservation Area Plan

Settlement Extent

The Conservation Area Appraisal records that older buildings suggest that the main route once ran along Church Street and the village originally had a more nucleated form. A change of the main route to the south-west of the Church (Witney / Standlake Road) - and subsequent spread along arterial roads - established a more linear character. However, the creation of a defined village green and the original school building provided a focal point for the village.

In the 1960s the proposed A415 (Ducklington bypass) promoted the development of new housing to the south-west of the Conservation Area, including the new school building to the south-east of the village. The bypass was completed in 1975.

There is no defined settlement boundary for the village (within the West Oxfordshire Local Plan), however, the settlement boundary today can be broadly defined by the River Windrush / floodplain to the north-east and A415 to the south-west, which come together at either end of the village.

Figure 4 shows an outline of the ‘settlement boundary’ / the built-up area of the village.

Housing

The village comprises a mix of housing styles and typologies, although buildings are typically 2 storey.

In relation to architectural style, within the older part of the village, the Conservation Area Appraisal states that:

.....pale limestone walling, of local origin, is common to all of the older buildings, with coursed rubble for humbler structures and with ashlar and/or worked stone dressings for structures of higher status. Red brick walling begins to appear in the 19th century. Roofing materials include thatch, plain tiles, stone slates and blue slates, mostly used at steep pitches, with roofs featuring red brick or stone chimneys.

Housing within the Conservation Area is typically detached houses and cottages, with areas of mixed housing within more modern infill developments, including at Strainges Close and Bartholomew Close.

Outside of the Conservation Area, houses are typically red brick and tiles roofs, with some elements of rendering. Building forms are more varied with a presence of terraced, semi detached and detached dwellings. This includes a relatively large number of bungalows / chalet bungalows, predominately along Park Road, Manor Road, Beanhill Road, Starnham Road and Sealham Road.

To the south-east of the village stood Ducklington Mill, a steam and water-powered flour mill. This was converted in the 1990's to a storage & distribution facility for Philip Dennis (see '**Business**' below). Part of the site was also used to create 26 new homes – known as Fritillary Mews – in the late 2000's. To the west of Fritillary Mews, a small pastoral field was developed for 24 new homes in the late 2010's.

At the time of writing, outline planning permission has been granted for 36 new homes, within field parcels at the southeastern end of the village, between the A415 and Stakelake Road and opposite the Phillip Dennis depot. The illustrative masterplan indicates that houses will typically front on to the A415 / Standlake Road, creating a 'block' which integrates with the existing four chalet bungalows along the Standlake Road. Houses are a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes and will be 1.5 and 2 storey in height, reflecting the scale of the existing homes adjacent to the site. Proposed open space is located to the south of the Site, while space for ecology is location to the north of the Site. A footpath is proposed through the ecology area to connect to existing sports ground.

Outline planning permission has also been granted for 120 new homes within a field parcel (the Moors) at the north western end of the village, between the Standlake Road and Witney Lake. As set out in **Section 2: The Parish**, the site falls within the revised

floodzone and discussions are ongoing with West Oxfordshire District Council and Environment Agency regarding the Reserved Matters Application. The illustrative masterplan indicates a central road running through the centre of the site with a series of development parcels. Houses are a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes and will be 2 storey in height, along with a number of single storey bungalows. Open space is predominately located to the east of the site, closest to the Witney Lake, and will incorporate drainage features.

Business

The **Bell Inn Public House** is located within the Conservation Area, along the main Witney / Standlake Road and in close proximity to St Bartholomew's Church. It serves as a pub, restaurant, and bed & breakfast, and is the only Public House in the village.

The Bell Inn originally formed a complex of six houses, carpenter's shop, yard and gardens known as the 'Bell Yard'. The portion now forming The Bell was probably a barn, but in the mid nineteenth century was extended and converted into a brewery which ceased operating in 1886. Inside the pub is a covered well, probably used to provide the brewing water.

The Strickland Arms Public House was located further west within the Conservation Area, along the Witney / Standlake Road, but closed in 2015 and has been converted into a private home.

Phillip Dennis – a major catering and food wholesaler – has premises at the south-eastern end of the village, which serves as their Oxfordshire Depot. As set about above, this was built on the site of Ducklington Mill.

Religion

St Bartholomew's Church is located to the south-east of the historic village core and is the most architecturally and historically significant building within Ducklington. It is a Grade I listed building, reflecting its exceptional national importance.

Historic Development

The earliest parts of the church date from the late 11th and 12th centuries, shortly after the Norman Conquest, when Ducklington was held by Robert d'Oilly, a companion of William I. The present plan of the church was largely established during the 12th century, with later additions including:

- Enlargement and alteration of doors and windows in the 13th century;
- Development of the north aisle in the early 14th century;
- Construction of the tower in the 15th century.

The church stands close to the site of the medieval manor house and near the original settlement nucleus. Its position illustrates how the village developed around the church as its spiritual and social centre. Together with the Village Green, former schoolhouse and historic buildings along Church Street, it defines the character of the Conservation Area.

The churchyard and adjacent cemetery remain important green spaces within the village, contributing both to heritage value and to the visual setting of the historic core.

Vision and Identity

Today, St Bartholomew's Church is not solely a heritage asset but a living and active parish church serving Ducklington and Hardwick. Its stated vision is to be "the spiritual heart of the community". This vision is expressed through the concept of being a "church without walls" – a congregation engaged not only within the church building, but actively present within the wider life of the village. The church seeks to build community and reflect Christ through welcome, pastoral care, partnership and service.

Congregation and Participation

As of early 2026, the Electoral Roll stands at 126 members, reflecting a vibrant and committed worshipping community. Of these members, approximately 57% reside within the parish, with the remainder travelling from surrounding areas, demonstrating the church's wider reach.

Attendance and participation extend beyond formal membership. The church operates across three overlapping communities:

- The Worshipping Community – those who gather regularly for Sunday services and seasonal worship.
- The Engaged Community – those who participate in events, festivals and initiatives.
- The Wider Parish Community – those who connect with the church at key life moments or through community partnerships.

In 2025, the church conducted:

- 10 baptisms
- 2 weddings and 1 blessing
- 14 funerals, burials or ashes interments
- 5 confirmations

These figures illustrate the church's continuing pastoral, ceremonial and community role within the parish.

Community Engagement and Social Role

The church plays an active role in village life, including:

- Strong and growing links with Ducklington CE Primary School;
- Hosting and organising Fritillary Sunday, celebrating the nationally important Ducklington Mead SSSI;
- Seasonal services and festivals including Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas;
- Our support of the Warm Welcome Space which provides a safe, welcoming environment for anyone in need of warmth, social interaction, and a hot drink or meal.
- Messy Church and children's outreach activities;
- Participation in the Flower & Produce Show and other village events; and
- Pastoral visiting, home communion and support for those in hospital or bereavement.

The church building itself is being adapted to better support community use, including improvements to accessibility, enhanced audio-visual systems for hybrid worship, and reorganisation of internal space to allow flexible use for meetings and gatherings.

Through these activities, the church contributes to:

- Social cohesion;
- Intergenerational engagement;
- Wellbeing and pastoral care;
- Community identity and belonging.

Planning and Heritage Significance

St Bartholomew's Church is central to the significance of the Ducklington Conservation Area and forms a key landmark within the village skyline. Important views towards and from the church tower contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

As Ducklington experiences housing growth and change, the church continues to provide:

- Continuity with the village's Anglo-Saxon and medieval origins;
- A focal point for shared celebration and remembrance;
- A stable and accessible centre for spiritual life and community cohesion.

In this way, St Bartholomew's Church functions both as a heritage asset of national importance and as an active institution supporting the social infrastructure of the village.

The village also had a Baptist Chapel until 2016, when it was converted into a private home.

Education

The original schoolhouse – and attached head teachers house - was built in 1858.

It was a 'national school', providing elementary education in accordance with the teaching of the Church of England, and was located in close proximity to the Church. It originally comprised of two classrooms, with the infants section enlarged in 1896 and a third room was added in 1901. In 1930 the school was reorganised as a primary school with the older children having to travel to Witney.

The new primary school was constructed in the 1960's, to the south-east of the village, close to the A415. It is a one-form entry school, with a single class within each year from reception through to year 6. In 2018, a nursery school was opened in the school grounds.

Today the school retains strong links with church of St Bartholomew's church. Its Christian ethos is reflected in the vision, inspired by the prophet Isaiah – 'Nurture, Bloom, Rejoice' – and this has its roots through showing compassion, courage and respect.

Although a village school, families are welcomed from the wider community, which deepens the connection with a broad spectrum of families, those of all faiths and none. The school has links with other village primary schools through the Corinthian Partnership with Cokethorpe School, a local independent co-educational school. Sporting opportunities are embraced, along with the involvement in creative initiatives such as showcasing art work at 'Sculpture at Kingham Lodge', for the annual village 'Fritillary Sunday' and Flower and Produce Show events.

The school is invited to attend many of the church services throughout the Christian calendar – Christmas, Easter etc – and classes visit the church building to help develop their understanding. At the end of the academic year, the Year 6 leavers are also celebrated in church. The rector holds regular assemblies in school and other members of the church and governing body offer their support within the classroom, including the nursery.

The school has strong leadership and governance, whereby safeguarding and pastoral care remains at the heart of all decisions. Respectful partnerships are fostered with families, staff and the wider church and community. A broad and ambitious curriculum is championed which ensures the school creates the conditions for strong teaching and learning. And achievements are celebrated: of pupils, of staff and of the wider community. A culture of compassion, well-being and a sense of belonging is valued as highly as academic outcomes.

Sport and Leisure

Ducklington Sports Club is also located to the south east of the village, next to the school. It comprises the club house and associated playing fields, which are managed by the Sports Club charity and leased from the Parish Council.

Ducklington Sports Club has in excess of 600 members is made of a strong contingent of Youth Football teams ranging from Under 5's to Under 16's (boys, girls and mixed teams) It also has 2 no. men's football teams.

The playing pitches were established in 1984 initially as just one football pitch and a cricket square, and over the years – as the number of the teams has grown – more pitches have been marked out. Today, there are 5 no. football pitches. Sadly cricket died out around 2015 and despite efforts it has not been possible to reestablish it.

Darts and aunt sally are also regularly played in the club.

The club house comprises a bar, kitchen, match / changing facilities, and storage areas. The bar area is open to the public and is available for hire.

The club house was constructed in 1987 and has been extended twice. At the time of writing, the internal changes have been made to increase the useable space within the bar area; and the changing rooms are being refurbished. Longer terms plans include additional changing rooms to meet the ever growing need for local football teams

Community Space

The Village Hall has been at the heart of the community since 1920. Originally built as a Tithe Barn, Ducklington Village Hall once served as a storehouse where the Rector of St Bartholomew's collected one-tenth of local agricultural produce as ecclesiastical tithes from farmers and landowners. The barn featured a wide opening – large enough for a horse and cart – which is now replaced by large glass windows. The heavy lintels from the original doorway are still visible today.

Although tithes were converted to monetary payments in the 1830s, the barn remained part of the Rector's estate. Between 1920 and 1930, the then Rector, Christopher Tristram, repurposed the building into a Parish Room for community events such as whist drives, dances, and concerts.

A local resident recalls eating school dinners there during the 1940s in the space now used as the storage area and boiler room. At that time, access to the main hall was through what is now the fire door.

In October 1973, the building was sold to the village and placed under Trusteeship where it was officially converted into a Village Hall, with a new main entrance.

In the early 2000s renovation and extension plans were developed, supported by grant funding. Improvements included relocating the main entrance, updating toilet facilities, installing a new kitchen, and adding an access ramp. The extension also created a small upstairs meeting space known as The Lilac Room. Additional funds were raised by the community through Ducklington's first two Open Garden events in June 2002 and 2004. The newly refurbished Village Hall was officially reopened on 13th March 2005 by the High Sheriff of Oxford.

Nowadays, the Village Hall is available to hire to all and welcomes everything from lively exercise classes and craft groups to children's parties, small workshops, and special events. With a maximum capacity of 100 people, the main hall is an ideal location for larger classes, groups, village events and more. These groups include:

- Warm Space
- Ducklington Morris Dancers
- Ducklington Women's Institute

The Lilac Room has space for up to 20 people, the Lilac Room is perfect for small meetings and gatherings.

There is also a large, fully equipped kitchen available with plenty of worktop space. Full fibre broadband is available throughout the building.

The Village Hall is a charity managed by a committee who are elected or co-opted along with representatives of the different groups using the hall. Their Annual General Meeting is held every Autumn.

Community Events

The village has an active calendar of events. At the time of drafting, the current annual community events comprise:

- Village / Flower Show, where people can enter produce, flowers, food and handicrafts for exhibition / competition, along with entertainment, stalls and other activities. This event is held at Glebelands and run by the Ducklington and Hardwick Produce Association.
- Fritillary Sunday, where Ducklington Mead SSSI is opened so that the public can enjoy the fritillary flowers, along with other activities within and around the Church and Village Hall. This event is run by St Bartholomew's Church.
- Beer Festival, where there is a selection of local beers and live music. This event is held and run by the Ducklington Sports Club.
- The Big Lunch, the UK's annual get-together. This event is normally held at the Village Green and is by the Village Events Committee.

- Apple Pressing, where people can bring apples to make freshly pressed juice. This event is held at the Village Green and is run by the Village Events Committee.

The Village Events Committee are responsible for other ad hoc events throughout the year.

Green Spaces

Ducklington has a variety of publicly accessible green spaces, which are summarised below:

- Village Green – informal green space within historic village core, incorporating duck pond and beacon. Owned and managed by the Parish Council.
- Glebelands – Playing pitches, playground and Multi-Use Games Area to the south-east of the village, associated with Ducklington Sports Club. Owned by the Parish Council, with the eastern most pitch area owned by the Fielden Trust; and all playing pitches leased to Ducklington Sports Club
- Chalcroft – informal green space, playground and small sensory garden to the north-west of the village. Owned by the Fielden Trust and managed by the Parish Council.
- Bartholemew Close – informal green space and wildlife area to the north east of the village, along the River Windrush. Owned and managed by the Parish Council.
- Mill Meadow – small information green space to the south-east of the village. Privately owned and managed.
- St Bartholemew Church Yard and Cemetery - Church Yard and Cemetery form the functional burial space around the Church, however, it remains openly accessible. The Church Yard is owned by the *Diocese of Oxford*, while the *Parish Council own and manage the cemetery site*.

The Village Green forms part of the historic core of the village, while other spaces have become established as part of the expanding village. Bartholemew Close and Mill Meadow are the most recent open spaces to be created, delivered as part of small-scale infill residential developments.

Glebelands play area has been subject to recent investment, with the old tennis courts replaced by a Multi-Use Games Area and new / replacement play equipment.

Ducklington has one allotment site within the core of the village. This is located adjacent to the cemetery and is privately owned by the Fielden Trust. The cemetery has previously been extended in the allotments to create more burial space. Other allotment sites are allocated on the edge of the village, as described in **Section 4: The Village Fringe**.

‘The Moors’ is a further important green space. Although privately owned land, it provides an important setting to the village, forming part of the transitional zone between the built-up area and Lower Windrush Valley; and is crossed by a series of path that provide access to Witney Lake, and onwards to the town. This area is described in more detail in **Section 5: The Countryside**.

Key green spaces are shown on **Figure 5** below.

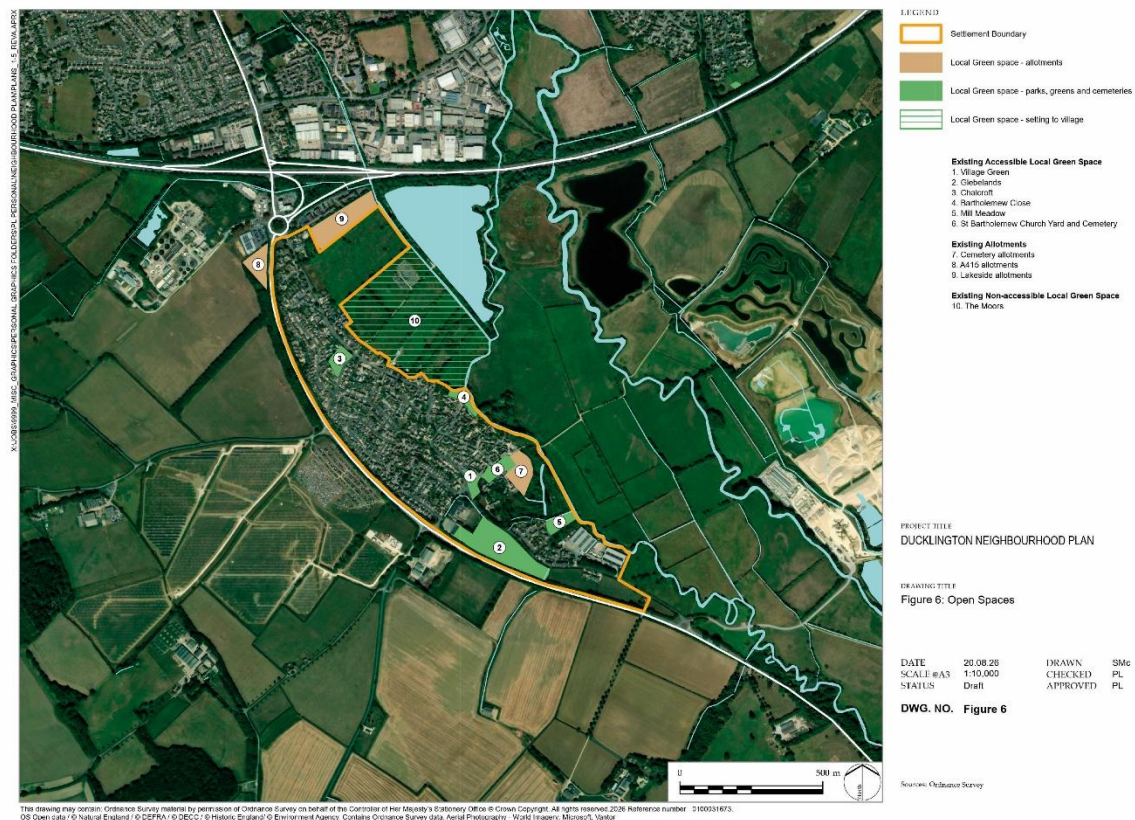


Figure 5: Green Spaces

Ducklington Parish Council has been improving the green spaces it owns / managed over the last few years. In 2024 a nature enhancement report was provided by Wild Oxfordshire to help guide ongoing maintenance. Since then volunteers have planted a new hedge, created wild flower areas, installed bird boxes and have support the creation of the sensory garden. Future projects planned within the village include improvements to the village pond to encourage biodiversity; and ongoing diversification of amenity areas.

SECTION 4: THE VILLAGE FRINGE

Introduction

A small area to the north of the village, and to the south of A40, forms an area of predominately retail and infrastructure uses on the outskirts of Witney. These uses are briefly summarised below.

Allotments

‘Lakeside’ allotments is the largest of the four sites managed by Witney Town Council, as was established in the late 1980’s – on existing agricultural land – to address growing demand and the loss of allotments elsewhere within Witney.

Ducklington Parish Council run an allotment site alongside the A415 near Ducklington roundabout. The allotment site was formerly used as gravel pits before being converted for community use and established as allotments. The allotment site became operational around 1975, coinciding with the opening of the A415 bypass around Ducklington village. Since that time, the site has remained in continuous use up to the present day.

Currently, there are thirteen active plot holders, with a further three plots available. Several of the plot holders contribute significantly to the flowers and vegetables exhibited at the Ducklington Flower Show.

Over the past five years, a great deal of improvement has taken place across the site. A car park has been created within the allotment area, removing the need for parking along the roadside. New fencing has been installed, and flower boxes have been added, enhancing both the appearance and overall presentation of the site.

Two years ago, the allotments experienced flooding, the only recorded incident of its kind. Following intervention from the local authority, including cleaning works and realignment of the ditch, the issue has since been resolved.

Retail

The Ducklington Roundabout is home to a range of retail uses.

To the north-east of the roundabout, a Travel Lodge / drive-thru Costa was built in circa 2019 on the site of vacant dwelling, on a small site contained by the A415 / Ducklington Lane to the west, A40 to the north, and its associated slip road.

To east of the roundabout, the Oxford Witney Hotel was built in the late 1980’s, alongside the ‘Lakeside’ allotments. It includes hotels, restaurant, conference facilities and swimming pool. A complex of thirty private flats are located immediately to the east of the Hotel, constructed in the late 1990’s.

To the west of the roundabout, the Lidl supermarket was built in the 2020's, on the site of the former Ark Royal Caravan Site. To the west of the supermarket is Muchmeats' abattoir.

To the north-east, a Shell Garage / Waitrose was built in the late 1980's on land that previously comprised a lorry park and rubbish tip. Adjacent to the service station, a former 'countrywide store' has planning permission for a self-storage facility with ancillary offices.

Infrastructure and Housing

The A40 forms part of the route runs between London and Goodwick (Fishguard), in Wales. Historically the route ran through the centre of Witney, but the 'by-pass' was created in mid-1970's, with the new alignment of the A40 located to the south of Witney and constructed as dual carriage. The A40 is largely on embankment where it passes between Witney and Ducklington, and forms a clearly defined outer edge to the town.

To the west of Lidl / adjacent to the abattoir, there is a Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works.

The large area to the west of Lidl is identified as a potential strategic housing allocation for some 600 – 800 homes within the emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan. The summary text in the Local Plan recognises that the site is 'disjointed' from the built-up area of Witney, by virtue of the A40 and there are various constraints, including proximity to the sewage treatment works and abattoir. The rationale and summary for the allocation is as follows:

This area has long been promoted for residential development across successive Local Plans. Residential development in this location would be consistent with the spatial strategy although it would straddle the parishes of Ducklington and Curbridge and is disjointed from the built-up area of Witney due to the segregating effect of the A40.

Development has spilled out from Witney in recent years into the strategic gap that was previously defined to protect the separate identity of Witney and Ducklington. The development of the Travel Lodge and Lidl supermarket at the Ducklington Roundabout have added to the previously existing development in the vicinity including the Four Pillars Hotel, petrol filling station, abattoir and sewage treatment works.

There has been a recent approval for a business development at the former Countrywide site and there is a solar farm currently under construction to the south of the site. The northern part of the parish of Ducklington has seen a concentrated focus of mixed development in recent years and this has dramatically altered the character of the area. 7.104 Outline Permission for mixed use development including up to 385 residential dwellings in this area was refused (22/01384/OUT) due to conflict with Policy

OS2 of Local Plan 2031 as well as the amenity impacts that would likely rise from neighbouring land uses.

A judgement needs to be made as to whether this is a sustainable location for further concentrations of development, particularly for housing.

Area C is low lying and relatively flat. It is well contained in terms of landscape and relatively unconstrained in terms of heritage value, although there is a strong possibility that there are remains of archaeological importance in the area. The low-lying nature of the land mean that the area is susceptible to surface water flooding and proximity to the sewage treatment works and abattoir mean that there would likely be amenity impacts on future residents particularly in terms of odour.

The area is accessible to services and facilities to the south of the A40 a result of the concentration of development around Ducklington roundabout. Other services beyond the A40 at Witney are relatively inaccessible via sustainable means due to the segregating effect of the busy local road network, although there is a public rights of way network which could guide residents via safer routes. The eastern part of the site is served by the X9 and number 19 bus services which connect to Witney, Carterton and Oxford via neighbouring villages.

Area C lies within the Carterton-Witney-Eynsham Rail corridor. If the railway or other mass transit is confirmed, this site would be suitable for a station or major transport node, and its capacity for housing and employment would be greatly enhanced

Waste Water arising from development in this location would be treated at Witney Sewage Treatment Works. Dry Water Flows at Witney Sewage Treatment Works are already exceeded 80% of the time, so investment will be required to improve the capacity of the sewage treatment works

SECTION 5: THE COUNTRYSIDE

Introduction

Land to the east and west of the village can be described as 'open countryside' surrounding the village, with the river valley to the east and broad vale landscape to the west.

Landscape Character Areas are shown on **Figure 2**.

Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes

The land to the east of the village falls within the River Meadowlands landscape character area (as defined by Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS), 2004). This is described as a flat, low-lying landscape occupy the floodplain of the River Windrush.

This area broadly coincides with the more localised character areas of the 'Lower Windrush Valley and Eastern Thames Fringes as defined by the West Oxfordshire Landscape Assessment (WOLA) (1998), which informed the OWLS study. This area is described as having a typical pastoral, tranquil and remote character, although active and restored gravel pits – including extensive areas of open water – are a key feature and influence landscape quality.

Key characteristics and sensitivities - as described in the WOLA - are as follows:

Landscape characteristics

- *Semi-enclosed floodplain pasture;*
- *Attractive low-lying riparian character, small scale pasture;*
- *Thick hedgerows and mature willow;*
- *Ditches and area of open water;*
- *Prominent hotel and surrounding car parking and service areas;*
- *Largely unspoilt, but some rural fringe activities including nearby gravel workings, horsiculture, and the presence of an electricity substation;*
- *Boundary between urban edge of Ducklington and farmland quite soft;*
- *Rural character of Church End important.*

Visual characteristics

- *Medium to low intervisibility - views across flat, low-lying land filtered by intervening vegetation;*
- *Urban edge of Ducklington softened by mature vegetation;*
- *Some filtered views of A40;*
- *Some views of power lines and electricity substation;*
- *Views out from the urban edge limited by intervening vegetation.*

Key sensitivities and considerations

- *Need to maintain strength of landscape structure on valley floor;*
- *Need to maintain soft urban edge – vegetation on the edge of the village particularly important;*
- *Need to strengthen landscape structure between Ducklington and A40;*
- *Need to soften urban edge around the hotel/roundabout*

Within this area, ‘**Witney Lake**’ is a key feature. The Lake is a flooded gravel pit dug initially for gravel used whilst constructing the Witney bypass (A40) in the mid 1980’s. It was purchased by Witney Town Council in 1982 and developed as 37ha Country Park. It comprises the lake with circular footpath and areas of hay meadow and wet grassland. The southern end of the lake is sectioned as a nature reserve and the grazing land to the east and north is classified as an Environmentally Sensitive Area. The northern end of the lake is sectioned as an area for public leisure, used for activities such as fishing and picnicking. The site was awarded Local Nature Reserve status in March 2025.

‘**The Moors**’ is a key feature. This is an area of privately owned, small scale paddocks and pasture between the edge of the built up area and the lake. The land provides an important ‘setting’ to the village, forming part of the transitional zone between the built-up area and Lower Windrush Valley. This area is within Flood Zone 3; the Lower Windrush Valley CTA; and the Lower Windrush Project Area, and as such, is designated for its landscape and habitat value. The area is crossed by a series of Public Rights of Way, and the concrete access road (from the Witney Road that provides access to an electricity substation) is well used as an informal recreation route between the village and Witney Lakes. The Moors appears on early OS maps (OS One Inch, 1885 – 1900 – Outline) as a clearly defined area of open land to the north of Ducklington, and forms part of larger ‘gap’ between Ducklington and Witney.

Further south, The Moors transitions into a broader area of small-medium scale pasture field parcels, located between the two courses of the River Windrush. This includes the Ducklington Mead SSSI. Land located just outside of the Parish Boundary to the east / south-east is used extensively for **mineral extraction** and forms part of the Gill Mill Quarry, owned by operators Smith Bletchingdon. This includes a range of active extraction sites; restored fields; and flooded gravel pits which have formed lakes.

Smith Bletchingdon also own land within the Parish and are proposing ongoing mineral extraction along with landscape management. Land to the north of the Cross Valley Way is proposed for extraction, and in the long term will be managed as a series of seven small lakes, with areas of public access and nature conservation. Land to the south of the Cross Valley Way is proposed to continue to be managed as meadow and with an area identified for a potential community orchard.

Bampton Vale

Land to the west of the village / A415 comprises undulating farmland, with a number of farmsteads, areas of woodland, and minor roads and footpaths. This area falls within the Lowland Village Farmlands landscape character area as defined by OWLs.

This character areas broadly coincide with the more localised character area of the 'Bampton Vale' as defined by the WOLA. This is described as a low-lying but gently rolling landscape, with large-scale, regularly shaped fields; a strong hedgerow structure; and overall with an attractive and unspoilt rural character.

Key characteristics and sensitivities are as follows

Landscape characteristics

- *Open, rolling vale farmland, semi-enclosed, rolling vale farmland;*
- *A415 acts as a strong barrier dividing urban area from open countryside;*
- *Land west of A415 mostly medium to large scale farmland ;*
- *Predominantly arable;*
- *Mostly weak landscape structure – thicker hedgerows to the north and the south;*
- *Farmland west of A415 mostly free from urban influences- except motor homes;*
- *Urban influences prominent west of roundabout-. garage, sewage works etc.*

Visual characteristics

- *High intervisibility across open land;*
- *Vegetation on road corridor filters views of urban edge;*
- *Earth mounding between the urban edge and the road appears incongruous;*
- *Views out from urban edge limited by vegetation and affected by presence of A415;*
- *A40 on embankment acts as a strong visual barrier;*
- *Prominent urban influences at roundabout.*

Key sensitivities and considerations

- *Need to further soften road corridor and urban edge;*
- *Need to strengthen landscape structure in open areas;*
- *Need to resist any change which extends urban influences further west of the A415 - particularly between the roundabout and the A40.*

There are a number of **farmsteads** within this area, including Home Farm; Claywell Farm; Barleypark Farm; Newhouse Farm; and Ducklington Farm / Coursehill Farm. These are typically small-scale clusters of development, comprising a farm house, barns / outbuildings and service areas.

There are also two principal areas of **woodland** - Barleypark Wood and Moulden's Wood – within this area. A water course – Elm Bank Ditch – also crosses the area, to the south-west of the woodland.

Immediately to the west of Ducklington, broadly between Barleypark Farm and Ducklington Farm / Coursehill Farm is **solar farm** has recently been constructed. The solar farm site extends to some 46 Hectares, and the solar arrays are expected to be in operation for around 40 years.

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