

Napton-on-the-Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan  
2018-2031

Character Assessment



Napton-on-the-Hill Parish Council

October 2019

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework states that design policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area's defining characteristics. The Framework also points out that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and how this should be reflected in development.



- 1.2 Towards this purpose a detailed character assessment was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Napton Neighbourhood Plan, which analyses and describes each part of the neighbourhood area. It communicates the key physical features and characteristics that combine to give each part of the village its local distinctiveness and unique identity. It articulates what is of value and what makes the area special.
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## 2. Overview of the village and its setting

- 2.1 The parish is in south east Warwickshire. It straddles the A425, which runs between nearby Southam and Daventry. It is predominantly rural with the village of Napton located on a hillside in the centre of the parish. According to the 2011 Census the parish had a population of 1,144.
- 2.1.1 Napton is a village characterised by its rural location, topography, historic land uses, primarily agricultural, and the proximity to the Oxford Canal. Whilst it originally evolved in a linear form that straddled both sides of Napton Hill, over time, new roads and built up areas have been developed off the original route through the village to create a more compact plan, especially around the central area on the southern side of the hill.
- 2.2 The Oxford Canal winds its way around the western side of the village following the base contour of Napton Hill, with the original built up areas hugging the roads around the opposite side of the hill, gently rising and falling through the village. Whilst the Oxford Canal followed what was probably deemed to be the easiest route to join the Grand Union Canal to the north, the settlement of Napton grew principally along southern facing contours. Only St Lawrence Church and Napton Windmill enjoy the most prominent position on top of the hill and have become major landmarks that can be seen from multiple locations around and beyond the village, and in turn offer long distance views out over the village and open countryside to all sides.
- 2.3 The upper parts of the hill are also characterised by the mature hedgerows and trees that line the historic foot paths and lanes that lead up to the Church and windmill, and bound the fields that straddle the ridge. From afar these layers of vegetation come together to form the impression of a woodland blanketing the most exposed parts of the village.
- 2.4 With modern farming practices seeking more efficient use of the land by stripping back old hedgerows, these well-established village hedgerows are of particular value both visually and environmentally.
- 2.5 Views into and out of the village are what make Napton unique over its neighbouring settlements. Many parts of the village are blessed with such views though there are a number of key sightlines that help to place the village into its setting. The church dominates the southern aspect whilst the windmill can be viewed from afar from the west and north side of the hill and from further back looking in from the south.
- 2.6 Being built on a hill, the village enjoys great views out from all directions from the upper areas and interesting views up and across the village from other areas within and from afar. The countryside is never far away with the generally open aspect of the edge of the village. Even the village centre is not overly compact and many of the streets enjoy an openness and green quality that is fairly unique to Napton. Where development does

span both sides of the road there are still views glimpsed through to the countryside beyond.

- 2.7 Key views from within the built-up area of the village are those across the open field to the south of School Hill junction with Vicarage Road (previously known locally as the sledging field) towards the lower part of the village and offering a wide field of vision beyond over open countryside including Shuckburgh Hill and Burton Dassett and towards other local settlements including the neighbouring Priors Marston.
- 2.8 Other significant views are from the top of Butt Hill across open fields to the north and east, looking towards Rugby in the far distance, top of Howcombe Lane/ the Butts towards to the south and overlooking the neighbouring hamlet of Chapel Green.
- 2.9 Six of the finest views have been identified as important views and are described in Table 8 within the Plan
- 2.10 In addition to the views there are areas of open space within the village envelope which enhance the rural nature of the village. The field to the south of School Hill currently falls within the built-up area boundary but as well as offering long distance views over it, it is also vitally important as an open space, providing a gap within and on the edge of the more densely populated areas of the village, contributing to the well-being of local residents and visitors alike. Another significant open space adjoining the main central area is a field that lies behind the Old Crown pub. A footpath across this space connects The Green to Howcombe Lane to the west. There are also many pockets of open space primarily at road junctions such as: the top of Howcombe Lane; where Dog Lane meets Godsons Lane; at the top of Butt Hill; and Hackwell Bank at the junction of School Hill and Hackwell Street. These help to soften the street scene along with more formal green areas associated with other parts of the village such as the area at the top of Hillside where it meets Butt Hill. The siting of public benches around the village coincides with either these green spaces or with a key viewing point, offering a welcome resting place.
- 2.11 Five of the most significant open spaces have been identified as Local Green Spaces and are described in Table 7 within the Plan and sections 8.92 to 8.97.
- 2.12 Unsurprisingly given its rural setting, farmsteads, farmers cottages and a few more substantial domestic dwellings make up the main historic stock of the village. These were originally spread out along the village roads, apart from around the village green which still boasts the highest density of the historic properties. The further away from the village green, the older buildings, whether they be houses or farm buildings, were more spread out and therefore, as the village evolved, allowed for infill development in-between. The evolution has been fairly slow so the infill has no specific style of architecture associated it but rather presents an overall mixed character with a few linking elements.

- 2.13 Generally housing density is low; there are more detached and semi-detached houses than terraces. Flats are virtually non-existent. With the exception of one side of Hackwell Street, School Hill and the western side of the Green, most houses are well set back from the road and offer off road car parking. Most houses are two storey with some three storey houses up the upper side of the hill on The Poplars, School Hill and Hackwell Street. Where a road through the village follows the contour the houses on the upside tend to be taller than those on the down side. Some of the more modern houses on School Hill and the Poplars are built up to allow for garage space underneath, offering scope for views over the houses below from the upper rooms. There are very few bungalows in the village. These are generally located around the more level areas such as St Lawrence Close.
- 2.14 There was a significant number of council houses built within the village at some point around the 1960s, along Dog Lane, off the High Street and along The Poplars, which has added to the mix of housing available in the village. Most of these houses were linked family homes with some flats/ maisonettes. There is an ongoing programme of replacing the flats with family homes and many of the original houses are now in private ownership.
- 2.15 More latterly, rather than individual infill plots, new housing has been clustered in fairly small cul de sac developments. Paddock Close, Jackson Lane, Howcombe Gardens and Hillside Croft and the more recent Cyril's Corner off Priors Marston Road being examples of these. The maximum number of dwellings in any one of these mini estates is no more than 21 so that they too have been able to successfully integrate into the fabric of the village. The architectural character of the more recent developments has reflected the historic local vernacular in terms of materials, style of windows and doors and added features. Many of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century infill houses were more varied and adventurous in their designs though not always sensitive to their setting or neighbours. However, the overall random affect is not unattractive. The latest new development off Godsons Lane (AC Lloyds) will deliver 28 new homes, which have a mixture of brick and stone frontages. Being the size and style it is and having such a prominent location, the development has had an impact on the character of this side of the village and on the local infrastructure.
- 2.16 The Green depicts the centre of the village and is the focus for outdoor community events such as the annual cycle ride. In the past, this area also hosted a number of shops and the two village public houses, namely The Crown and The Plough. These have now disappeared, the Crown being the last, now converted to a residential dwelling. Interestingly the main community facilities that serve the village are now located off roads that lead from the bottom of the Green; New Street, Dog Lane and The Crescent. Immediately to the south at the end of The Crescent can be found the Village Hall. Along Dog Lane to the east there are St Lawrence Primary School, playing fields and the Victory Club and along New Street to the west can be found Napton Post Office and Village Stores and the Christadelphian Meeting Room. All these facilities are linked by a fairly level footpath making this end of the village easily accessible by local residents.

- 2.17 As well as The Green, there are a three other ‘greens’ notably Pillory Green, Crown Green and Memorial Green. The village boasts a number of interesting features such as Hackwell Well and Steps, other wells at the allotments and Chapel Green, the War Memorial and street artefacts, including the old milestone marker on Southam Road and the letterbox on Vicarage Road.
- 2.18 The most compact part of the village occurs in the triangle of land bound by School Hill to the north and Hackwell Street to the south.
- 2.19 Roads leading into the village along The Poplars and Dog Lane are also restricted by width.
- 2.20 The main junction off the A425 (Southam to Daventry Road) into the upper parts of the village is marked by the Cross Roads garage on one side and The King’s Head (one of only two public houses still open of the original five) on the other. Other community uses include The Arc School located at the top of Butt Hill and St Lawrence School off St Lawrence Close. Both of these uses attract visitors and staff travelling by cars and on foot. Whilst the situation is currently manageable there is always the risk of congestion and safety issues as the village continues to grow.



- 2.21 The built-up area of the village is fairly sprawling as it wraps around the hillside, helping to retain its rural character and charm. There are a number of green links, and hedge lined narrow lanes that link areas of the village together, the most used being Fell’s Lane linking Vicarage Road to Dog Lane, which also provides a link to the main Sports Playing Field to the east of the centre. St Lawrence Church is served by two narrow lanes, off Vicarage Road to the east and Hollow Way to the west, as well as two pedestrian links, one off School Hill and another (a bridleway) leading from Grove Lane to the north (off Hillside). These lanes enhance the rural character further still.

- 2.22 New development adjoining Fell’s Lane rises above the hedge line offering some natural surveillance but in turn detracting from the recreational value these hidden green lanes offer to walkers seeking a more peaceful green environment.
- 2.23 Property boundaries are also generally rural in character in terms of their planting (native hedge species) and use of traditional materials. Boundaries facing on to the roads are generally low, offering views into front gardens and creating an open aspect and interesting street view. Most streets benefit from natural surveillance from the houses that front them. There are a few exceptions to this where high modern fencing has been used, which detracts from the street view. Street lighting and road signage is relatively inconspicuous and in keeping with the character of a rural settlement. There are areas where street furniture, such as cabinets, road signs and bins have become cluttered, for example at the top of Butt Hill and The Green, and detract from the street scene.

### Summary

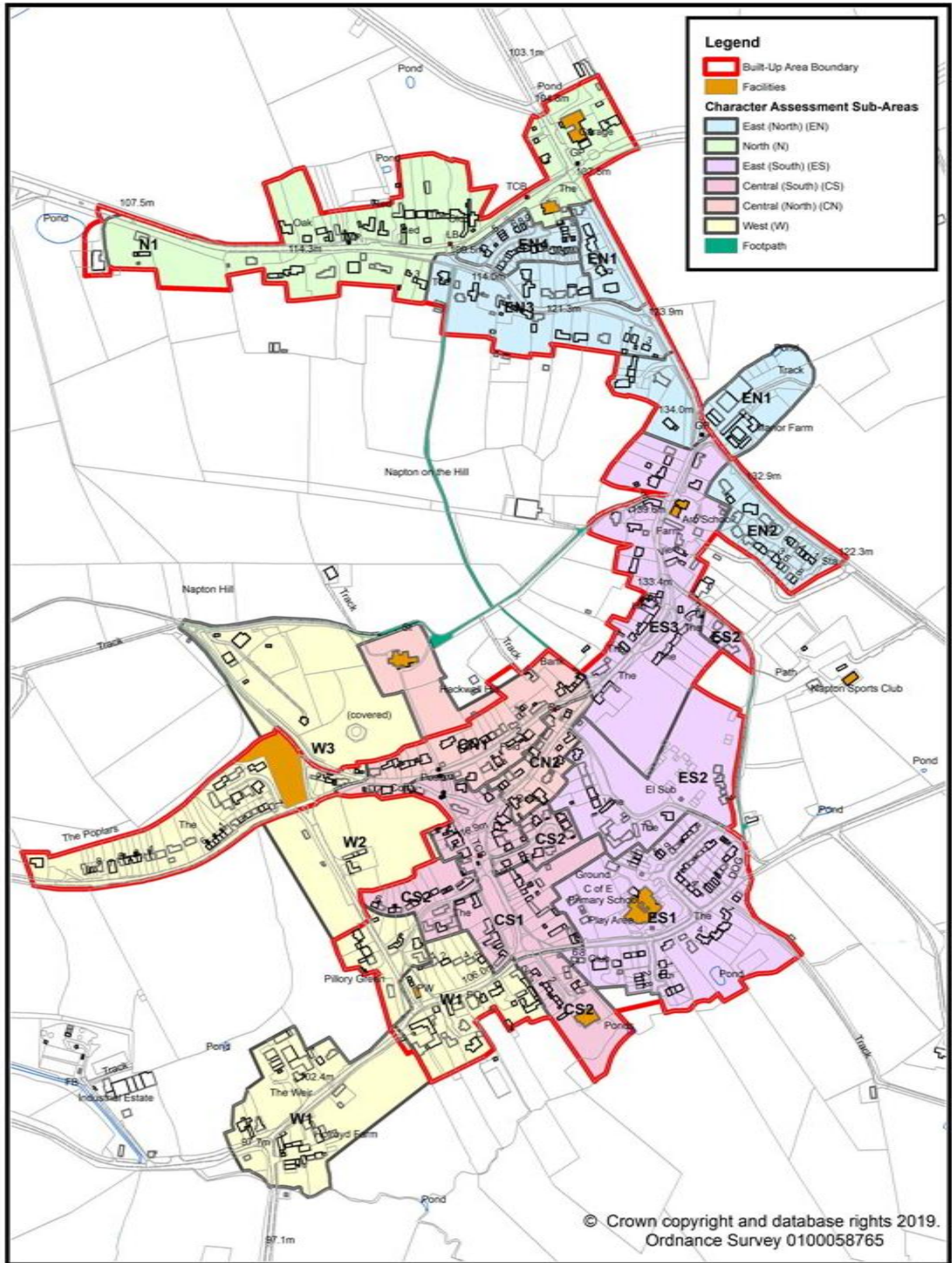
- 2.24 Whilst there is an attractive local vernacular in the historic buildings that form the original core of the settlement, this could have been over whelmed by the influx of infill developments of such variable styles and designs over the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had it not been for the natural features of the landscape that have helped to tie all these elements together. The layering of houses up the hill with their interesting roofscapes, gently winding roads offering ever changing vistas and the presence of soft boundary edges, green spaces, trees and wonderful views create a unique character born of evolution and balance over time. No one style has dominated and therefore it is important going forward that new development considers how this balance can be maintained. Features that make the village attractive such as the views arising from the natural topography and the green spaces and open edges that breathe life and give the village its rural character must be retained and enhanced.
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### 3. Characteristics of individual areas

- 3.1 The different characteristics of individual areas within the village were defined according to criteria such as land use, building type, or the period when they were constructed. They are best described as areas that have their own distinctive, individual character or 'sense of place'. In other words, they share a similar appearance and feel.
- 3.2 The methodology considered factors such as:
- layout;
  - topography;
  - spaces;
  - green and natural features;
  - landmarks;
  - buildings and details;
  - streetscape features;
  - land uses; and
  - views.
- 3.3 After this assessment, the village was divided into the following areas to reflect the subtly differing characteristics of each:
- Central (South)
  - Central (North)
  - West
  - East (South)
  - East (North)
  - North
  - Chapel Green
- 3.4 These areas are defined on Map 1 overleaf and described in the following sections.
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Map 1 – Character Assessment Sub-Areas



## 4. Character Area : Central (South)

### Introduction

- 4.1 Central (South) area includes the historic centre of the village, based around the Green (High Street) and Chapel Lane. Whilst the shops and pub which used to front the Green, have all now closed, the area still acts as the one of the primary outdoor community hub for the village hosting annual events such as the Napton Bike Ride.
- 4.2 Central (South) also includes three cul de sacs that lead off the High Street; Paddock Close Cox's Lane and The Crescent



### Layout

- 4.3 Sub Area CS1 : The Green and Chapel Lane to the north - Broad open space located on west side of the main road. Fronted by generally older and historic buildings with some set close to road or edge of the green. Many houses are set back from the road with attractive front gardens and green boundaries softening the street scene. Whilst there are a few detached properties, most are linked forming a strong linear edge both sides of the Green.
- 4.4 Sub Area CS2 : Streets off the Green - Paddock Close – cul-de-sac of 1980's detached family houses. Cox's Lane – gently curving cul-de-sac leading to newer detached properties and on to older semis beyond, originally built with no direct vehicular access. The Crescent – Semi-detached housing development, similar in architectural style to that along Dog Lane (1960's Council built) leading to the Village Hall.

## Topography

- 4.5 The High Street has a gentle rise/ descent linking parts of the village above and below The Green, which more closely follow the contours of the hill. The slope of Napton Hill increases with altitude, so is much more noticeable where Chapel Lane meets School Hill to the north. Paddock Close and Cox's Lane are fairly level, whilst The Crescent slopes down the hill towards the village hall and the brook that meanders behind it.

## Spaces

- 4.6 As well as The Green, a large open space adjoining the High Street, there is also Crown Green sitting above it with its magnificent chestnut tree, and a triangle of green at the bottom where the road meets Dog Lane. Higher still is Memorial Green, located off the Butts/ Chapel Lane, marking the cross roads with the footpath rising up from the Green and leading to the Church at the top of the hill to the north.
- 4.7 There is a small area of green at the end of Paddock Close. Cox's Lane overlooks The Green at its eastern end and whilst the Crescent has no direct green space there is a large open space behind the village hall which is accessible to all.

## Roads, Streets and Routes

- 4.8 A wide footpath runs along the east side of High Street, separated by a grass verge in places. There is a separate footpath hugging the edge of the housing to the west of The Green.
- 4.9 A steep footpath rises up the hill to the north past the reputedly oldest house in the village, The Old Bakery, to connect to the War Memorial green off the Butts, leading to St Lawrence Church beyond at the top of Napton Hill.
- 4.10 Paddock Close – the road layout is fairly suburban in character, with a kerbed footpath on one side only.
- 4.11 Cox's Lane –the short section of road, turns into a narrow footpath known as The Garth (referred to by local children as the Mouse's Motorway) linking through to Howcombe Lane to the west.
- 4.12 The roads that lead from The Green, to the east, west and south, are very different in character. Given it leads to the Village Hall, The Crescent is a relatively narrow road with footpaths on both sides. Cars tend to park partially on the path to keep the road clear.

## Green and natural features

- 4.13 In addition to the greens and collection of mature trees (chestnut, turkey oak, and flowering cherry) the area to the south of the main green has been fenced off to form

private front gardens associated with the houses that run along this side of the road but separated by the public footpath.

- 4.14 The garden boundaries to the east side of the High Street are generally soft, with varied planting, including both native and ornamental hedging and trees.
- 4.15 The Village Hall green space to the rear is bound by a brook to the south, with native hedges forming its boundary

### Landmarks

- 4.16 The Green is a major landmark with Napton village.
- 4.17 Attractive historic residential buildings face on to The Green on both sides including Byfield House, Leeson House and Rosary Cottage.
- 4.18 The old Crown Pub has a prominent position overlooking the Crown Green and facing towards Hackwell Street. It has recently been converted to residential use. The historic buildings adjoining the old Crown Pub include the oldest building in the village, The Old Bakery.
- 4.19 A very mature horse chestnut dominates the top of The Green, a landmark that marks the centre of the village as one approaches from Hackwell Street to the north east.
- 4.20 The Village Hall is a focal point for the Community attracting a wide variety of users.



### Buildings and details

- 4.21 Generally older and historic buildings characterise this area. Elements include ironstone, mellow warm orange-hued brickwork, natural slate, clay tile, thatch roofs with lots of big

imposing chimneys. Those which are located at road junctions help provide identity and mark the transition from one area to another. Others form landmarks in their own right.

- 4.22 There is a variety of architectural styles and details but together they make an interesting collection of buildings forming the centre of the village. Generally, the buildings are two storey though storey heights vary from cottages with lower ceiling (e.g. Greystone Cottages with its eyelid dormers) to more formal and grand houses (e.g. Byfield House). Mixed roof pitches ranging from 40–70 °.
- 4.23 The design of and materials and details used on the modern buildings are generally sympathetic to the local vernacular.
- 4.24 Beyond The Green, the housing is more modern but also varies in style and period; Paddock Close being late 70's, infill off Cox's Lane late 80's, and earlier Council built housing early 60's. Generally, it is two storeys and a mix of detached and semi-detached housing, set back from the road. Whilst there are some traditional features such as chimneys, which help to integrate these streets with the historic core of the village, alternative substitute materials such as artificial stone and concrete roof tiles do detract from its overall character.
- 4.25 The Crescent is similar in architectural style to 'The Garth' (off Cox's Lane) and along Dog Lane (1960's Council built); chimneys, front porches, reddish brown brick, red concrete roof tiles. Simple but well-built and detailed for their time.
- 4.26 The Village Hall is single storey of similar period to housing, with later adaptations.



### Streetscape features

- 4.27 The area to the top of The Green is a bit cluttered with structures and street furniture. The bus shelter houses the village's defibrillator whilst the Parish Council's notice board is

half hidden further up the hill. Added to this, a dog bin, phone box and telecommunications cabinet are all positioned in close proximity; there is scope for decluttering to help add clarity to this generally most attractive part of the village. There is a bench at the top of Memorial Green which is well placed in terms of capturing views from its elevated position down towards the Green and beyond

## Land Uses

- 4.28 Almost entirely residential apart from the Village Hall.

## Views

- 4.29 There are long open views up the Green despite the lower section having in the past been appropriated and turned into private gardens detached but now owned by nearby properties.
- 4.30 There are long open views from The Butts and down the Green, offering significant views into the distance of open countryside to the south.
- 4.31 The roads that lead off the High Street are fairly contained with some glimpses of views between buildings.

## Summary

- 4.32 The Green depicts the historic centre of the village. The linear layout of the old buildings that flank either side, many of which are linked, form a strong sense of enclosure whilst still allowing the large green space to dominate and impress. There are fine views within, along and out from the Green, with the approach from the north being the most spectacular, offering long distance views across a wide expanse of open countryside.
- 4.33 The area contains a series of associated green spaces that form a green corridor running north to south through the village, punctuated with trees and a variety of boundary treatments, native and ornamental hedging being most prevalent. Most properties are set back from the road with mature gardens, with wide verges between, so there is a very distinct rural character.
- 4.34 The Green is the focus for outdoor community events such as the annual bike ride. In the past, this area also hosted a number of shops and the main village pub, the Crown. Sadly, all these have now disappeared, the Crown being the last, now converted to a residential dwelling.
- 4.35 Immediately to the south at the end of The Crescent can be found the Village Hall which also hosts many community uses.

- 4.36 Whilst the roads that lead from the Green to the east and west and south are very different in character, the transition is aided by the presence of interesting historic buildings on the junctions where the roads meet.
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## 5. Character Area : Central (North)

### Introduction

- 5.1 Central Area (North) covers the more densely developed areas of the village to the north of The Green. The feeder road into the village from Butt Hill splits into two beyond Vicarage Road, the northerly rising route following School Hill, whilst the southerly descending route becomes Hackwell Street which meets the High Street at the top of The Green.



### Layout

- 5.2 Sub Area CN1: The Butts, School Hill - A mix of old and modern housing, detached, semis and terraces are nestled into the hillside. Properties on the upper side appear much more dominant, 2/3 storeys from the road side, than those on the lower side, which in some cases only present a single storey to the road but, in reality, descend to 2/3 stories downhill.
- 5.3 Properties to the north are generally set back from road whilst those to south have little or no front gardens
- 5.4 Sub Area CN2 : Hackwell Street - Mixed housing similar to Sub Area CN1 but with the upper side housing generally closer to the road and the lower side set back.

## Topography

- 5.5 Beyond the steeper entrance off Vicarage Road to School Hill, the road is fairly level, following the natural contour along the upper part of Napton Hill.
- 5.6 Hackwell Street gently descends across the contours towards to the centre of the village

## Spaces

- 5.7 Where School Hill meets The Butts is Memorial Green, an open breathing space along this fairly busy and congested road, which leads down to The Green.
- 5.8 There is no associated green space along Hackwell Street until it meets the upper part of the Green where it shares great views along to Crown Green. On the plateau at the top of Napton Hill, to the north of and adjoining St Lawrence Church, lies an area of open grassland which enhances the setting of the church and provides space for locals to enjoy. It has been identified as a Local Green Space B



## Roads, Streets and Routes

- 5.9 School Hill and The Butts are narrow roads, with some sections without a footpath. There is an elevated footpath in part on upper side, with some sections laid in traditional brick.
- 5.10 On and off street car parking dominates the street scene along School Hill.
- 5.11 Two steep hedge lined footpaths lead off northwards towards the top of the hill and the church.

- 5.12 Along Hackwell Street, a number of properties have no off street car parking so the road is often filled with parked cars on the upper side making manoeuvring through the village more difficult, particularly at peak times.



### Green and natural features

- 5.13 There is varied garden planting associated with the domestic properties that line these roads.

### Landmarks

- 5.14 St Lawrence Church, atop Napton hill.
- 5.15 The War Memorial that sits on Memorial Green off School Hill.
- 5.16 At the eastern end of School Hill, Hackwell Steps and inset well set underneath Hackwell House, connecting the two roads. A bench is located at the top of these steps.

### Buildings and details

- 5.17 Sub Area CN1: The Butts, School Hill - Older properties tend to be cottages rather than large houses, built in stone or mellow warm orange hued brickwork, slate, clay tile, punctuated with chimney stacks. The exception is The Old Chapel now converted into a house. There is one thatched property, Little Fold.
- 5.18 There is no dominate modern style of housing though the most distinct were those individual properties built during the 70's which now tend to look somewhat dated and the rather imposing 90's 3 storey houses, with built in garages at street level.

- 5.19 The most recently built houses have been designed over three floors to maximise on the splendid views to the south, but having garages underneath and direct off street car parking (with little demarcation between road and private land) inevitably detracts from the character of the street itself.
- 5.20 Mixed roof pitches ranging from 40–70 °.
- 5.21 Design of and materials and details of the modern houses are wide-ranging, though most recent developments have aimed to be more sympathetic to the local vernacular e.g. dormer windows and use of roof space reflecting the vernacular of the Old Chapel.
- 5.22 Sub Area CN2 : Hackwell Street - The Granary is most the distinctive historic property enjoying an open aspect to the south. Whilst there are other older properties, the houses along this section are generally more modern in character, mainly 70s in origin, and built in a variety of materials, including timber as well as stone and brick. Some have flat or mono pitch roofs.

### Streetscape features

- 5.23 The bench at the top of Hackwell Triangle off School Hill, takes advantage of its elevated open position, offering an excellent view; extensive in terms of field of vision including short and long and short views of and across the lower parts of the village.
- 5.24 Many garden walls along the Butts and School Hill are built in stone, which helps to ‘tie’ the street together despite the variable building styles.
- 5.25 Uniform road signage, style in keeping with rural village. Interesting ‘No Cycling sign at bottom of footpath up to the church.
- 5.26 Hackwell Street tends to be dominated by traffic, being without sufficient off street carparking to support the houses that front it. There is a footpath on the upper side only, elevated above the road and separated by a grass slope. Part of the footpath has escaped being surfaced with modern tarmac, instead finished with its original blue Victorian pavers. Similarly, there is a section of brick paving along School Hill.

### Land Uses

- 5.27 A residential area.

### Views

- 5.28 Whilst most residences enjoy good views out, due to their elevated position, at road level views are generally restricted to glimpsed views between the buildings and at a few key points that provides excellent views over the rest of the village and open countryside, such as the key views :-
- from the eastern end of School Hill towards Shuckburgh Hill

- top of Hackwell Triangle over open field to south and east of the Granary and rest of village (ref Important View 6 in the Plan)
- top of the Memorial Green over the Green and open countryside
- from the Churchyard of St Lawrence Church (Ref Important View 3 in the Plan)
- looking westwards along Hackwell Street towards Crown Green and the Old Crown Pub and Old Bakery adjoining.

## Summary

- 5.29 The Central North area enjoys an elevated position halfway up Napton Hill attracting more development and consequently is more compact and densely populated than other parts of the village. Buildings are taller here than anywhere else in the village so the streets feel less open and less rural in character.
- 5.30 Public views out over the rest of the village and open countryside beyond are exceptional where there are openings between developments and benches have been located at two key sites to allow people to enjoy them to the full. The view from the top of Hackwell Steps is of particular note as the field of vision is so wide. Another important view (Ref 3) can be gained from the churchyard of St Lawrence Church looking southwards. The views out are a lot better than those looking in or of the streets themselves; the contrast is uplifting.
- 5.31 There is a lack of harmony resulting from the wide collection of architectural styles, features, materials and building heights. The staggering of so many individually designed houses up the hillside presents a somewhat incoherent character; the view from top of Hackwell Street looking up towards School Hill being a case in point. However, the fact that no one architectural style dominates another and the random nature of the way this area has evolved over time, creates an interesting overall impression
- 5.32 A lot of the older properties were built without provision for off street car parking, so the roads, especially Hackwell Street, can get very busy and restricted by residents' cars. Many newer properties have incorporated in-built garages under the main accommodation and off-street car parking, resulting in a merging of boundaries between road, footpath and private drives. This impacts adversely on the street scene as well as on the movement of through traffic. Where there are footpaths, they appear on one side of the road only and in places are elevated above the level of the road and built in traditional brickwork. There are few unifying features but road signage is one and makes street identification easy.
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## 6. Character Area : West

### Introduction

- 6.1 This area covers the western fringes of the village, including three sub areas:
- W1 - New Street leading out of the bottom of the village to Chapel Green;
  - W2 - Howcombe Lane that connects the upper and lower areas at this end of the village; and
  - W3 - Poplar Road, the upper road leading into the village from the west, Howcombe Gardens, Mill Road and Hollow Way.

It also includes agricultural land that falls within the built up area boundary for the village.



### Layout

- 6.2 Sub Area W1; New Street leading out to Chapel Green : The eastern end is framed by attractive historic houses (Clyde House and Home Farm, the latter establishing the building line to the south side). Properties to the north are staggered with a significant set back from road.
- 6.3 Small residential developments have sprung off New Street; on sites which were once agricultural or back land and incorporating conversions and new builds.
- 6.4 Sub Area W2 : Howcombe Lane - On the edge of village built up area. Development is concentrated at the bottom, where the gradient is less, and sits back on both sides of the road. Houses on the west side align with the road whereas those on the east relate to either Cox's Lane or Pillory Green rather than Howcombe Lane.

- 6.5 Sub Area W3 : Poplar Rd, Howcombe Gardens, Mill Road, Hollow Way – Development on The Poplars is on one side only, overlooking open fields to the south. Some houses are built right on to road edge, others set back with front gardens. Howcombe Gardens occupies what was originally part of the allotment site.

### Topography

- 6.6 New Street is fairly level following a natural contour near the base of Napton Hill, above the brook that runs behind to the south east.
- 6.7 Howcombe Lane is sloping (perpendicular to contours) with its gradient increasing up the hill.
- 6.8 The Poplars is fairly level, following the natural contour along the upper part of Napton Hill.
- 6.9 Howcombe Gardens is tucked behind The Poplars with houses following the higher contours.
- 6.10 Houses along The Poplars are generally elevated above road level – with a steep rise behind properties

### Spaces

- 6.11 New Street is sandwiched between the Green and Pillory Green, which occupies the bottom of Howcombe Lane.
- 6.12 Pillory Green has been enhanced over recent years, now clear of the old metal clad garage between it and the Christadelphian Meeting Room, and provides a pleasant place to sit at the end of Cox’s Lane where it meets Howcombe Lane.
- 6.13 The village allotments are located at the junction of The Poplars with Hollow Way, opposite Howcombe Lane, that junction marked by a green triangle of land
- 6.14 There is also a small green space at the top of Mill Road, where one can stop to enjoy the magnificent views over the allotments and open countryside to the south.
- 6.15 This end of the village adjoins open pasture to the west and south, separating the village of Napton from the neighbouring hamlet of Chapel Green. There is a right of way across the field to the east at the top of Howcombe Lane, connecting through to The Green.

### Roads, Streets and Routes

- 6.16 New Street is a gentle curving road, fairly open with good pedestrian access on one side only. Napton Village Stores forefront merges with the public footpath that passes it. This

road is generally free of residents' car parking but is used extensively in support of the shop.

- 6.17 Howcombe Lane is a long straight road up the hill with no footpaths above Pillory Green. Footpaths cut across grass verges at both sides of its junction to New Street.
- 6.18 The Poplars is a fast narrow road, with no pavement on either side.

### Green and natural features

- 6.19 Long front gardens to north side of New Street and varied vegetation of a fairly informal character soften the street and give it very much a rural context.
- 6.20 This is more evident along Howcombe Lane which forms the edge of the village with native farm hedges along the upper section and informal planting and hedges to its lower section. Fields and open countryside lie to the west and east of the upper section.
- 6.21 A green triangle (with tree) sits at top of Howcombe Lane.
- 6.22 The village allotments are located at the junction of The Poplars and Hollow Way and provide a stunning view to the south over open fields and a vast swath of open countryside beyond.
- 6.23 Beyond the built up area, along The Poplars and before the canal bridge crossing, lies to the north the old Napton Brickworks, comprising redundant quarry and earthworks. This is now the site of a local fishery. Part of the site has been identified as a Local Green Space D; Land adjacent to the former Napton Brickworks site.



- 6.24 The Oxford Canal skirts around the village of Napton on the western and northern sides of Napton Hill, but has a visual connection at key points including from The Poplars.



## Landmarks

- 6.25 Napton Post Office and Stores off New Street forms a strong focal point both in terms of its architectural character but also its land use –over recent years, with the closure of two pubs in the village, it has become a primary community hub. It also attracts lots of visitors to the village including canal users and cyclists who use Napton as a ‘break’ stop.
- 6.26 Christadelphian Meeting Room, whilst a small building, is still recognisable as a place of worship.
- 6.27 Oxford Canal
- 6.28 A little way out from the centre, located next to Napton Bottom Lock on the canal, is The Folly pub, which attracts custom from both the waterway and land-based settlements, not just confined to Napton locals.



## Buildings and details

- 6.29 There is an eclectic mix of architecture from different time periods within this area.
- 6.30 The houses to the north side of New Street are relatively modern compared to those to the south, which include the listed Georgian Home Farm. Pillory Thatch Cottage looks authentically old with its thatched roof but is relatively modern, constructed with details sensitive to the local vernacular.
- 6.31 There is a mix of materials that are used elsewhere within village – stone, brick, slate, clay thatch.

- 6.32 There is a mix of house types and building heights – bungalows (off Howcombe Lane), two storeys and, along the Poplars, the building height rises to three storeys in places. These houses occupy an elevated position but are set back from the road so do not appear as dominant as they might otherwise. Individual units have been refurbished differently from each other so the original uniformity of terrace has been lost.
- 6.33 Also on The Poplars, a group of older terraces to eastern end, slightly elevated, sit close to the road. This established the building line, position and architectural style of a newer block of terraces downhill of Howcombe Gardens as well as the vernacular of the larger family homes to the rear, built in stone and brickwork with clay substitute roof tiles.
- 6.34 A small number of 1920's semis and later individually designed detached properties infill between the two original terrace blocks at either end of The Poplars. Houses are set well back with elevated gardens with car spaces/ garages built into hillside at road level.

### Streetscape features

- 6.35 There is nothing which is overly intrusive or cluttered. Uniform road signage helps in that regard.
- 6.36 Pillory Green has a seat, timber bollards depicting the routes across.
- 6.37 Leys charity bench has an elevated position at the western end of The Poplars.
- 6.38 A prominent feature is the natural spring and well dating from the 1800s below the allotments.

### Land Uses

- 6.39 Mainly residential.
- 6.40 There is also:
- Retail – Post Office & Stores
  - Religious - Christadelphian Meeting Room, in a small building adjoining Pillory Green
  - Agricultural - land uses to open fields adjoining farms to west
  - Community – allotments

### Views

- 6.41 The gentle curve of New Street as it leads west and out of the village offers changing short vistas and glimpses of open countryside beyond.
- 6.42 On the approach into the village, from as far back as the Oxford Canal, there are excellent views up the hill to the Poplars, and also across Howcombe Lane to the Butts and St Lawrence Church sat on top of the hill. It is as interesting from the edge of the village approaching New Street as it is from afar, with the church being the focal point.

- 6.43 Howcombe Lane (upper section) and The Poplars/ Hollow Way offer excellent open views to the west and south across open fields and long distant views beyond of open countryside including Burton Dassett Hills.
- 6.44 There is an iconic view of the Oxford Canal from the Poplars, It has such merit as to warrant it being identified as an important view. (Ref Important View 2) The Oxford Can also features within Important View 4, looking back towards the western side of the hillside village.

### Summary

- 6.45 The western fringe of the village has a distinctly rural character and strong visual and physical connection to the agricultural uses from which Napton grew. Even within the busier area along New Street the road feels open and houses are set back from the road. Space in front of the shop allows customers to sit without obstructing the footpath and, despite the popularity of the shop attracting more cars, the overall attractiveness is not marred. Mature and well stocked front gardens, hedging as well as mellow stone garden walling to boundaries create a softness to the street scene.
  - 6.46 Changing vistas along New Street and exceptional views into and out of the village from both the top and bottom of the hill add to the overall quality of the environment and give this part of the village a real sense of place as a rural hillside settlement. The architecture almost becomes secondary to its setting and context.
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## 7. Character Area : East (South)

### Introduction

- 7.1 This area covers the south-eastern edges of the village, including three sub areas:
- E(S)1 – Dog Lane, St Lawrence Close, Jackson Lane;
  - E(S)2 – Godsons Lane, Fells Lane; and
  - E(S)3 – Vicarage Road, Church Road.
- 7.2 It also includes agricultural land that falls within the built-up area boundary for the village as well as make reference to open space outside that line.



### Layout

- 7.3 Sub Area ES1 : Dog Lane, St Lawrence Close, Jackson Lane - Dog Lane is a through route which connects, via a narrow lane, to Priors Marston Road to the east. St Lawrence Close and Jackson Lane feed off Dog Lane.
- 7.4 The focal point of this area is St Lawrence Primary School and the adjoining Granton Playing Field, which give this area a sense of openness, also aided by the wide road, footpaths on both sides and grass verge. Housing along Dog Lane is mixed in terms of size and tenure and generally low density, set well back from the road with generous gardens front and back. Whilst the housing around St Lawrence Close and Jackson Lane (a mix of private and housing association stock) is more compact, space in front of the houses is still generous so the area feel fairly open. Small bungalows face towards primary school.

- 7.5 Sub Area ES2 : Fells Lane, Godsons Lane - Apart from the Vine, houses are set back from road with mature front gardens. There is a small backfill development of three large family homes.
- 7.6 Sub Area ES3 : Vicarage Road - Buildings are mainly set back from road, quite higgledy-piggledy the houses on the upper side of the road have particularly large rear gardens/ fields linking through to Church Road to the west. Off Vicarage Road, there is a layby development of four large detached houses where the old vicarage originally stood, and The Baynton's courtyard, comprising a farm house and converted farm buildings.

## Topography

- 7.7 Sub Area E(S)1 around Dog Lane, it is fairly level following natural contour near the base of Napton Hill, above the line of the brook.
- 7.8 In contrast Godsons Lane and Fell's Lane (ES2) are sloping (perpendicular to contours) with gradients increasing up the hill.
- 7.9 Vicarage Road (ES3) is elevated and sloping gently between Butt Hill above and Hackwell Street below.
- 7.10 Church Road leads off Vicarage Road as a sharp ascent until within sight of the church where it plateaus.

## Spaces

- 7.11 Granton Playing Field and the playing field to St Lawrence Primary School are significant open spaces. Outside of the built-up area, associated strongly with the village, lie Napton Sports Field and Club (located off Priors Marston Road but also with pedestrian access off Fell's Lane) and the skateboard park below that. These all give this character area a strong recreational emphasis, and play an important role in terms of social and wellbeing benefits for the village. The Sports Field and Club is identified as a Local Green Space A.
- 7.12 In addition, there is a field to the south east of the Granary off Vicarage Road, whilst having no formal public access over it was for many years used by the community as the 'sledging field'. The lower part of this field has now been developed for housing but the upper part still remains as a very significant gap in the built-up area, offering a breathing space to what is the main route into the village and enabling excellent public views over the rest of the village and across to a vast area of open countryside beyond. This field is identified as a Local Green Space E.

## Roads, Streets and Routes

- 7.13 Dog Lane, within the confines of the village, is a fairly wide roadway with footpaths on both sides and a grass verge on one side. School restrictions have pushed car parking

further away from its entrance but it is still hectic at start and end of school day. As Dog Lane leads away from the village to the north east, it is relatively narrow, with grass verges and no footpaths.

- 7.14 A public footpath to Shuckburgh Hill leads off Dog Lane, in close proximity to the bottom of Fells Lane. This offers the opportunity of green corridors and traffic-free routes away from and through this side of the village.
- 7.15 Godsons Lane is a steep, narrow, one way road with no footpath and two sharp bends. There is a hedge on the embankment to its eastern side that restricts views on the bends.
- 7.16 Fells Lane is a minor track/road serving a few residential properties at top end but soon becomes a 'green' lane, linking Vicarage Road in the north to Dog Lane to the south. It also provides pedestrian access to Sports Field & Pavilion. This is a very popular walking route connecting many parts of the village to the School and other facilities located along Dog Lane . It provides a safe walking route for families with young children and has a quiet rural charm despite being so close to the centre of the village.
- 7.17 Vicarage Road is the main route through the village and yet still only has a pavement on one side only (south-east).

### **Green and natural features**

- 7.18 There is brook that flows westwards at the base of Napton Hill, south of Dog Lane and passes under it on the edge of the village to the north side, forming part of the boundary to the fields and Skateboard Park beyond.
- 7.19 A public right of way runs south off Dog Lane, providing an attractive link through to Shuckburgh Hill.
- 7.20 A mature wooded copse sits half way up Fell's Lane on its western side, opposite the access to the playing field. This is identified as a Local Green Space C.

### **Landmarks**

- 7.21 St Lawrence School on St Lawrence Close
- 7.22 The Baynton's, a collection of converted farm buildings set around the original Hill Farm House, stands out for its sensitive and attractive design.
- 7.23 The Arc School (previously Napton First School) off Vicarage Road.

## Buildings and details

- 7.24 Sub Area E(S)1 : St Lawrence Primary School is single storey with a fairly sprawling footprint on a generous site. Single story bungalows face on to the primary school. These are some of the few bungalows that exist in the village.
- 7.25 Closer to the village centre is the Victory Club, with associated car parking, directly off Dog Lane.
- 7.26 Elsewhere housing is generally two storey, mixed housing types and materials. More recent developments have generally aimed to follow the local vernacular in their use of the colour of brick or stone, window details, chimneys etc.
- 7.27 A small group of four unusual 1970s architect-designed houses stand out as being different but still blend in through the use of materials, overall building height and by being set well back from the road.
- 7.28 The original council built housing within this area has a style that is recognisable of similar housing built of its time elsewhere in the village, off Cox's Lane and The Crescent. Whilst the architecture is fairly plain, the original plots are generous by today's standards. Old flats/maisonettes are in the process of being replaced by the same number of terrace houses to reflect modern housing needs of young families.



- 7.29 Whilst this style could have dominated this part of the village, there is a good mix of private and social tenure and also a mix of architectural styles, boundary treatments and landscapes so that there is not an adverse impact of the whole.
- 7.30 Sub Area E(S)2: Older houses located at top of Godsons Lane are built of stone with slate roofs. A group of similar looking houses (chalet bungalows), built in the 70's, sit

immediately below and are set well back from the road with generous parking in front of the properties that forms part of and potentially detracts from the street scene. Below that is a later modern backfill development more in keeping with local vernacular.

- 7.31 Sub Area e(S)3: A number of older properties along Vicarage Road stand out as special. Hill Farm (the Bayntons) stands proudly at the junction of Vicarage Road to the minor road leading up to the church. Original outbuildings have been sensitively converted to create three attractive single storey units.
- 7.32 South View – an elegant imposing 3 storey white rendered Georgian property enjoying an elevated position on bend of Vicarage Road, as it descends towards Hackwell Street.
- 7.33 Arc School is located in the original Napton First School on Vicarage Road.
- 7.34 In contrast, there is an unsympathetically converted 3 storey rendered house opposite the Arc School, its impact increased by it being elevated above road level

### Streetscape features

- 7.35 Streetscape within this character area is shaped and softened by the gardens to the properties that front it.
- 7.36 Along Dog Lane there is a grit bin, telegraph poles, street lighting and school railings, though the street also benefits from not being dominated by road signs (uniform in style) or other street paraphernalia, so avoids looking too cluttered.
- 7.37 There is nothing distinctive, in terms of street furniture, about Godsons Lane or Fell’s Lane. Low key street lighting illuminates the former.
- 7.38 As within other areas, benches are provided at key locations, e.g. Sports Pavilion and the road signs are uniform throughout the village.

### Land Uses

- 7.39 The area has a mix of uses; residential, educational and leisure/ recreational.
- 7.40 Agricultural uses on are adjoining land and on the open field off Vicarage Road. Further out to the east lie Dog Lane Fisheries and Lakeview Camping Park.
- 7.41 Dog Lane has a strong community feel with the presence of the village school at the junction of Dog Lane and St Lawrence Close, Granton Playing Field, the Victory Club and the village playing field.
- 7.42 The Arc, a special needs school, has a less prominent presence within the village as many of its students come from outside the village but it is still a welcome educational resource within the village.



## Views

- 7.43 Along Dog Lane, there are glimpsed views through to the south across the lower flood plain and to the north across Granton Playing Field up to the housing on the hill.
- 7.44 To the eastern end of Dog Lane and bottom of Godsons Lane there are good views up the hill which hopefully will not be affected by the height of the new development to the north east and in the foreground. Views such as this help to provide cohesion, connecting the different parts of the village.
- 7.45 There are very attractive long distance views from the top of Fell's Lane overlooking Napton Sports Field and across to Shuckburgh Hill.
- 7.46 The open aspect where farmland abuts Vicarage Road (known by many residents affectionately as the old 'Sledging Field') offers views across to lower parts of village and open countryside beyond. This reinforces the rural character of this part of the village, and provides a breathing space along Vicarage Road. This is a popular place for people to stop and admire the view. Important View 5; From the top of Danils Hill (campsite) back into the village clearly shows the rural character of the village which is enhanced by the presence of this green area (LGS E) amongst the buildings.

## Summary

- 7.47 The eastern fringe of the village has an open feel to it. Houses are generally set back from the road with well stocked gardens. Boundaries are a mix of hedging, fencing and some walling. It is noticeable where these elements are missing. Dog Lane feels particularly open, with a good footpath link on both sides, and grass verge on the north side.
- 7.48 Housing is the most mixed within the village including a wide range across different ages, sizes and tenures and includes a number of bungalows on the lower, more level parts around St Lawrence Close, offering easy access to most of the community facilities in the village.
- 7.49 There is a strong community element to this area with two schools, playing and sports fields and the Victory Club all easily accessible from the centre and other community related uses.
- 7.50 Views from the lower level are more restricted, gained from glimpses between buildings towards open countryside and to the north towards to the upper parts of the village. Views from the upper level, outwards and inwards from nearby Danils Hill near Shuckburgh are spectacular and help to connect the village to its beautiful setting.
- 7.51 Two proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) (Ref C & E) are located within this area; land above Quincy Meadow and the copse off Fell's Lane, with another LGS A Napton Sports field and Club sitting just outside the Built-up Area Boundary.

## 8. Character Area : East (North)

### Introduction

- 8.1 East (North) area covers the most easterly fringe to the village, including the triangle formed by Hillside, Hillside Croft and Butt Hill rising up the north side of Napton Hill, as well as the top of Vicarage Road before it meets the lane that ascends up to St Lawrence Church and the new development off Priors Marston Road.



### Layout

- 8.2 Sub Area EN1 : Butt Hill - Butt Hill was not part of the original road layout serving the village but a later addition when the road between Southam and Daventry was improved. This explains why there are no older buildings along its lower section, but a mixture of detached modern houses located on the west side only. The mix continues up the hill to include a few older properties, usually set back, again all on west side. The only exception to this is the listed Manor Farm at the top of Butt Hill. There is a small back fill development just above the Hillside junction.
- 8.3 Sub Area EN 2; Priors Marston Road : An attractive new housing development has recently been completed on two cul de sacs (Cyril's Corner and Collins Close) off the main Priors Marston Road. These are located between existing residential uses, albeit the southern one is a long private drive to a house located behind Vicarage Road. It includes a mix of housing types including bungalows with their accesses off the cul de sac not the main road.

- 8.4 Sub Area EN3 : Hillside – At the lower end, the dwellings are cottage and farm style, with some properties parallel to the road but others (Elsmore House) orientated, more sideways, towards the more open aspect on the bend in the road. The upper end is predominantly 1960's development with individual house designs, generally detached, set back parallel to road.
- 8.5 Sub Area EN4 : Hillside Croft - This is a modern development circa 2000, with linked detached and terrace housing. Density is higher than the traditional housing in the village with small front and rear gardens. Off street car parking is provided though the street is still used for car parking where there are no dropped kerbs and access points off.

## Topography

- 8.6 Butt Hill is steeply sloping, perpendicular to the hill gradient. Reaching the top of the hill the gradient lessens to a gentle slope at the start of Priors Marston Road before it steepens again towards its junction with Dog Lane.
- 8.7 Hillside cuts across the hill to link Butt Hill to Southam Road, and Hillside Croft off Hillside is fairly flat.
- 8.8 Napton Sports Field and Skatepark are located on the corner of Priors Marston Road and Dog Lane. Major earth works were undertaken to cut and till the sloping site to create the sports facilities.

## Spaces

- 8.9 There is a green space with semi-mature trees, towards top of the hill at the junction between Butt Hill and Hillside, which also incorporates a few public parking spaces. With it elevated bench it provides a pleasant place to sit and enjoy the long distance views to the north and north east.

## Roads, Streets and Routes

- 8.10 Butt Hill has a wide carriageway with a wide footpath on one side, serving the houses on the west wide of the road. This ends at the bottom, requiring pedestrians to cross the road to access properties on Southam Road to the west.
- 8.11 A new footpath has been added to Priors Marston Road to serve the new housing at Cyril's Corner, which might otherwise create a suburban feel at edge of village but for the open aspect, overlooking fields, on the other side of the road.
- 8.12 Hillside would have been the original route into the village, but was 'bypassed' by the main A425 Southam Road. The road is signposted as access to frontages only. There is a continuous pavement on the right-hand side heading up hill.



- 8.13 Hillside Croft is a typical small scale estate road terminating with a hammer head at its end, with continuous footpaths within but which do not link to any other footpath.

### Green and natural features

- 8.14 There is a continuous natural hedgerow along the eastern side of Butt Hill with open fields beyond to the east. Mature trees flank both sides before the junction with Priors Marston Road at the top of the hill and a well-established hedge continues around the corner leading to Vicarage Road on the north side.
- 8.15 New boundaries off Priors Marston have been fenced, removing the original hedging but some sections have already been planted up to form more natural edges.
- 8.16 There is a very interesting form to the topiary cloud hedging that bounds Hannah's Cottage. A large over topped beech tree sits above this outside Elsmore House. A wide grassed verge at the top of Hillside accommodates a short avenue of trees.
- 8.17 Napton Sports Field and Club is identified as a Local Green Space A.

### Landmarks

- 8.18 Manor Farm is the only building that stands out by virtue of its location at the top of the hill and having no neighbours. It is also the most prominent working farm remaining within the confines of the village. The Vicarage opposite is well known, by its association with the church as opposed to its architectural presence.
- 8.19 Napton Sports Field is located here.

## Buildings and details

- 8.20 There are a few buildings of historical value and, apart from Manor Farm, these are generally located on the lower to middle section of Hillside, which was once the main route into the village. These include Elsmore House and Hillside House, both of which are listed. Older houses, which often include outbuildings, are constructed in either stone or brick, with natural clay tile or Welsh slate roofing. Wrought iron bracing to Hannah’s Cottage and Elsmore House, punctuate their elevations.
- 8.21 The rest of the developments that front these roads are varied in style, and building materials. There is no consistency in roof height though there is evidence of a building line, unlike on Southam Road.
- 8.22 The newer housing, developed since the 1990s, tends to more reflect the local vernacular – brick, slate/tile substitute roofing.



## Streetscape features

- 8.23 There is a plethora of road signs at the junction of Butt Hill to Prior Marston road, including three brown signs (Dog Lane Fisheries, St Lawrence School and Sports Field), which could be rationalised to present a more attractive aspect. This also includes a ‘Caution Children Playing’ sign on entrance to road.
- 8.24 Uniform road signs help to unify signage throughout the village.

## Land Uses

- 8.25 Mainly residential, apart from agricultural use (Manor Farm) at the top of Butt Hill and on adjoining land.



- 8.26 There is also leisure associated with the Sports Field, and Dog Lane Fisheries further along Priors Marston Road to the south.

### Views

- 8.27 There are open views all the way along Butt Hill across farmland to the north and north east including Napton Reservoir and Marinas and as far as Rugby in the long distance. A view point at the junction of Butt Hill and Hillside has been identified as Important View 1 in the Plan.
- 8.28 There are stunning long distant views from Priors Marston Road across farm land to south east towards Shuckburgh Hill, visually connecting this hillside settlement to its neighbouring topographical feature
- 8.29 Other less significant views are gained by looking up Hillside where it meanders up the hill and through properties on the more elevated sections of Hillside.

### Summary

- 8.30 The eastern fringe of the village has an open feel to it. Butt Hill, a long straight steeply sloping road, is the main conduit into the village. However, it still maintains a rural characteristic by virtue of the lack of street parking and one sided development. Mature field hedges soften the aspect over sloping farmland, across the reservoir and canal beyond to distant town of Rugby to the north.
- 8.31 Views from the lower levels of Hillside and Hillside Croft are more restricted, gained from glimpses between buildings towards open countryside whilst views from the upper level

are excellent towards the north and eastern side of Napton Hill and help to connect the village to its beautiful setting.

- 8.32 Houses are generally set back from the road with well stocked gardens. Boundaries are a mix of hedging, fencing and some walling. Whilst it feels less rural than the western end of the village it still has a very strong rural character emphasised by having housing development on Butt Hill and off Priors Marston road on one side only offering spectacular views over open countryside on the other side.
- 8.33 Housing is mixed across different ages but mainly offers larger family houses, apart from some within Hillside Croft. There are a few bungalows and chalet bungalows scattered amongst the more modern developments.
-

## 9. Character Area : North

### Introduction

- 9.1 The North area is the stretch of Southam Road from the junction with the old brickyard site through to where it meets Shuckburgh Road at the crossroads with the King’s Head public house.

### Layout

- 9.2 Southam Road, the A425, is a ribbon development with houses set at variable distances back from the road. Whilst some of the properties have large front and back gardens, others sit more closely to the highway boundary.
- 9.3 No buildings front on to the road between Hillside and the King’s Head public house



### Topography

- 9.4 The road is fairly level, gently rising and falling, following the natural contour slightly up from the toe of Napton Hill on north side. The land continues to fall away to the north so that Napton, including the houses along Southam Road are visible from a distance.

### Spaces

- 9.5 The open countryside that surrounds this area is, in the main, hidden behind houses.
- 9.6 There is a green space where Hillside joins Southam Road.



## Roads, Streets and Routes

- 9.7 Southam Road has a wide carriageway, serving heavy traffic at peak times. Speed is restricted to 30mph through village though vehicles do often exceed that as they pass through. The road connects Napton to Southam to the west and to Daventry via Shuckburgh to the east.
- 9.8 There is a footpath on the north side only, occasionally separated from the road by a narrow grass verge. This is continuous to 'Endene' bungalow. New infill development is underway on the north side of Southam Road but this, along with 'Westcott', the final house on this road, will not be served by a footpath.
- 9.9 There is space on the southern side of the road for a footpath on the approach to the junction with Hillside but this remains as a wide grass verge.
- 9.10 The road can be difficult to cross adding to the lack of connectivity between Southam Road and the rest of the village on the south side of Napton Hill.
- 9.11 Kings Head carpark is used as a school bus pick up and drop off. However, in the afternoons, buses travelling away from Southam have to drop children off on the 'wrong side' of the road, requiring most of them to cross without a dedicated safe crossing point.
- 9.12 There is an unlit bridleway (Grove Lane) from Southam Road, where it meets Hillside. It is located between properties and leads users up the hill and through open fields up to St Lawrence Church at the top. In addition, there are three public rights of way that lead up to the top of the hill from this side of the village, the most westerly starting opposite the recently converted Bridge Inn
- 9.13 There is a public right of way that crosses farmland to connect indirectly to the Oxford Canal on its course around the northern side of Napton Hill, and links through to Napton Reservoir to the north east and another route that links to the neighbouring village of Stockton to the north west.

## Green and natural features

- 9.14 There is a man-made pond by the old brickyard entrance off Southam Road.
- 9.15 Mature trees feature along the roadside heading towards the village.
- 9.16 Predominantly hedging, often with mixed native species, is used to define property boundaries.
- 9.17 The Oxford Canal cuts across Southam Road to the west of the village and winds round to the east so that it is visible in the distance from Southam Road. It can be accessed on foot where it passes under the A425 and off the road that heads north past Crossroads Garage.

## Landmarks

- 9.18 Oxford Canal to the north of the village.
- 9.19 A line of attractive mature trees along the boundary to new building site east of 'Westcott' (though some have been put at risk by the new development).
- 9.20 Other landmarks include:
- Kings Head public house; and
  - Cross Roads garage.

## Buildings and details

- 9.21 There are as many listed and older buildings located on this side of the hill as within the centre of the village, notably Red House Farm and a barn to the north-east of it and The Old Farm. However, it is more difficult to appreciate their aesthetic appeal due to the nature of the road on which they are located (busy road, footpath on one side only). Only about five of the eighteen odd properties located along this road that are in fact circa 20<sup>th</sup> century or later, with a further four new houses nearing completion.
- 9.22 Ironstone and traditional Georgian brickwork is used extensively. Stone and thatch is found on Inglenook Cottage (circa 1660), stone on The Old Farm, Grove Cottages and others and a mellow orange locally sourced brick on Red House Farm.
- 9.23 Building heights depending on age and number of storeys. Red house farm is three storeys though most older houses are two.
- 9.24 Interesting roofscapes with variable heights of buildings and many roofs punctuated with chimneys.
- 9.25 Some of the detailing on the more modern houses aims to reflect their historic context but is has been clumsily executed thus missing the point.

## Streetscape features

- 9.26 There is little by way of street paraphernalia. For such a busy through route, it is pleasantly clear of clutter.
- 9.27 There are 'Welcome to Napton' signs at both ends of the road – but perhaps more could be made of prominent village features such as the windmill and canal. These are accompanied by speed limit signs marking the entry into the village.
- 9.28 Historical features include a mile marker and an inset post box outside the Old Barns. There is also one of the four old water fountains/taps that are located around the village pf Napton.

## Land Uses

- 9.29 Residential is the primary use. There is in addition some commercial (Cross Roads garage) and Leisure (King’s Head PH).

## Views

- 9.30 There are open views between properties and beyond ‘Endene’ towards Stockton across open fields, and including the Oxford Canal in the middle ground.
- 9.31 Outside the built-up area of the village, there are also stunning views to be gained from the top of Grove Lane looking northwards, including Napton reservoirs and marinas (Calcutt, Napton and Wigwam Turn).



## Summary

- 9.32 The northern end of the village contains as many of the older historic building stock as does the main centre around the Green. It is difficult to fully appreciate their quality and character due to the transient nature of the main road that serves the village. Originally the road would have meandered up Hillside and through the village but the main route is now from the crossroads with Butt Hill. Nevertheless, this end offers visitors their first impression of Napton and it is a good one, shaped by the interesting buildings, prevalent mature vegetation and open countryside leading to it.
- 9.33 The speed of the road, volume of traffic and lack of footpath on most of the southern side (including the section leading to the Kings Head PH from Butt Hill and Hillside) results in a degree of separation of the northern side of this part of the village. Whilst there are grass verges it is not conducive to encouraging pedestrians and crossing the road at these points at peak times can be difficult. Houses on the south side have no footpath so are

reliant on using their cars or have to walk along the grass verge or cross the road twice to access the village.

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## 10. Character Area : Chapel Green

- 10.1 Chapel Green is a small rural hamlet, set in open countryside and comprising of around 20 houses and two farms. It lies approximately 400m to the south west of the main village centre of Napton on the Hill.



- 10.2 Chapel Green whilst separated from Napton is still closely affiliated with its larger neighbour, with its residents making use of all of the community and recreational facilities it offers. In return the hamlet presents a very pleasant ‘gateway’ on the approach to Napton from the south, the views in that direction giving opportunity to enjoy its beautiful hillside setting topped by St Lawrence Church and Napton Windmill.
- 10.3 Chapel Green has a strong historical context. Its name is derived from a chapel (and medieval settlement) located here. A hollow way and the recognisable field patterns of ridge and furrow radiate out from where it is purported to have stood before the Black Death blighted the area.
- 10.4 There is also a well/ water tap alongside the road, Chapel Green, which is thought to be one of the clues used by treasure hunters, trying to solve the Biblical mystery of what happened to the Ark, hidden when Jerusalem was invaded by Babylonians and then brought back to England by the Knights Templar.
- 10.5 Chapel Green as it stands today evolved around a small number of farmsteads and associated farm cottages. All but two of those original farm houses have now been converted along with their outbuildings to residential use with many of their occupants now working outside the parish. However, there is still a very strong connection between the hamlet and the agricultural land uses that surround it. Napton Water Buffalo is actually based in Chapel Green.

- 10.6 The most historically significant building is the listed Grade II Chapel Green Farmhouse, circa 1637, identifiable by its massive central stone chimney stack and mellow ironstone walls. It is set behind Langley's Pit, through which horse and carts would pass so that their wooden wheels would swell back on to the rims. Whilst the pond has shrunk in size it still provides an attractive setting to the houses that overlook it, and an undisturbed habitat for local wildlife.
- 10.7 Apart from The Fens (a brick terrace of four late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages) all other houses along Chapel Green are set back from the road with mature front gardens and hedges. Cars are generally parked off the road other than in front of the Fens where old gardens are now hardstanding and the grass verges are well worn by traffic.
- 10.8 Mature field hedges, including trees, line the roads where there are no houses, adding to the rural character of the hamlet.
- 10.9 There is a footpath that runs alongside the main road from The Fens connecting the hamlet back to Napton village. There are also public footpaths across neighbouring fields offering access to the Oxford Canal and open countryside to the south.
- 10.10 The road that passes through Chapel Green that leads towards Napton Village has a speed restriction of 40mph though the proximity of houses to the road makes most drivers slow down. The limit only reduces to 30mph along Thornton's Lane on the approach to the main village.
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