

7 Action Projects

The following section of the Neighbourhood Plan outlines action projects identified which would benefit the community. It will be for the parish council and local people, working with key agencies such as Wiltshire Council to deliver these action projects over the coming years.

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan will not be examined as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, however, it does pick up on key issues identified by the community during consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, and issues identified in the evidence base.

Action projects are included on the following themes:

- Housing
- Economy and Employment
- Tourism
- Traffic and Transport
- Cemetery expansion
- Youth Facilities

Housing

Surveys of community opinion have shown clearly that highest perceived priority is affordable housing, especially for younger families. Because of the local market prices, affordable in practice means Social Housing, which is in the hands in North Wiltshire of various Housing Associations. The future policies of these Associations are currently (2018) under review, but none intend at present to replace in the Parish any local stock sold.

A July 2017 Wiltshire Council Housing Needs Survey Report assessed the current needs as 14 additional subsidised rental and shared ownership homes. This survey did not include those local families who have already been driven out of the Parish by high market prices, but which would like to return.

There are no sites available even within the recently (2018) extended Settlement which could meet that need in mixed estates. Furthermore, although there is currently no imposed Housing target for the Parish, there probably will be in the period up to 2036.

The only suitably sized site immediately outside the Settlement, Bedwyn Dyke Field (7.1 acres approx.), with existing road and pedestrian access to the village facilities, lies administratively within the neighbouring civil parish of Little Bedwyn, although it directly borders Great Bedwyn's Primary School and Spaines estate. Local facilities (schools, surgery, post office/baker's, general store, station, etc) are all confident they could cater with the increase in local population which such a new estate would engender, and indeed would benefit economically.

Action Project 1: Housing

- (a) Parish Council to apply for boundary change with Little Bedwyn, to bring Bedwyn Dyke field within Great Bedwyn Civil Parish, and subsequently within GB Settlement.
- (b) St Mary's Church PCC to consider supporting the development of their land Bedwyn Dyke field for development of mixed use housing scheme (including the delivery of social housing for local people).

Potential Brownfield sites within the Settlement are few and small enough, if and when the owners are ready to sell, to be dealt with by the normal planning process. Known such brownfield sites include the Vicarage and its grounds off Church Street, the property on the corner of Church Street and Brook Street (identified also in the 2007 Kennet District GB Conservation Area Appraisal), and the open plot behind 24-26 Farm Lane.

Photo: Bedwyn Dyke Field showing South Western built edge (top) and South Eastern edge looking towards the railway line (bottom).



Economy and Employment.

The Civil Parish of Great Bedwyn is still predominantly rural, agricultural and forested. However, neither of these latter characteristics provides significant local wealth. An increasing number of residents have started small home-based businesses, dependent on achieving very good internet and transport communication. Many residents are commuters, by road and/or rail, to employment in large conurbations. Great Bedwyn is not a wealthy parish: 21% of the local homes are Social Housing, and 42% of the residents have household incomes of less than £40,00 per annum.

The numbers employed in agriculture and forestry are small. The largest employer is Great Bedwyn Primary School, now part of an Academy, with 14 teachers, and 23 teaching assistants and ancillary staff; 60% of the staff have to commute to the village from cheaper housing elsewhere. There are two small garages, and a diminishing number of tradesmen. There are two potential designated Light Industrial Sites (Brook Street former piggery - currently storage and lorry parking, no permanent employees), and Brail Farm (currently a small garage and three small workshops, room for another).

The big unknown is Tottenham House and its parkland. The planning application for their development is now (2018) with Wiltshire Council, and there are potentially large implications for local employment on and off the property, including light industrial workshops, and for additional housing needs and supporting trades. Until a buyer is found however, these implications remain unquantifiable.

Action Project 2: Economy & Employment

Parish Council to initiate and support

- (a) Information on Great Bedwyn Parish website, including details of all local businesses.
- (b) Improvements to local broadband speed and reliability
- (c) Encouragement for marketing of unused space in light industrial sites such as Brail Farm and Brook Street former piggery.

Tourism

Figures 5, 7 and 8 highlight key aspects of local tourist interest to visitors and recreation opportunities for local people. The Kennet & Avon Canal attracts anglers, ramblers, boaters, canoers/paddleboarders, cyclists, amateur historians, those with an interest in natural history and the environment and those with former family links to the Great Bedwyn area. Furthermore the walking trails and cycle routes attract a number of people, many of whom then visit the Pumping Station and local pubs and shops.

Despite the many visitors, Visit Wiltshire considers Great Bedwyn to be lacking in coordinated tourist information and information about visitor facilities (camping, B&B, public toilets, refreshments etc.). There is potential for a local Tourism Plan, which provides information for local people and visitors about the local offer.

Action Project 3: Tourism

Parish Council to initiate and support the production of a local Tourism Plan with information for local people and visitors about the local offer.

Traffic and Transport

Parking

The amount of traffic, both local and through, is increasing. Bedwyn Railway Station also attracts many commuters from other communities, whose cars remain in the village throughout working days; improvements to the rail infrastructure make this trend likely to increase. More online shopping brings more delivery vans. Buses, trucks, farm vehicles and cars are getting bigger. The delivery and collection of children to/from the village school causes traffic surges twice a day.

Great Bedwyn Parish Council intends to review village parking in more detail, but meanwhile it is already clear that:

- New homes will bring more local cars, so off-street parking for them is a must;
- The narrowness of even principal road such as the High Street and Church Street, and the lack of off-street parking for many of the properties, indicate the potential for one or more public car parks on the edges of the village centre. While a parking study is awaited, suitable spaces for these parks need to be protected from further housing development.
- Parking at the church is constrained.
- Two fields where additional car parking could be provided in future have been suggested:
 - Land off Brook Street , next to Great Bedwyn Wharf.
 - Land between the Allotments/Back Lane and Shawgrove

Road Safety

Most of the roads in and approaching the village are attractive rural lanes that do not reflect modern traffic expectations. Parking on either side of the High Street and Church Street in particular can make access by emergency services and farm vehicles slow and sometimes impossible. Speeding in Church Street, Forest Hill and Brook Street (especially around the canal and rail bridges) is very dangerous.

The network of public footpaths outside the village is extensive, but the pavements and lighting within the village are considered by some to be inadequate for safe pedestrian use, especially in Brown's Lane, Brook Street and Church Street. These matters require action by Parish and Wiltshire Council.

Action Project 4: Traffic and Transport

The parish council aims to initiate:

- (a) A parking study and plan which would justify the need or otherwise for additional car parking in the village, potentially in the locations suggested
- (b) Road and pedestrian safety improvements are needed, including pavements and lighting, which improve pedestrian safety while also maintaining the character of the village and retaining dark skies. This will entail close working with Wiltshire Council as the Highway Authority.

Cemetery Expansion

The extension to the St Mary's Church cemetery is likely to be needed. The existing cemetery, formerly part of the Church Field, is now approaching full capacity, and will soon require another extension of similar size. It is suggested that this is best located on Church Street in the Church Field. This space would be allocated and would be retained for this purpose alone.

Action Project 5: Cemetery Extension

Further work is needed to identify how much land is required, and identify the land parcel as an allocation. The parish council will work with the Church to identify the future demand and identify a site for this purpose. Together they will apply to the owner of Church Field (Crown Estate), to seek approval for this.

It is possible that an allocation for a cemetery expansion would be made in the final Neighbourhood Plan should sufficient evidence of need be established.

Youth Facilities

The Parish is currently does not have such good activities or facilities for young people, especially teenagers. A survey of local young people was carried out in 2017, asking what facilities would be used and where they would best be sited. The resultant recommendations are summarised in the evidence base report to this Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Action Project 6: Youth Facilities

The parish council will work with the community and young people to improve the village's offer in terms of Youth Facilities, taking on board the findings of the 2017 study.

8 Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base

Policy Background

Core Strategy (Wiltshire Council)
Housing Site Allocations DPD (Wiltshire Council)
Local Plan (Wiltshire Council)

General Evidence

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan
Environment Agency Flood Risk Assessments and Surface Water Flooding data

Local Evidence

Completed

Appendix 1: Pre-Application Engagement Protocol
Appendix 2: Bedwyn Dyke Site - Little Bedwyn
Appendix 3: Employment Evidence
Appendix 4: Tottenham House Estate Planning Application Summary
Appendix 5: Housing Needs Assessment for Great Bedwyn, (Wiltshire Council, 2017)
Appendix 6: SHEELA for Pewsey Area (Wiltshire Council, 2017)
Appendix 7: PROW and Tourism
Appendix 8: Great Bedwyn Village Design Statement 2003
Appendix 9: Great Bedwyn Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2007

In draft

Appendix 10: NDP Consultation Report 2018 - process ongoing
Appendix 11: Local Green Space Designation Report 2018 - process ongoing
Appendix 12: Youth Facilities Audit 2017- draft

Forthcoming

Cemetery Expansion Paper, 2018 - not yet commenced