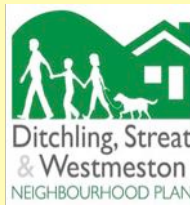




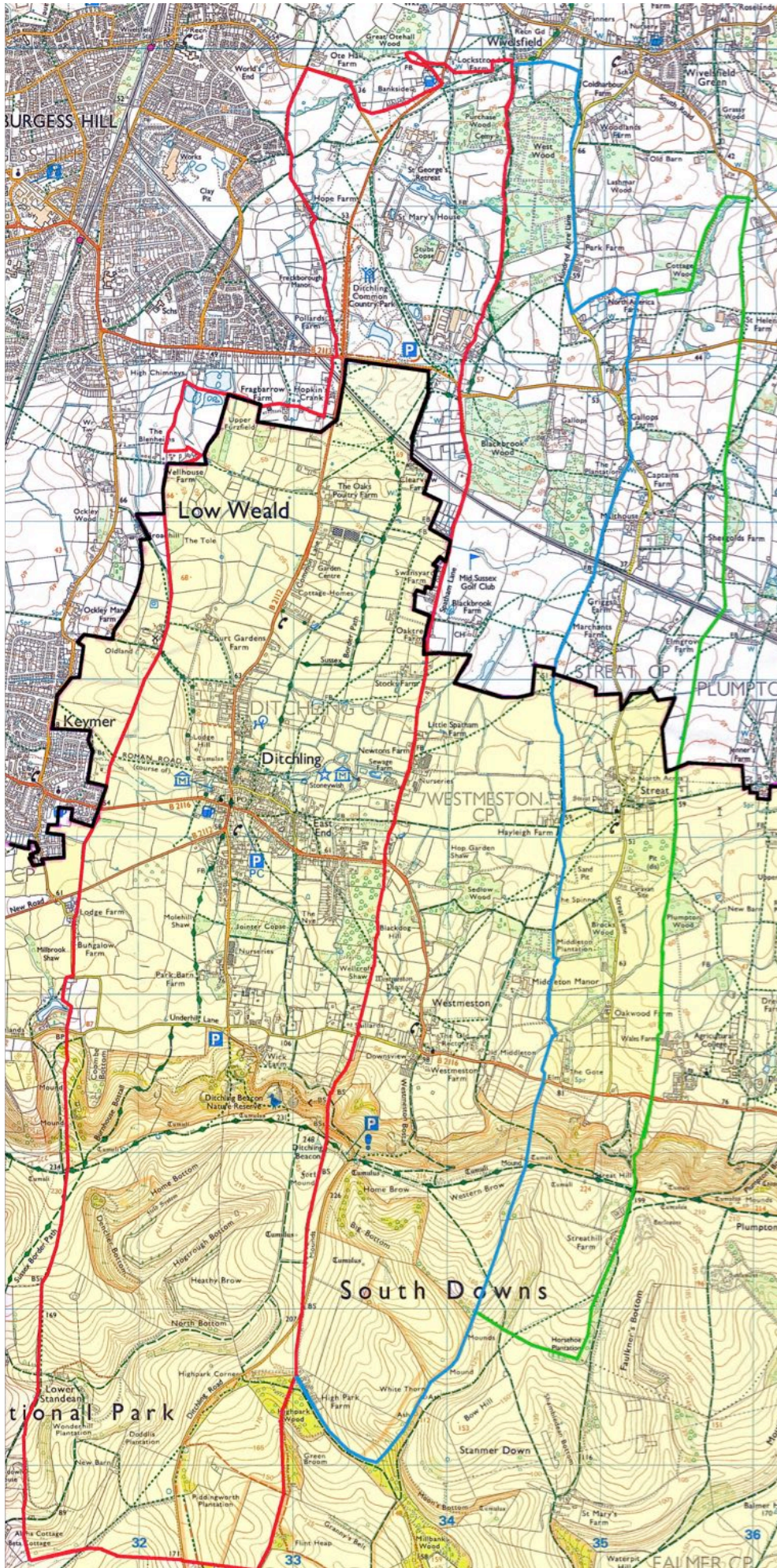
Ditchling Street and Westmeston neighbourhood development plan

*Second pre-submission consultation draft:
housing & green spaces*



December 2016 - January 2017





Key

Ditchling 

Westmeston 

Street 

South Downs National Park 

The three Beacon parishes of East Sussex

Ditchling Streat and Westmeston neighbourhood development plan

Second pre-submission consultation

7th December 2016 – 28th January 2017

The pre-submission version of the neighbourhood plan was published in March this year. It was widely circulated to all statutory authorities, and on display to members of the public on the website and a number of locations. For the full consultation process, see the communication and engagement report, again available on the plan website.

There was a gratifying and generally positive response from both residents and public agencies, and all the comments were taken into account for the final draft. Reference should again be made to the record of the submissions and amendments made, available on the plan website.

While being generally supportive of the draft plan, the South Downs National Park Authority, the planning authority for most of the area of the three Beacon parishes, recommended that further work and consultation should be carried out in two areas:-

1 Housing development. The SDNPA recommended that any new sites that were identified be reviewed and that further details be given for all sites. The results are presented in section 1 of this partial consultation document.

2 Local green spaces. The SDNPA felt that more individual identification, detail and registration of the important green spaces in the three parishes was needed to safeguard them from possible future development. See Section 2 of this document.

These specific revisions are now presented as the second consultation, and the results will be incorporated into the final full submission for formal onward transmission to the SDNPA and Lewes DC (as the planning authority for the northern portion of the parishes). The planning authorities will then take the plan through the formal evaluation and inspection process as set out in the pre-submission plan.

Dr Mike Burr

Neighbourhood plan project management group

7th December 2016

Call for comments on housing and local green spaces

This second informal consultation welcomes comments on these proposals and invites all residents to an open exhibition in Ditchling Village Hall on

Saturday 21st January 2017, 10am-12.30pm

If you wish to comment beforehand, please address your comments in writing to:

Mrs Michelle Warner
Clerk, Ditchling Parish Council
1 The Hollow, Lindfield, West Sussex RH16 2SX
e-mail: ditchlingpc@btinternet.com

or

Tony Gedge
Chairman, Streat Parish Meeting
Streat Cottage
Streat
Nr Hassocks, BN6 8RU
e-mail: a_gedge@hotmail.com

or

Rob Mills
Chairman, Westmeston Parish Council
Hooks Acre
Lewes Road
Westmeston, BN6 8RH
e-mail: hooksacre@btinternet.com

or

Dr Mike Burr chair of the project management group:
e-mail: mustburr@gmail.com

All neighbourhood plan documents referred to here are held on:

www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk/

I Housing

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is required to identify ‘available, achievable and deliverable sites to deliver housing’. The government recognises that national parks are not suitable locations for unrestricted housing, and that new housing will be focused on meeting affordable housing requirements, supporting local employment opportunities and key services.

Ditchling has been given a target of a MINIMUM of 15 planned new dwellings. This number does not include applications already agreed or what is known as ‘windfall’, i.e. unplanned small sites.

Following our consultation earlier this year, some sites that were put forward have been ruled out while new ones have been proposed by landowners. We have three new sites to consider and more detail on the existing proposed site at Park Barn Farm/Long Park Corner in Beacon Road. All the sites remain subject to detailed proposals including traffic calming, flood alleviation etc.

Two of the offered sites have more than one owner involved. The table below gives a summary of the current position, showing that there is now a total potential of 22 new units, plus 3 which already have planning permission, but which the SDNPA has ruled can be added into the total. This gives us some leeway if any sites don’t get as far as planning permission or are withdrawn by their owners.

Site	Owner	No of units	Notes
A: Park Barn Farm/Long Park Corner	Simon Sinnatt/ Lewes DC/ Community Land Trust	9 community housing units plus 3 private units for Sinnatt family	Outside settlement boundary Sinnatt land to be gifted for CLT & community. Flood alleviation works required.
B: Common Lane	Philip Dunn	6 units	Outside settlement boundary.
C: Lewes Road/ Nye Lane	Paul Bowtell	2 new units in addition to 3 units already granted	Within settlement boundary
	Neville Estates	2 new units	Ditto
D: Jointure 17 South Street	Cook Estate Trust	3 permitted units allowed for inclusion	Ditto
	TOTAL	22 + 3 already granted	

Sites A (Park Barn Farm) and B (Common Lane) are outside the existing settlement boundary, although immediately abutting it. It is therefore proposed to extend the settlement boundary, as shown in Figure I below.

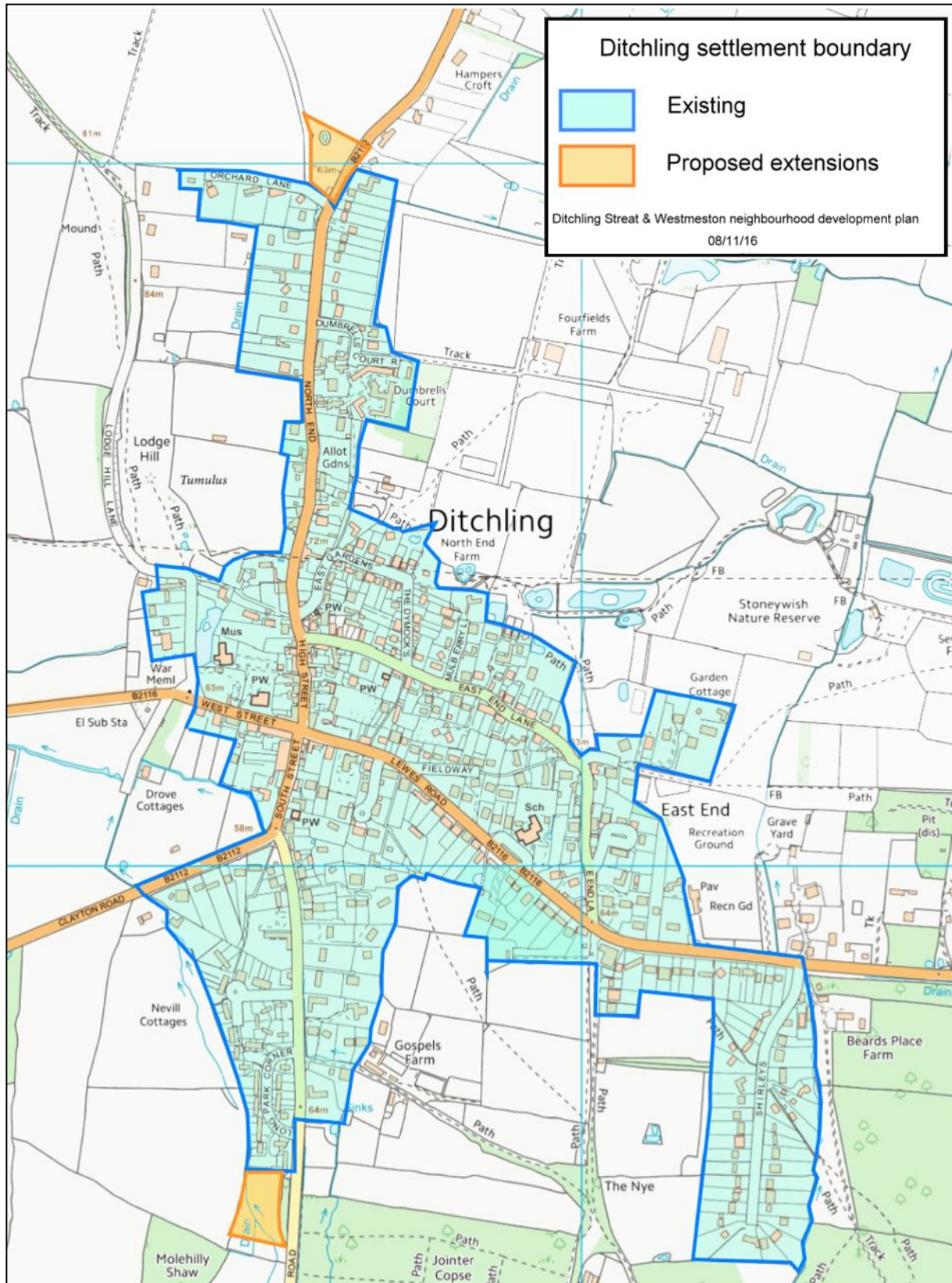


Figure I: Proposed extensions to Ditchling’s settlement boundary

Proposed development sites

If the settlement boundary were to be extended, the sites would sit within it as shown in Figure 2 below:-

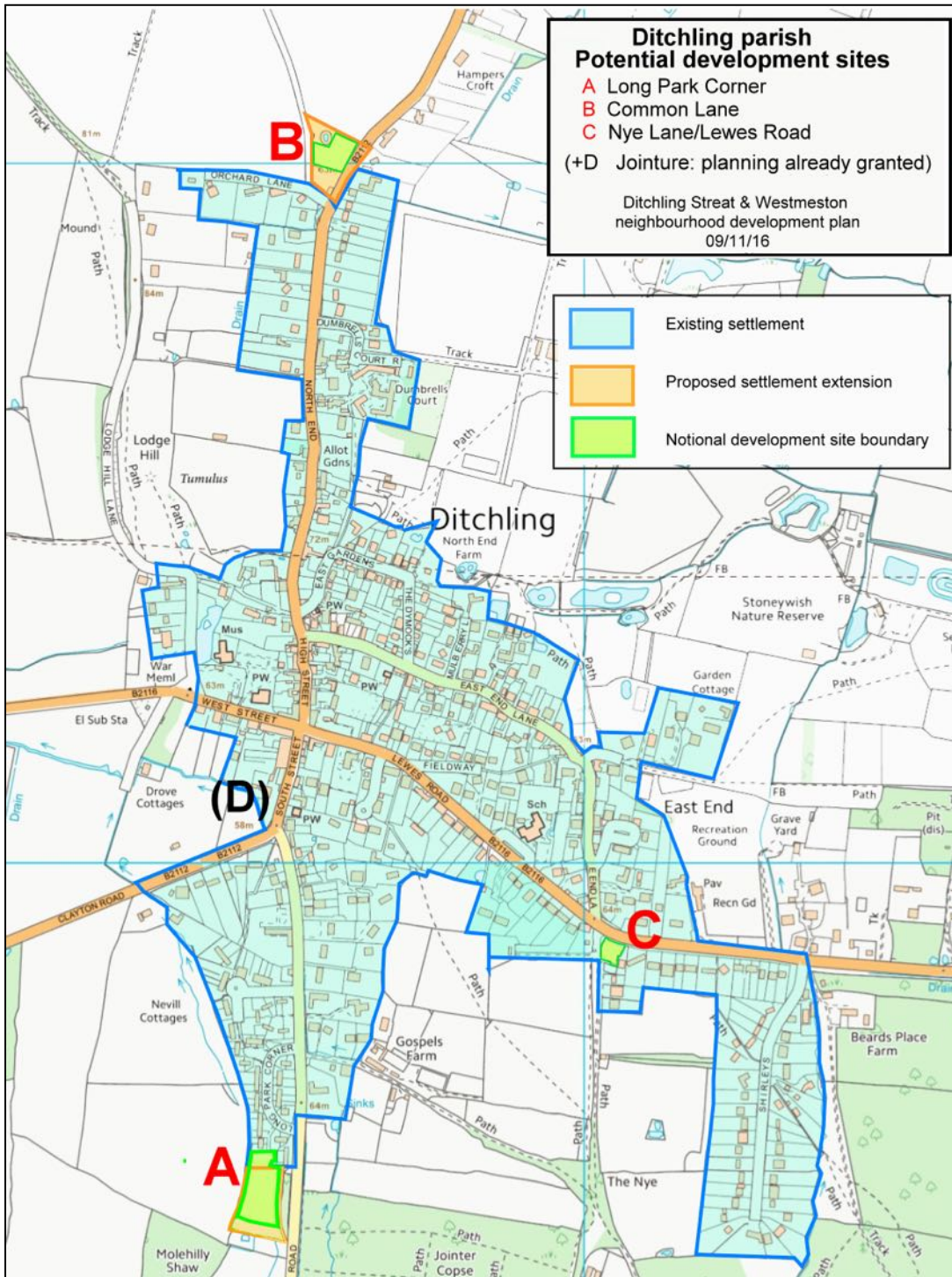


Figure 2: Sites located within the expanded settlement boundary.

(A) Park Barn Farm (12 units)

This site is on the south edge of the village, outside the current settlement boundary, abutting Long Park Corner housing estate. The owner of the field that makes up the southern part of the site is prepared to gift the land to the village if he can build three detached houses. He is also prepared to gift for communal recreational use a further narrow strip that runs behind Long Park Corner that can't be used for building since it is part of the field drainage system and outside the settlement boundary to the west. See Figure 3 overleaf.

At the north of the site there is a row of prefabricated garages with a tarmac forecourt, owned by Lewes DC, connected to the estate by a narrow access road. The council's housing officers have indicated that it is considering demolishing the garages, and accepted in principle that the land could be merged with the donated land, subject to the same caveats proposed for the rest of the development. A composite indicative design layout has been drawn up on this basis (see again Figure 3).

There are a number of development constraints:

1 The land is shown as having a moderate flooding risk, although a survey of the existing drainage ditches showed that they are all clogged with vegetation and not properly maintained. The removal of the old tarmac surfacing and replacement of hard-standing areas with more modern permeable surfacing will also improve drainage. As well as ditch refurbishment maintenance, it is proposed that two balancing ponds be dug in strategic locations.

2 One of the existing ditches cuts diagonally across the development site. It is proposed that it is diverted as part of the site preparation and drainage works.

3 The site is bounded on its eastern edge by 'valuable woodland'. A 10 metre gap has been left between it and the development, as recommended by the SDNPA.

4 In the first round of consultation residents raised a number of concerns. These have been addressed as follows:

- *'Will make insufficient present parking situation worse'.*

In the layout, every new house is allocated a dedicated parking space, with a further provision for an additional 18 spaces for present residents.

- *'Narrow access road'.*

Lewes Council officers have accepted the need to address this. Their plans will be fully consulted on.

- *'More space needed for children'.*

The Sinnatt additional land strip (see site plan) will be for community use, which could include a wide range of facilities including those for children.

- ‘High traffic speed and difficult access from Beacon Road’

In line with policy TRANS 2, it will be required that the existing access road junction be improved with the addition of a traffic island, supplemented by traffic calming road ramps and surface treatment on the Beacon Road itself. The cost of this will be borne by the development.

- ‘Houses will get sold off on the open market’.

A Community Land Trust managed by the parish council, possibly together with Lewes DC, will build and own the houses. This will ensure their public ownership in perpetuity.

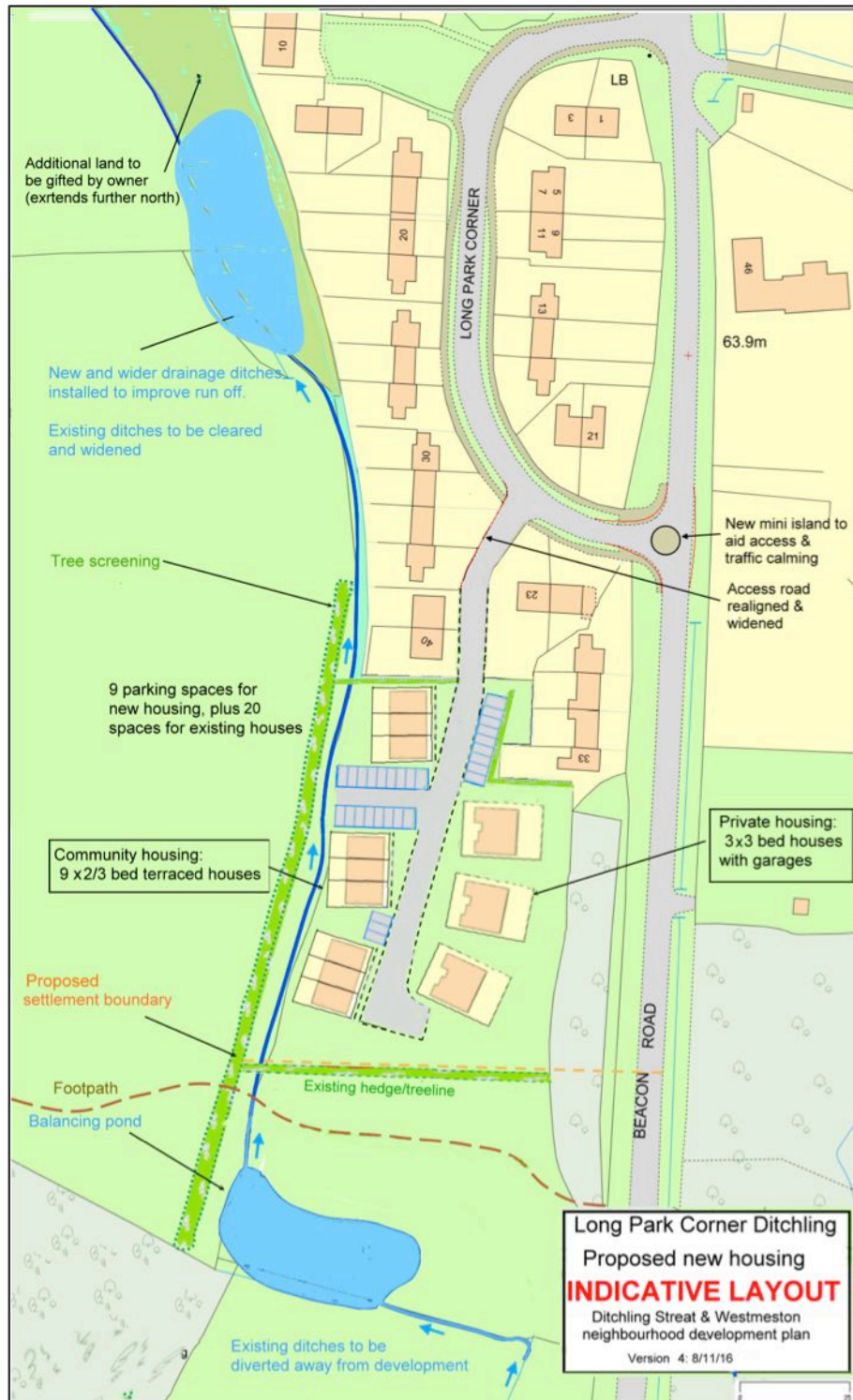


Figure 3: Long Park Corner

(B) Common Lane (6 units)

This triangular site is on the north side of the village, again sitting just outside but abutting the existing settlement boundary. The owner has proposed an option of 6 detached single-storey units, two of which are 3-bedroomed and four 2-bedroomed. There are likely to be traffic speed and sightline issues to be addressed on the B2112, so in line with the neighbourhood plan traffic calming policies (see TRANS 2) it is required that the developer incorporate traffic calming works at the entrance. See Figure 4.

This would be a privately funded commercial development, but since the site’s potential is assessed at 6+ units, there may be a contribution from the developer for affordable housing.



Figure 4: Common Lane

(C) Lewes Road/ Nye Lane (total 4 new/additional units)

The main site here is the Ditchling garage site owned by a Ditchling resident. He already had planning permission for 3 detached houses, but acceded to a request to consider increasing the number of units by 2, by incorporating smaller terraced houses instead. The plan (Figure 5) shows the result, in line with the plan’s objectives.

Neville Estates owns a narrow strip on the west side of Nye Lane opposite the garage land, that it has proposed is capable of taking 2 small live/work 1-bed properties. This has therefore been included on the site plan, and it has been suggested to them they should consider working closely with the garage owner to propose an architecturally similar style of dwelling to the adjacent garage site, thus presenting a higher quality of dwelling and consistency of aspect.

In line with the neighbourhood plan traffic calming policies (see TRANS 2) the developer will be required to incorporate traffic calming works on the main highway.

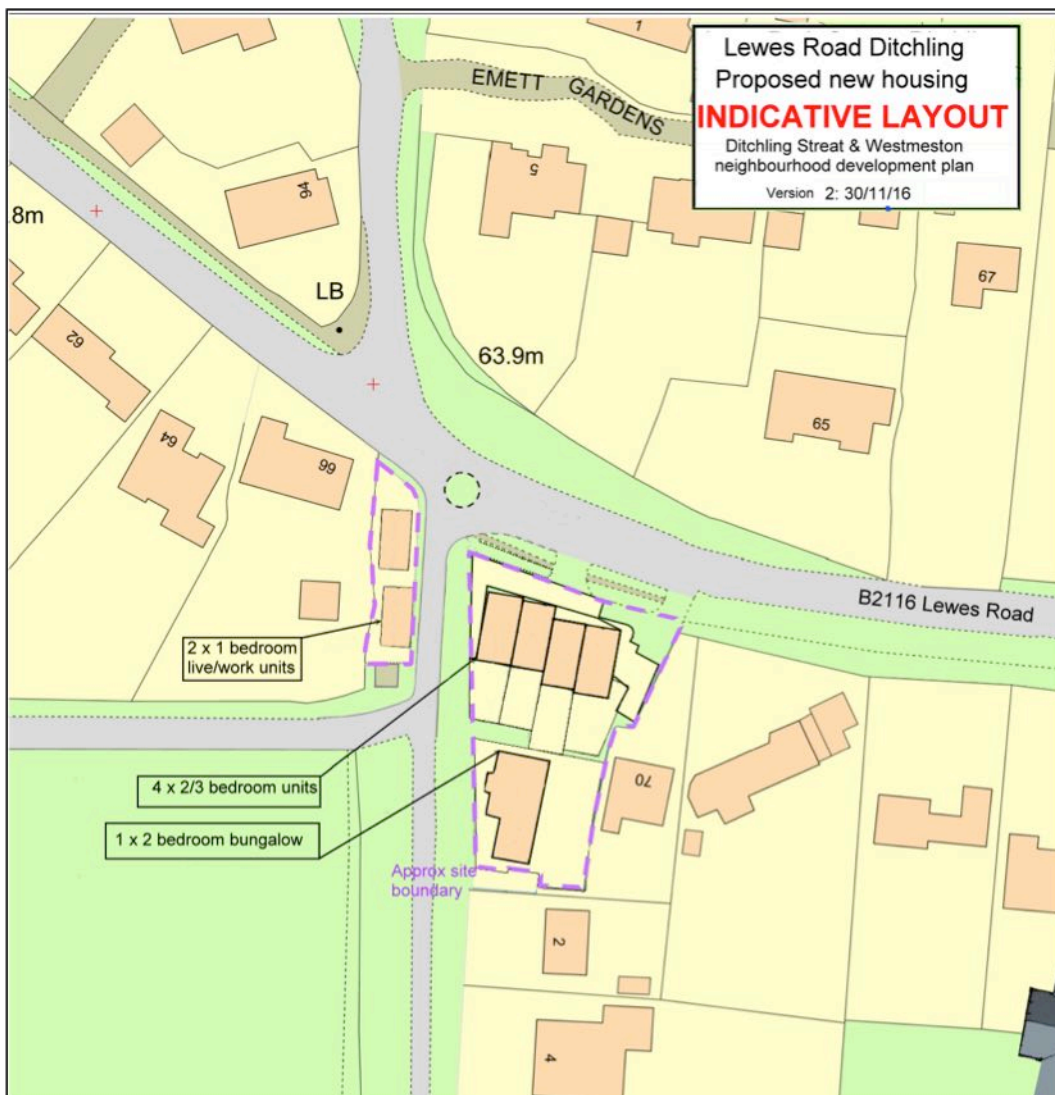


Figure 5: Lewes Road/Nye Lane

(D) Jointure, 17 South Street (total 3 units)

This site has already been approved. It consists of an existing dwelling with three small additional units on the site. Building/refurbishment work has already started. However, the SDNPA has accepted that its 3 small units may be included in the total allocated in the plan, because of the date on which they received planning permission. See Figure 6 for general location only.

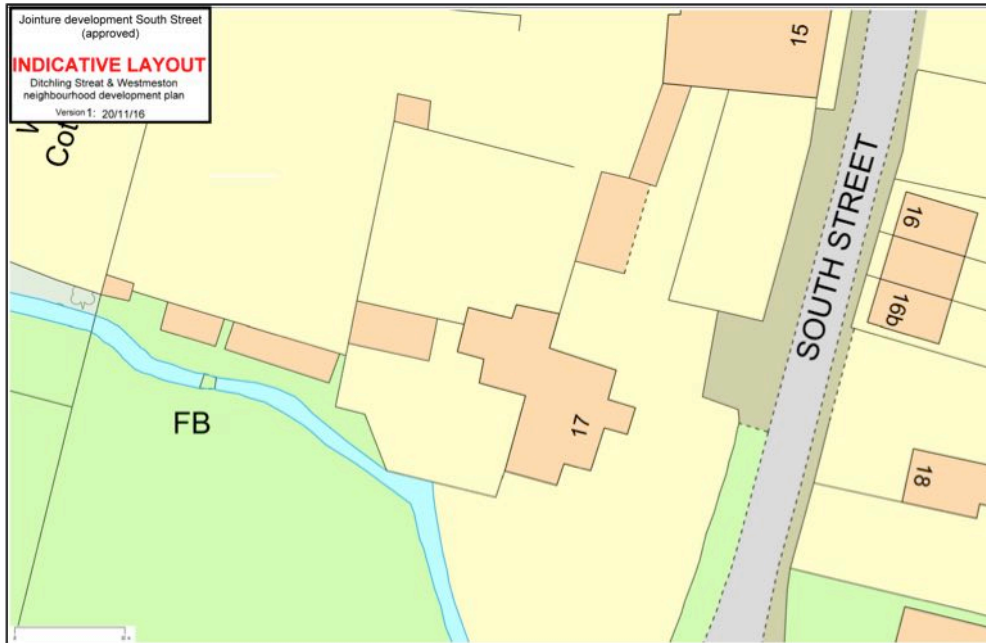


Figure 6: South Street

2 Designation of local green spaces (LGS)

21. Introduction

The pre-submission consultation draft of the neighbourhood plan published in March 2016 included a policy¹ designed to protect important local green spaces within the three parishes. This proposition was supported by consultation responses to the plan. To enable local people and affected landowners to express their views about individual sites, the SDNPA advised that more detailed work was needed to justify the designation of individual sites, and also that this information should be publicly presented as part of a more focussed follow-up consultation exercise.

The following paragraphs outline the background to the Beacon parishes' proposals to identify LGSs in the neighbourhood plan, and sets out the justification for applying this designation to individual locations. More detailed information is also available in the draft technical document prepared by the conservation focus group on the neighbourhood plan website.

¹ Originally CONS 12, now re-designated CONS14 to allow for other additions to the conservation section policies

2.2 Background to Policy CONS 14.

Government planning guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)² empowers neighbourhood planning bodies to identify special protection green areas of particular importance to local communities, and to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. The relevant guidance makes it clear that an LGS designation should **only** be used:

- 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 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 not an extensive tract of land.

(NPPF, para 77)

For the third criterion, more detailed planning practice guidance (National Planning Practice Guidance-NPPG)³ makes it clear that a blanket designation of open countryside adjacent to a settlement as Local Green Space would **not** be appropriate.

The results of the earlier household survey, and subsequent consultation exercises such as the public exhibition, showed that the local community places a high value on the preservation of important green spaces. Accordingly, this is a core objective of the Neighbourhood Plan, and the ability afforded by national planning policy to apply special protection against new development of suitable green spaces represents a significant opportunity for residents to protect an important natural environmental asset.

Although the proposed wording of Policy CONS 14 was covered by the main consultation exercise on the pre-submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan⁴, and generally approved, any new comments on the policy itself are also welcomed.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework>

³ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>

⁴ See pre-submission plan, March 2016 at <http://www.beaconvillagesplan.co.uk>.

2.3 Areas proposed to be designated as Local Green Spaces

A detailed assessment has been undertaken to identify those sites and areas which would be suitable for a Local Green Space designation, in line with national planning policy guidance noted above. The proposed sites are:

1. Recreation ground, Ditchling
2. Village green, war memorial and pond, Ditchling
3. Allotments, Ditchling
4. Lodge Hill, Ditchling
5. Land adjoining Ditchling village at Clayton Road
6. Boddingtons Lane community orchard
7. Barnfield Gardens off Lewes Road
8. Old Meeting House, The Twitten
9. Long Park Corner green space
10. Roadside verges in Ditchling
11. Recreation ground at Keymer Road
12. The Cottage Homes Ditchling
13. Graveyards 13a. Ditchling, St Margaret's;
 13b. Ditchling burial ground, Lewes Road;
 13c. Streat churchyard;
 13d. Westmeston, St Martin's
14. Land adjoining Turner Dumbrell workshops
15. Land to the west of North End
16. St Margaret's school grounds
17. Church corner, Westmeston (17a and 17b)
18. West Wood
19. Roadside verges, Westmeston
20. Common land, Streat Lane

The justification for including each area is set out in Annex A together with a plan identifying the location and extent of each site (see Figures 7 and 8 overleaf).

2.4 The proposed policy (CONS 14)

National guidance says that any local policy for managing development proposals within a Local Green Space designation should be consistent with policies applying to Green Belt locations. However an element of flexibility should be built into any policy of this type in the Neighbourhood Plan to enable the provision of essential utilities infrastructure, and to allow for the upgrading of existing outdoor sport and recreation facilities. The proposed policy set out below reflects these considerations.

CONS 14: *Protect local green spaces*

In areas designated as local green spaces on the accompanying maps (see Figures Cons1/1 and Cons1/2), development will only be permitted in very special circumstances, other than where it comprises:

- essential utilities infrastructure which cannot be located elsewhere.
- redevelopment of existing built structures serving established outdoor sport and recreation facilities, provided any new building is not materially larger than that which it replaces, and is located so as to preserve the openness of the local green space.

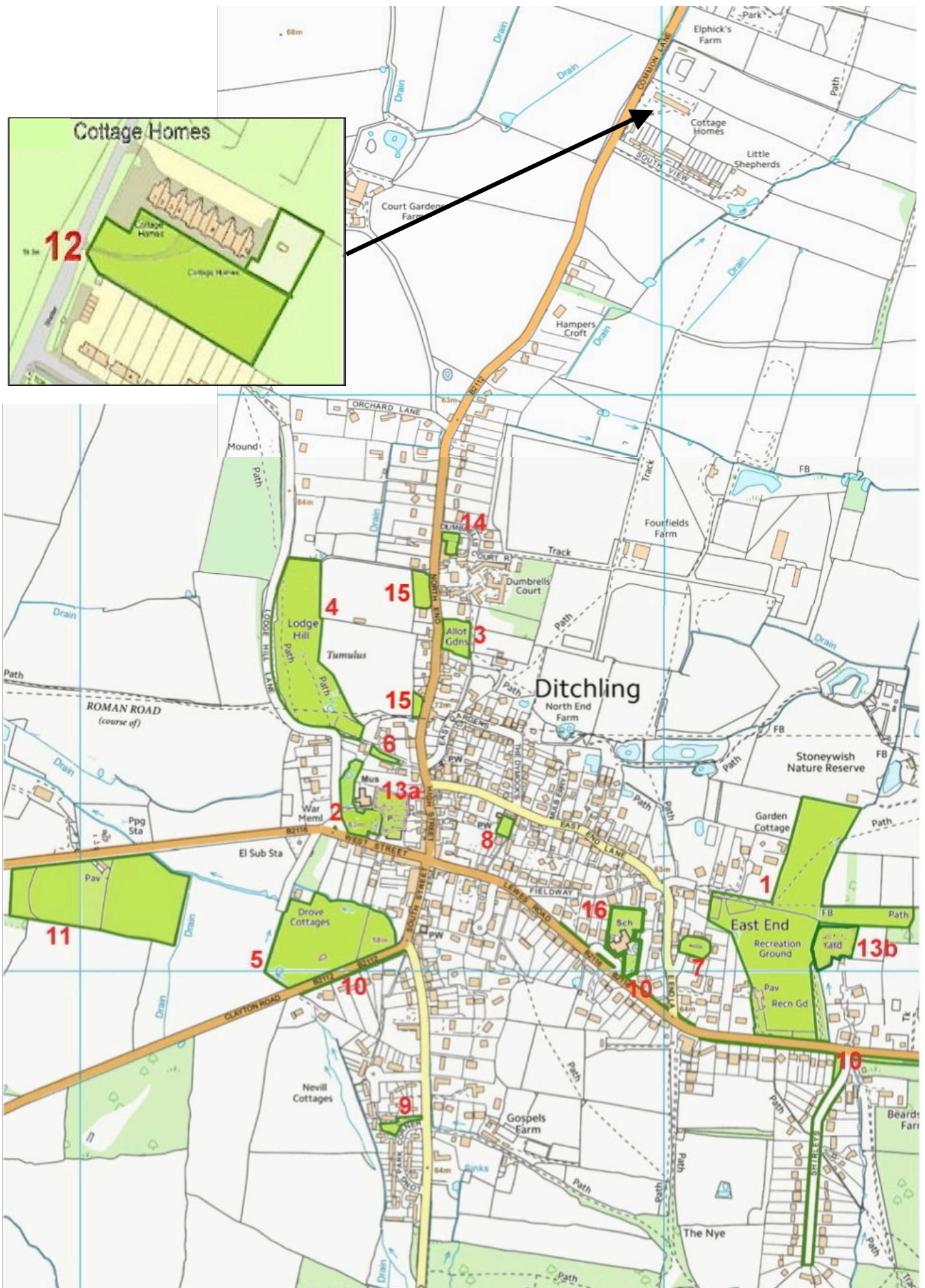


Figure 7: Proposed local green spaces (Ditchling)

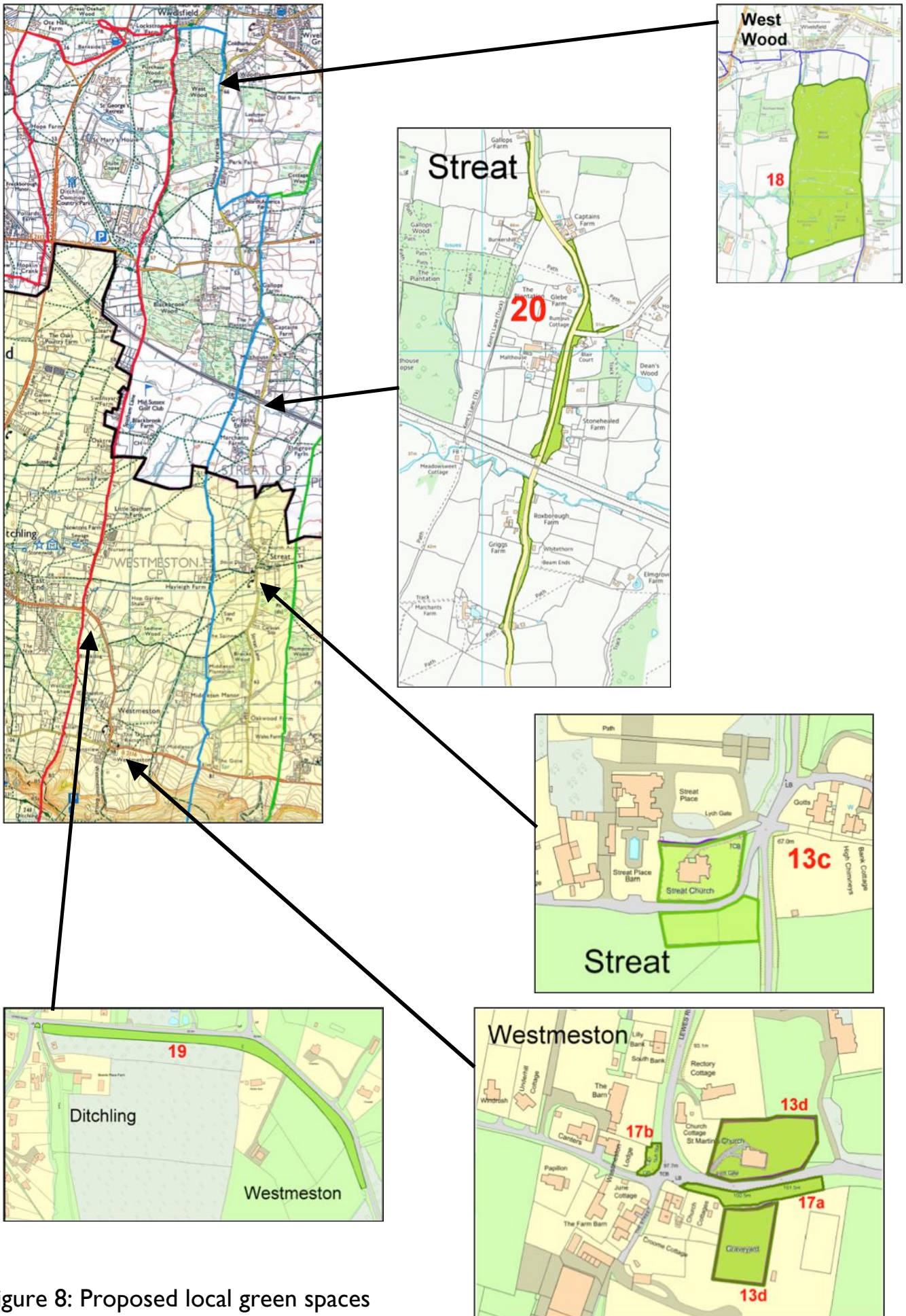


Figure 8: Proposed local green spaces (Streat & Westmeston)

Annex A

Description and rationale for designation of each site

1. Recreation ground, Ditchling

This is by far the largest open area within the builtup framework of the village and comprises an extensive area of playing fields accessed from Lewes Road, used for formal recreational activities such as football, cricket, rugby and the local game of stoolball, all served by a sports pavilion and car park. The wider area also includes a children's play area and hard surfaced tennis court. It is also used extensively by the local community for informal recreation (walking, relaxing, dog exercising etc) and is an attractive visual amenity in its own right with well established trees and hedges along its boundaries. It is also well connected with the local footpath network.

It is a highly popular and very well used facility located within the community it predominantly serves, is demonstrably special to that community, and is essentially local in character.

2. Village green, pond and war memorial, Ditchling

This is a distinctive and picturesque part of the village overlooked by St Margaret's Church and Lodge Hill. It comprises a series of open spaces including the village green, cart lodge and barn, a large pond on the eastern side of Lodge Lane with a more informal open area adjoining to the north, and the formally laid out war memorial area. This is an important part of the extensive Ditchling Conservation Area, and the latter elements are identified in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as "important open spaces" and/or "focal points".

The various green space elements and pond are an essential part of the fabric of the village and its community. They have a particular local significance given the picturesque setting of which they form part, their significance in this historic part of the village and their recreational value for local residents and visitors alike.

3. Allotments, Ditchling

The largest area of allotments within the village is located on the eastern side of North End. It is a popular and well used local amenity run by the Ditchling Horticultural Society. The allotments are also identified in the Character Appraisal as an important open space within the Ditchling Conservation Area. There are also smaller areas of allotments located within the more modern established housing area at Neville Cottages located on the western side of Beacon Road.

Both allotment areas satisfy the selection criteria for Local Green Spaces on the basis that they are an integral part of the community they serve, are highly valued by it, and provide an important informal recreational facility.

4. Lodge Hill, Ditchling

This is a distinctive local feature on a small hill adjoining and overlooking the village, and located to the north and east of the alignment of Lodge Hill Lane. The lane forms part of the old drovers' route linking the Downs via Ditchling Common to the Weald, and at the foot of Lodge Hill crosses the old Roman road linking Keymer through to Streat and beyond. Lodge Hill itself contains important archaeological features and is also a publically accessible area affording dramatic views over the village and towards the Downs. It is very well used as an informal recreational open space with access via the established public footpath network and Lodge Hill Lane .

Clearly it is in close proximity to the community it serves, and is demonstrably special because of its beauty, historic significance and recreational value.

5. Land adjoining Ditchling village at Clayton Road

This is a tranquil and attractive area of open land adjoining the western side of the Village located between Drove Cottages and the B2112 Clayton Road. A well used footpath traverses its western edge. A significant feature of this area of open space, is its inclusion within the Ditchling Conservation Area and its critical role, identified in the Character Appraisal, in protecting its visual and landscape setting.

This area is not considered as the type of extensive tract of open land referred to in the NPPF which would render it inappropriate for designation as a Local Green Space. Rather it is physically well defined and essentially local in character, and performs a function of great importance to the local community because of its intrinsic attractiveness and critical role in protecting the setting of the village and its conservation area.

6. Boddingtons Lane community orchard

This relatively small area is located on the southern side of Boddingtons Lane which is a well used pedestrian route linking Lodge Hill Lane to the High Street/North End. It is the product of a recent community initiative to establish an area of orchard planting for use and enjoyment by the local population, and as such also provides an attractive and tranquil area of informal open space in this quiet part of the village.

It lies at the heart of the community it serves and is highly valued by it.

7. Barnfield Gardens

Barnfield Gardens is a quiet residential cul-de-sac within the village accessed from East End Lane. It consists of a small 1930s estate of six mock Tudor dwellings encircling a planned rectangular communal area. This is a valuable and tranquil area of local open space within the Ditchling Conservation Area which is of recognised importance to its character (See Conservation Area Character Appraisal) and which provides an attractive visual amenity in its own right and an opportunity for informal recreation.

8. Old Meeting House, The Twitten

The Twitten is a narrow footpath located in the central part of the village connecting East End Lane and Lewes Road. It provides access to the Old Meeting House in front of which is an attractive open space. This provides a setting for the listed meeting house and is identified as an “important open space” contributing to the character of this part of the Conservation Area. (See conservation Area Character Appraisal). It forms an integral part of the townscape of this quiet part of the village, offers views to the Downs and is a valued amenity open space both for those living nearby and those using The Twitten as a pedestrian route.

9. Long Park Corner

This is a area of linked amenity open spaces located in the southern part of Ditchling within the established residential area at Long Park Corner, where the northern part of this road joins Beacon Road. It comprises three distinct parts. First, there is a small rectangular area of open space enclosed on three sides by bungalows with some recent landscaping and seating area. Next to this is a fenced children’s play area with equipment maintained by Lewes District Council, and an area of unenclosed informal open space extending to Lewes Road. This combination of open spaces is clearly highly accessible to those residing in this part of the village, and provides a valued and well used opportunity for recreational activity and a welcome open area within a relatively high density established housing development.

10. Roadside verges in Ditchling

A particular feature of Ditchling is the presence of very wide grassed roadside verges on two of the main approach roads to the village. These are located on the southern side of Clayton Road extending from Beacon Road to the western edge of the settlement, and on the southern side of Lewes Road extending approximately from its junction with East End Lane as far as Shirleys. They provide a backdrop to predominantly larger detached dwellings set well back from the carriageway, and lend a more visually open character to two of the main routes into the village providing a contrast with much of the remainder of the settlement. They represent important though informal linear green open spaces which are an intrinsic part of the character of Ditchling, and are very well used by the local community. This is particularly the case with Lewes Road where the wide verge also contains a hard surfaced footpath.

11. Recreation ground at Keymer Road

This is a large roughly triangular area of land in the open area between Ditchling and Keymer, and positioned on the southern side of Keymer Road (B2116) adjoining the eastern extremity of the built up area of Keymer and Hassocks. It lies at the western side of Ditchling Parish. The land provides facilities for St. James Montefiore Cricket Club and comprises two cricket fields, a large pavilion/club house and car park. There is also an area of allotments at the apex of the land adjoining Keymer which is used as allotments.

12. The Cottage Homes Ditchling

This south facing communal open space lies within the conservation area of the same name located on the eastern side of the B2112 to the north of Ditchling. It comprises a formally laid out lawned area with a flagpole in a central point, and with a gravelled drive extending from the currently unused Lions Gate access towards the terrace of cottages. Established vegetation comprising trees and hedges provide a sense of definition and enclosure. The space is an important component in the character of the conservation area and provides an attractive setting for the formally laid out terrace of cottages. Moreover, although the Cottage Homes is in a relatively isolated position in open countryside, it has an important role to play in providing an opportunity for informal recreation and relaxation for those living in the development of which it forms an integral part.

13. Graveyards/burial grounds

Beyond their obvious practical role in providing for burials associated with local churches, graveyards are an essential and much loved part of the fabric of the area's three villages, and are inextricably linked with their establishment and development. They are at the heart of the communities they serve in terms of their association with places of worship, but also because they are physically part of the historic cores of the villages, and provide attractive and tranquil green areas for quiet contemplation and relaxation. In the case of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston, the churches and associated graveyards are all focal points within their respective conservation areas, with the burial grounds themselves providing an important setting for the listed structures.

The following individual features are noted:

13a Ditchling, St. Margaret's The churchyard associated with St. Margaret's is part of an important sequence of open spaces that connects High Street/Church Lane with Lodge Lane and West Street via pedestrian routes accessing the village green, war memorial, village pond area and the museum. The church grounds themselves are in an elevated position overlooking and providing attractive views to the latter areas. They contain a variety of mature tree planting including an avenue of heavily pollarded trees creating a formal way between Church Lane and the museum. The graveyard itself is the resting place for a number of nationally prominent artists associated with the arts and crafts movement.

13b Ditchling Burial Ground, Lewes Road The burial ground lies on the eastern side of the main recreation ground on Lewes Road from which it is accessed via a dedicated route comprising a long avenue traversing a linear open area of formal appearance. This runs through to the main part of the burial ground itself which is located discreetly to the rear providing a tranquil setting. The sense of privacy is enhanced by well established vegetation along the main boundaries.

13c Streat Church The graveyard associated with Streat Church is in two parts. The first comprises grounds enclosed by a flint wall within which the building stands adjoins Streat Place. The second is located just to the south of the right of way forming part of the old east-west aligned Roman road. The latter is a rectangular open space enclosed by natural vegetation containing a memorial cross together with seating area and gravestones. Both parts are located within Streat Conservation Area on the southern edge of the hamlet in a commanding position at the top of the ridge overlooking the Downs. This is an especially attractive location affording fine views, and the portion to the south has a particularly important role to play in facilitating views towards the scarp slope of the Downs.

13d Westmeston, St. Martin's Like Streat, the graveyard is divided into two parts, in this case straddling the B2116 Lewes Road, both of which also fall within the conservation area. The first comprises the grounds within which St Martin's Church is set, and which are enclosed along the road frontage by a low flint, wall with the grounds of the Old Rectory to the rear. The second is an attractive rectangular open area contained by vegetation including a tall hedge and wide, planted verge on the Lewes Road frontage. There is also mature tree planting within the confines of this part of the graveyard. St. Martin's Churchyard is identified as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance as highlighted in the draft Conservation Area Appraisal, parts being managed in conjunction with English Nature.

14. Land adjoining Turner Dumbrell Workshops

This is a highly visible area of amenity open space wrapping around the complex of traditional buildings comprising the Turner Dumbrell Workshops and located at the point where Dumbrell's Court Road intersects with North End. It is a very attractive green area on one of the major roads through the village, comprising mature tree planted around a large natural pond and wide grassed verges bordered by public footways along North End and Dumbrell's Court Road. It forms a very important element in the street scene in this part of the village which can readily be appreciated and enjoyed by pedestrians and passing motorists.

15. Land to the west of North End

This comprises two small tracts of land on the western side of North End which in turn form part of a wider area of open countryside used principally for grazing rising towards Lodge Hill. The first lies to the south of the public footpath adjoining No 51 North End, while the second adjoins the southern side of No 17. Both sites are located within the village conservation area with the distinguishing feature that they are locations which bring the open countryside directly into the physical fabric of the village, and provide visual relief from the building frontages along North End. They provide attractive and important views out of the village across rising ground towards Lodge Hill and are, in turn, prominent in return views from the latter vantage point and from the public footpath. They represent an essential component in the character of this part of the village and are an integral part of the character of the conservation area and its setting. In identifying the extent of the latter areas to be subject to a local green space designation, it is proposed that the western boundary to both should coincide with the conservation area boundary.

16. St Margaret's School grounds

This space comprises a relatively compact area used for play and sporting use forming part of St. Margaret's Primary School which is located on the northern side of Lewes Road in Ditchling. It is positioned to the rear of the existing main school building which fronts onto Lewes Road and is enclosed by established residential development on the remaining three sides. While this means that it is largely concealed from public view and general access to the wider public is not available, it is an important green "lung" within the established built up area, and has a particular recreational value associated with serving an important educational facility located at the heart of the community it serves.

17. Church Corner, Westmeston

This green space sits at the heart of the historic settlement of Westmeston, opposite the church on the corner of the B2116. It is an open area consisting of two verges divided by the entrance to Underhill Lane. One part (17a) is adjacent to the separate graveyard on the Downs side of the road. This is partly wooded and provides occasional parking during church services, and a timber bench provides a tranquil place for resting walkers. A little to the west, the other part (17b) sits on the wedge of bank between Underhill Lane and Lewes Road. This is mainly grass with a small hardstanding for car parking. It is the site of the ancient well, marked by oak railings. A Sarsen stone, placed there at the personal expense of a local resident, is an item of interest. The parish council noticeboard is located near the hedge and the renovated George VI ex-GPO telephone box has a prominent position near the traditional oak 3-direction finger post. The phone box has been adopted and renovated by the parish council and is used as an information centre. A memorial oak bench is sited on the bank. It is a focal point of the settlement which is in frequent use by local people and is a "picture postcard" visual reminder of bygone days. Volunteers and the parish council maintain the area.

18. West Wood

West Wood is a large expanse of broadleaved ancient woodland located towards the northern boundary of Westmeston parish. It is the largest area of ancient woodland in the Beacon parishes and stretches from St George's Retreat north to Wivelsfield Green. It is criss-crossed with footpaths and is a much used recreational resource for those living towards the northern end of the parishes. However, as the wood is immediately adjacent to the village of Wivelsfield Green (in the neighbouring parish of Wivelsfield), it is in effect also a highly valued Local Green Space for Wivelsfield residents, providing a large woodland backdrop to the village and an adjacent rural, woodland space for walking and recreation. As the wood is not within Wivelsfield parish, it is not possible for its residents to designate the wood as a Local Green Space within their plan. It is thus being proposed as such within the Beacon Parishes plan in acknowledgement of its value to the residents of Wivelsfield and Westmeston parishes alike.

19. Roadside verges in Westmeston

The feature of very wide roadside verges within Ditchling village (see location I0 above) also extends further eastwards from Shirleys to the parish boundary opposite Spatham Lane, and beyond to a point opposite the entrance of Black Dog Farm. The first mentioned section is lightly wooded, with plum trees providing local residents with fruit during July/August, wild flowers and presence of wildlife including Roe deer. Further on it opens up to a wide grass verge and throughout carries the Jubilee Pathway which links at Shirleys to the footway mentioned in location I0, and to bridleway Westmeston 20a (beyond the area delineated on the map), and the network of bridleways and footpaths. Whilst linear in nature, as with location I0 above, these verges are a well-used amenity serving the main settlement of Ditchling and the dwellings situated along the whole length of the verge, connecting the centre of Ditchling to the outskirts and Westmeston. There is no open countryside along the site as there are residential properties on one side or the other. It is used by walkers, cyclists and equestrians and provides a safe route for children on cycles, alongside a road that is hazardous for this class of user.

20. Common land, Streat Lane

Streat Lane is a quintessential country bye-way running north from the foot of the scarp face of the Downs through the length of the village. It is single track for much of its length, with many blind bends as it follows the boundaries of historic fields, ancient woods and period properties. High hedges are a feature of the southern section of the lane which is in the national park, but most of the northern section is bordered by common land, some parts of which are wooded, and others are pastures, sections of which have in recent times been mown by adjoining owners. The common land is rich in flora and fauna. Maintaining the rural nature of this land, and ensuring it is not suburbanised, is paramount to safeguard the future of this habitat and the lasting beauty of the lane.