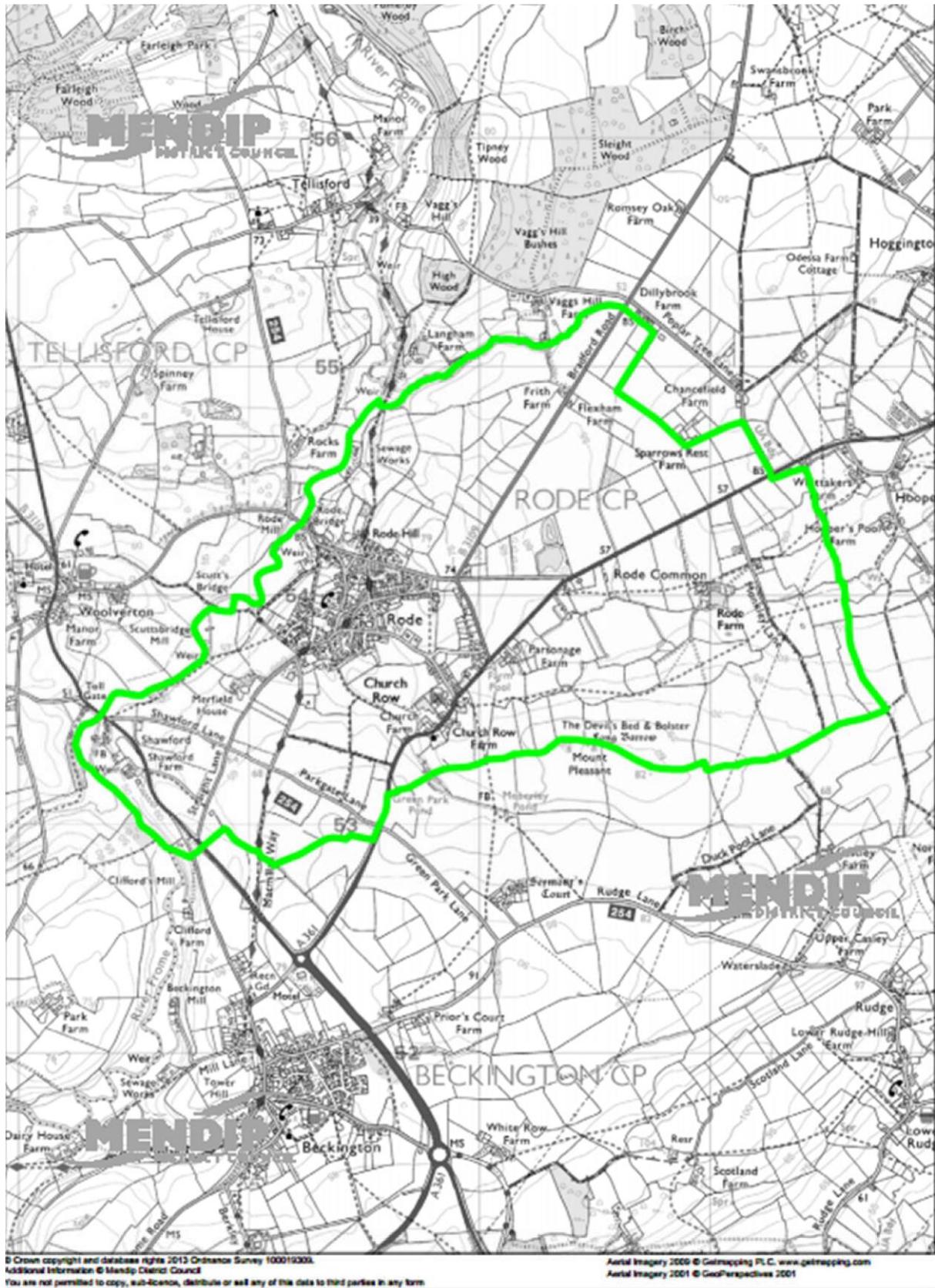




# **RODE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

**2015 - 2030**

**Incorporating modifications following  
Examination, April 2017**



Neighbourhood Plan Area: Parish Boundary of Rode

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Please note; all map scales are indicative.

## **1. Introduction and Background to the Neighbourhood Plan**

### **1.1 The Localism Act 2011 and the new powers:**

A Neighbourhood Plan is a new and more meaningful way for communities to have a say on the future of the places where they live and work. The Localism Act that came into effect in April 2012, for the first time enabled Parish Councils to write local planning policy documents (neighbourhood plans) that had the same statutory weight as policy from the Local Planning Authority.

1.1.1 The benefit of the new Neighbourhood Planning legislation is that Communities can use neighbourhood planning to:

- ☐ Choose where new homes, shops and offices could be built
- ☐ Have a real say what those new buildings should look like
- ☐ Support planning permission for new buildings that fit with the Neighbourhood Plan criteria.

### **1.2 Why Rode Parish Council (Rode PC) decided to start a neighbourhood plan**

1.2.1 Government strategy encourages house building, and before the Mendip Local Plan was approved in 2014, there was little guidance on how that development could be best accommodated in the district. In 2011, with potential property development threatening adverse impact on the village, Rode Parish Council decided to consult the village on its preferences to development. Specifically it was agreed to ascertain where any development should take place in Rode and areas of land that should be protected.

1.2.2 The 2011 consultation survey went to every property within Rode and an exceptional response of over 50% clearly identified land that could be developed and land that should be protected. The survey showed an understanding of the needs for some development, but in areas of the village which have the least visual impact. The survey was also clear that the building of “affordable housing” in isolation is totally against the ethos of the village, which is one of inclusion and not separation. The survey supported progressing a neighbourhood plan that included local preferences in planning policies for development.

1.2.3 Rode PC wanted to clearly understand the wishes and concerns of the village. In 2012 a further qualitative survey was carried out to seek preferences from the village regarding infrastructure, telecoms, transportation, social and domestic issues etc. Some of these issues are not within the remit of Neighbourhood Planning, but the Parish Council felt a need to understand core issues within its brief to better support and develop the village.

- 1.2.4 Rode Parish Council, being a relevant body as defined in Section 61G of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, successfully applied for the whole of the parish of Rode to be designated as a neighbourhood area for the purposes of proposing a Neighbourhood Plan under Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The area to be designated is indicated by the green line on the plan inside the front cover. Designation was approved on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2013 by Mendip District Council, the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.2.5 Since this formal designation, Rode PC has undertaken and commissioned several evidence gathering exercises to inform the policies in this plan. These include a site assessment appraisal and settlement boundary review. The Parish Council has also undertaken a character assessment of the village to inform a policy on good design in the parish, and commissioned a Housing Needs Survey to ascertain housing need in the parish for market and affordable housing within Rode. Work on the plan has also identified areas of Rode that should be permanently protected for the future as Local Green Spaces.
- 1.2.6 With this evidence, and the previous consultation undertaken on the plan, Rode PC feels it now has a clear understanding of the housing and planning needs of the village into the future. This draft plan is offered as a response to those identified needs, and your comments on the plan and its policies are encouraged and welcome. This version is now offered for the formal six week consultation required before the plan is formally submitted to Mendip District Council.
- 1.2.7 A Consultation Statement is being compiled for submission to Mendip DC along with an amended version of this plan. The Consultation Statement will detail the results of this formal consultation as well as earlier work, and give the Parish Council's formal response to all comments received. Once submitted, Mendip DC will arrange further publicity and an examination of the Rode Neighbourhood Plan. If this is successful, and the plan is approved by the village in a referendum, the plan will be made and have as much weight as Mendip DC's planning policy.
- 1.2.8 The Parish Council are mindful that in a few years' time it is likely that the plan and its policies will need to be reviewed. There is a commitment to monitor progress on policies therefore, and review the plan every three years.

## 2. Introduction to the Village of Rode

### 2.1 Location

Rode is situated on the Somerset-Wiltshire boundary 18km (12 miles) south of Bath and 8km (5 miles) north-northeast of Frome, just north of the junction of the A36 (T) main route from Bath to Warminster and the A361 Frome to Trowbridge road. There are two distinct clusters of development, with the medieval church and several old houses situated on the A361 and the main part of the village offset to the north, between the two main roads.

2.1.1 The core of the village is at about 60m above sea level, on a fairly level site, with a gentle rise north to Rode Hill and an 80m rounded knoll to the south-east of the village. The River Frome flows immediately to the west of the village, with a historically important crossing point at Rode Bridge.

2.1.2 The village is surrounded by farmland on all sides with small fields bounded by hedges. To the west, the course of the river is a tree-fringed, meandering channel, bounded by meadows.

### 2.2 Brief history

There is some evidence of early settlement with a possible Roman farmstead south of the village, ring ditches south of Rode Common and lynchets (difficult to date accurately) to the west. There are also the earthworks of a 'shrunken village' by the Church of St Lawrence, consisting of platforms, linear banks and ditches. There is a mention of a manor in the Domesday Book.

2.2.1 Medieval development, and a degree of prosperity, is shown by the provision of a substantial parish church and the growth of a woolen and cloth industry. There are portions of late medieval houses on High Street that seem to combine workshops and living accommodation and there were a number of water mills along the course of the River Frome, associated with the processing of cloth and dyeing. Important crossing points existed at Rode and Scutts Bridges and the village was situated on packhorse routes between Frome, Bradford-on-Avon, Trowbridge and Southampton.

2.2.2 The routes may have determined the basic layout of the village, at the junction of several of them, and they may have encouraged a migration of the village core away from the Church of St Lawrence and the main road to Trowbridge and Frome (Church Row), to drier ground on the site of the present village.

2.2.3 The High Street core has a large number of historic buildings, often in large groups, with a mixture of mainly 17th- and 18th-century houses, some early 19<sup>th</sup> century and a few later 19<sup>th</sup> century, with modern development in the form of small infill's, backland closes and larger areas at the northern end of High Street and on the western side of Lower Street. These do not seriously compromise the overall historic character (being reasonably sympathetic in overall form or being hidden from older areas).

### **2.3 The Rode Village Conservation Area**

The main village of Rode has a conservation area that was designated in 1973. The separate small cluster of historic buildings on Frome Road, to the east, along the A361, has a number of listed buildings and an unscheduled archaeological site, and has been added as a detached part of the Rode Conservation Area. This reappraisal was endorsed by Mendip on 22 July 2009 as a material planning consideration, and will be taken into account when assessing local planning applications.

2.3.1 The Conservation Area has an overall coherence and quality created by local building traditions and the availability of a limited range of local building materials. There is interplay between post medieval 'Cotswold' vernacular and polite Classical architecture, with one or two 19th century stylistic revivals added. Buildings, boundaries, details and trees combine to create a rich and complex village scape. There is a strong visual contrast between the dense corridor of development along much of High Street and parts of Lower Street and the relatively low-density development along Rode Hill and the River Frome crossing to the west.

### **2.4 Rode Population and Community Activities**

The Parish of Rode had a population of 1,025 at the 2011 Census, living in 451 households. Currently there are about 480 dwellings in the parish, including vacancies as well. The village has most basic services, including a Post Office and store, primary school, Pubs and Village Hall. There is no GP practice or Dentist in the village however.

2.4.1 The population is slightly older than the average for both the South West region (SW) and Great Britain (GB), with 59.2% of the population between 16 and 64 (compared with 63.8% in GB). 28.3% of households in Rode are pensioner households (person aged over 65) which compares with 24% pensioner households in Mendip and the SW region. Rode is a relatively prosperous parish, with 60% of households being without any deprivation indicator (compares with 46% of households in the SW). Car ownership is high, only 7% of households have no car or van compared with 19% in the SW region. Half of the households in

Rode own more than one car, in the SW only 37.6% of households do. Rode is within the eastern Mendips area, where owner-occupation levels are high (75%) and over half of owner-occupiers have no mortgage.

2.4.2 As well as St Lawrence church, there is a chapel with services and regular coffee mornings every week. A community choir also meet in the chapel. The busy Post Office also contains a small shop and popular café. The telephone box nearby has been converted into a library and houses a defibrillator. The Memorial Hall is near the village centre and is a popular venue for many activities and meetings. Rode Lunch Club, Over 60s Club, Horticultural Society, Parish Council and Ladies Group all meet once a month there. Pilates classes take place once a week.

2.4.3 There is a Baby & Toddler Group, Pre-School and thriving Methodist VC First School. The Scout Group is extremely active in the village, comprising both boys and girls ranging in age from 5 yrs to 18 yrs. The Cricket Club use the Playing Field and also run coaching sessions. There is also a children's playground and pavilion at the Playing Field.

## **2.5 Rode business and employment activity**

In the past there were many shops and public houses in Rode. There are now two public houses/restaurants in the parish. After the closure of the woolen mills, a brick works was developed and also a brewery which became a thriving business. Houses were built in the village for employees and the brew house extended. Subsequently the business was bought by Bass and it became a distribution depot. This closed in 1992 and the site was sold for development (47 houses & 3 flats, now known as the Old Brewery). The Cross Keys pub was retained and reopened in 2002.

2.5.1 Rode is a mainly a commuter village (often with families and children) and a retirement village, but it does have some significant businesses including:

- choconchoc supplying handmade chocolates to outlets such as Harrods, John Lewis, and Selfridges and employing over 30 people;
- Camden Miniature Steam Services, a specialist book publisher and distributor employing over half a dozen people;
- Fussells collection of enterprises including Fussells Farms, Fussells Fine Foods, Rode Haulage and Frome Area Building Supplies; together employing 30 full time staff and 14 part time.

2.5.2 These businesses provide some local employment opportunities, but for the most part their employees come from outside of the village. There is a significant level of commuting to work from the village with an average travel to work journey of 20km in the ward Rode is part of, and 48.4% of employees in the Eastern area of Mendip commute out of the District (Mendip DC Housing Needs Study 2012).

2.5.3 Beckington and Rode ward have a high number of people working from home (21% compared with a regional average of 14%).

## 2.6 Transport Links

There was a reasonable bus service until recently when in August 2015 the 267 Rode to Bath bus was greatly reduced. At present the X34 is still running to Trowbridge and Frome but is also under review.

Rode is located on or close to two major roads, the A36 and the A361, and local links to towns with more services are good by road.

## 2.7 Broadband

From the beginning of 2016 high speed broadband is scheduled to be installed in the village.



Village Red Phone Box – Community Facility and heritage feature

### 3. Vision and Objectives

**VISION** - To nurture the unique character, assets and community engagement of the village of Rode into the future.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- Encouraging sustainable development within the village
- Ensuring that the location, nature and scale of development and affordability of new housing is designed to maximise benefit to the community and reflect the village's rural character
- Protect and enhance the village's key green spaces, heritage and community and recreational facilities

#### **3.1 Agreed Priorities for Rode's Neighbourhood Plan:**

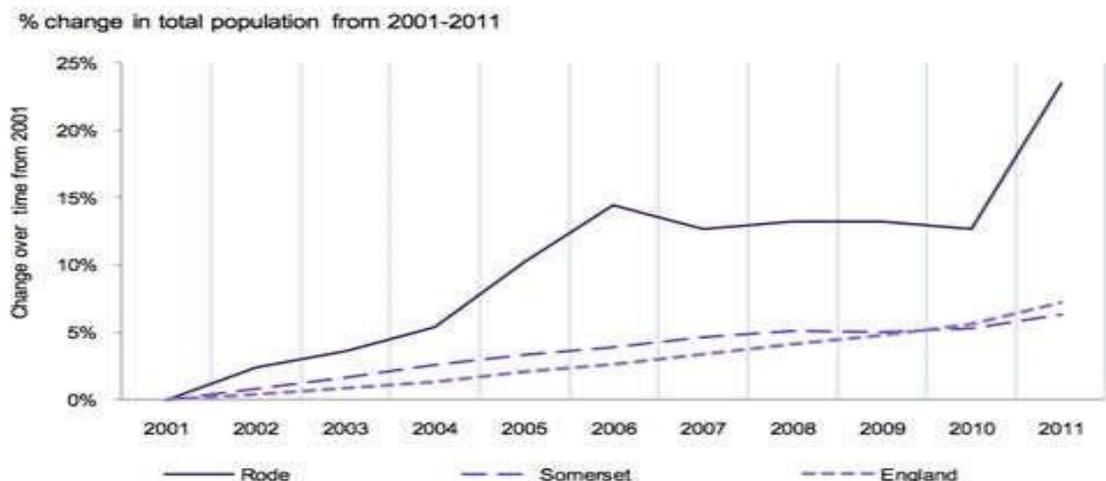
- a. To identify areas of Rode that are suitable for Development, and explore local aspirations and development requirements.
- b. To identify areas of Rode that should be permanently protected for the future.
- c. To identify housing styles and local characteristics and develop design guidance for Rode.
- d. To ascertain the need for affordable housing within Rode, and housing need generally.
- e. To coordinate national housing demands & Mendip's Local Plan 2006 – 2028 with the needs of the village of Rode.

## 4. Housing Policies

### 4.1 Background

The Adopted Mendip Local Plan 2014 shows that for the period 2006-2029 the district will need to provide a minimum of 9,635 new homes. Most of this development is to be focused on the main towns, and housing allocations have been made on this basis. Rode is classified by Mendip as a “primary village” and Mendip’s Local Plan proposes a 15% increase in housing for the primary villages over the plan period – a figure that provides for local need and some in-migration. For Rode this means a minimum target of 65 new homes.

4.1.1 With current planning permissions and recent construction this figure has already been exceeded. Sites with planning permission but where work has not yet been commenced have, for the avoidance of doubt, been shown as allocated housing sites in this plan. Together there are potentially over 50 dwellings still to be built out in the village. Over the past decade Rode has experienced an exceptional amount of housing development, the housing stock has increased by more than 20%, which is three times the national average. A District Council survey of East Mendip Community Partnership Villages has shown that more houses were built in Rode in the period 2002 - 2008 than in any similar Mendip village.



Source: People who have moved address (Census 2001: table KS 24), Population Change 2001-2011 (ONS Mid Year Estimates/Census 2011, National Insurance No. registrations (DWP 2011/12)

4.1.2 The site selection consultation exercise undertaken in the village during March 2015 showed a lack of support for further general housing allocations, probably due to the level of new development recently. However there was a cautious acceptance of the need to make limited provision for the identified housing need of suitable housing (not affordable) for the elderly. This is discussed further in 4.2.2.

### **Policy 1 - Housing Sites**

The designated housing sites shown on map 1 are expected and are allocated to provide for the additional market and affordable housing required in Rode as set out in the adopted Mendip Local Plan Part 1. The sites are:

- **Church Farm**
- **Lower Street.**

#### **4.2 Housing Needs Survey Findings**

The Mendip Housing Needs Survey (MHNS2012) mostly considered issues of affordability and housing need, which is less important for pensioner households in Rode than suitability of accommodation. However MHNS2012 paras 8.33-5 talks of the need, particularly into the future, for policy to support the public and private provision of specialist housing for the elderly within their existing community. The same study (para 8.75) estimates that 11% of market housing provided to 2031 is likely to need to be specialist housing for the elderly (and normally also suitable for the disabled as well). Specialist housing includes dwellings adapted for use by the less mobile and wheelchair users, sheltered housing with or without a warden and extra care accommodation.

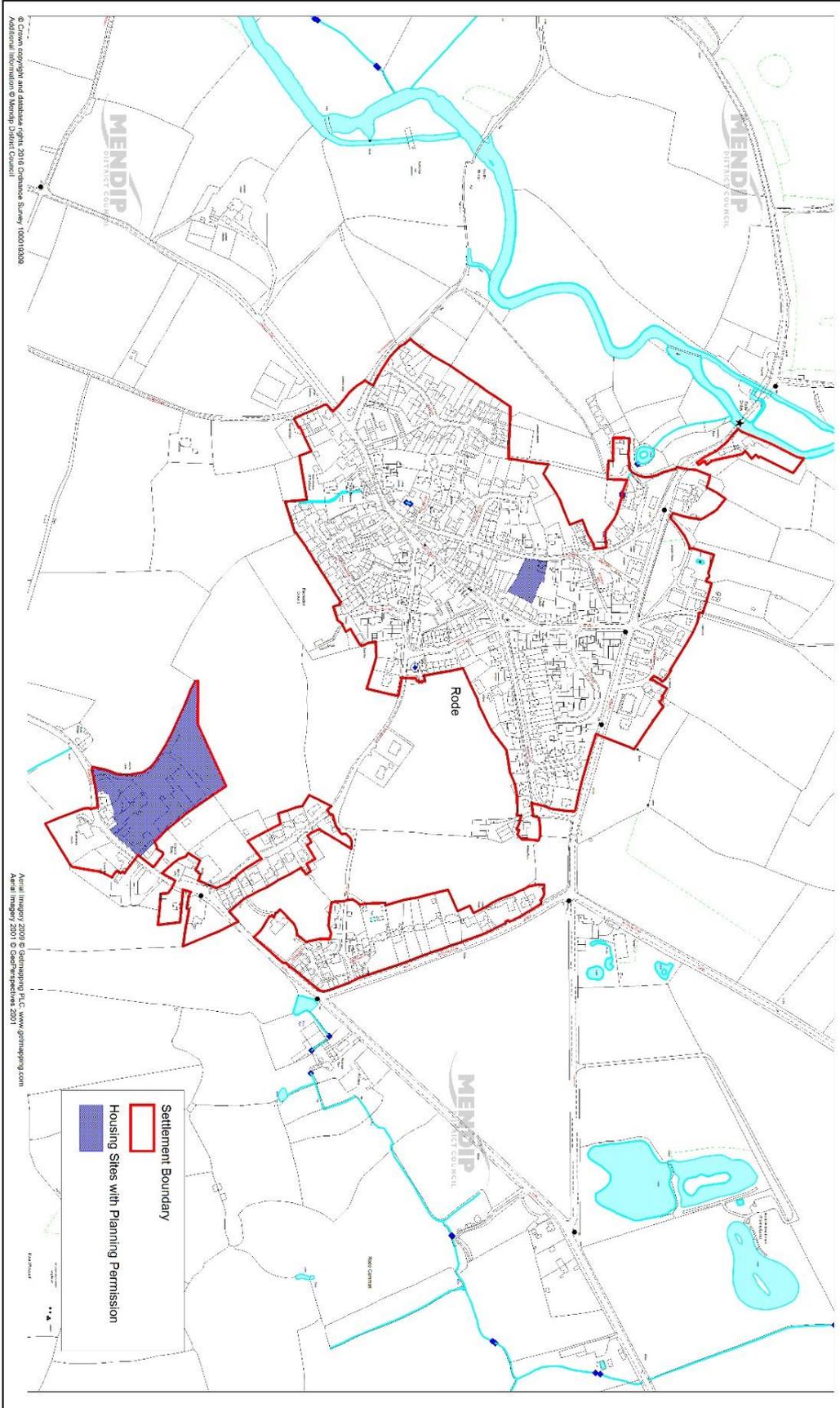
- 4.2.1 The Neighbourhood Plan Group undertook their own Housing Needs Survey of the parish in 2013. This showed some demand for affordable housing, which should be met by the permission for new homes including affordable housing on the Church Farm site. However the survey did show significant interest in purpose built accommodation for the elderly, with 39 respondents indicating an interest in moving into this accommodation type over the next 10 years, 35 of these respondents would be looking to purchase the accommodation.
- 4.2.2 There is therefore an identified need in Rode for private provision of specialist housing for the elderly and local support for meeting this community need. An unobtrusive small scale development opportunity has been identified, involving alterations and adaptations to an existing residential building and curtilage, that was assessed as the most suitable site in the site appraisal and selection report of 2014 for the Neighbourhood Plan. Consequently it is proposed to allocate Merfield House and grounds for limited development of housing for the elderly, subject to meeting policy requirements in this plan and those of the Local Planning Authority. The latter will include respecting its status as a listed building. A management trust will, on completion of any development, allow for the proper maintenance of the site and curtilage assets including the walled garden and ensure local priority on any future sales and lettings.
- 4.2.3 As Merfield House is a Grade II\* listed building, it will be important to ensure that any proposals are discussed at an early stage with the Parish Council, Mendip District Council and that the advice of Historic England is sought.

# Rode Development Boundary

## Map 1 : Housing Sites and Settlement Boundary Rode Neighbourhood Plan - PSMA License Number 100051909

Notes:  
Scale 1:5000

Compiled by on 25 April 2017



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## **Policy 2 - Housing for Older People at Merfield House**

*Use and development of the Merfield House and outbuildings for housing for older people is supported subject to the following criteria:*

- The status of Merfield House it's curtilage and it's setting as a grade II\* listed building shall be respected by any development proposals.*
- Safe pedestrian egress is encouraged to be provided from the site to the junction of Straight Lane with Crooked Lane subject to satisfactory visual and highway safety impacts. Innovative solutions will be encouraged.*
- Materials used in any construction shall be of local stone and other materials as required by conservation, heritage, energy efficiency and design requirements; and comply with other policies in this plan and the rest of the development plan for Rode.*

4.2.4 The MHNS has projected an increasing elderly population over the life of the plan for the district from 26% to 37% of households. This makes it important to also support those growing older in their own homes in respect of adaptations they may need to make.

Government policy has acknowledged that housing suitable for the elderly will be increasingly needed and provided guidance on good practice (Housing our Ageing Population: House of Commons 2012). Guidelines for good design for adaptable homes for all ages were produced in the Lifetime Homes guidance, and both of these have informed the development of guidance in policy 3 below.

4.2.5 The Rode Housing Needs Survey (RHNS) reported that Rode had seen a 35.6% increase in its population of retirement age (2001-2009), which compared with equivalent growth of 18.7% in Mendip and 10.7% nationally. Yet there had been a significant net outflow of people 65+ from Rode whereas in Mendip there was a net inflow. This suggests there isn't currently enough appropriate accommodation in the village for older residents. The current home being too large was a significant driver for people wishing to sell their property according to the RHNS, and of people wanting housing suited to the elderly, two thirds wanted bungalow accommodation.

4.2.6 Policy 3 aims to facilitate changes to the housing stock that would provide accommodation better suited to the elderly, and require that any new residential development provides some dwellings that are immediately suited for the elderly and less mobile and follows guidelines to enable housing to be adapted to changing lifetime needs. Such housing should have a first refusal on purchase to existing local residents or people with a local connection. Local priority has the advantage of often releasing family homes to the local housing market, and will deal more directly with the evidenced current lack of suitable housing and projected increase in the elderly population

in the village.

### **Policy 3 - Housing for Older People**

A range of housing options will be encouraged that promote and maintain housing choice and independence for local older people. Proposals for more intensive care options will be supported if they are of a scale suited to the size and needs of Rode.

The conversion or adaptation of an existing building or dwelling, including the subdivision of a dwelling, to enable occupancy by older or disabled persons will be supported where the proposed development accords with other policies in the Plan.

Development proposals for new residential development should address the local need for housing for older and disabled people as set out in the following design guidelines. The provision of single storey accommodation or other suitable housing types is generally encouraged so that housing can be adapted to lifetime changing needs or wheelchair use.

#### **The following design criteria are sought for development for older people:**

- *Be located in an appropriate environment, near local amenities and public transport links;*
- *Feature ease of access for those with mobility, physical or sensory disabilities;*
- *Facilitate opportunities to align residential facilities with health and social care services;*
- *Generous internal space standards and plenty of natural light in the home and in circulation spaces;*
- *Adaptability and 'care aware' design which is ready for emerging telecare and tele healthcare technologies;*
- *Where relevant, the provision of shared facilities and circulation spaces that encourages interaction;*
- *High levels of energy efficiency in recognition of lower activity levels;*
- *Extra storage for belongings and mobility scooters;*

- *Shared external areas such as 'home zones' that give priority to pedestrians and landscaping that introduces plants, trees, and the natural environment for people who may find it more difficult to get out to the countryside.*

### **4.3 Design in Rode**

As part of the work on this plan, a character assessment was undertaken in Rode. This work built on the Conservation Area Appraisal undertaken by Mendip DC and sets out design parameters for development that ensure future development in Rode respects and enhances local distinctiveness within and outside of the conservation Area. Development in Rode is expected to comply with design guidance in Rode Character Assessment.

- 4.3.1 Good design, that respects local context and distinctiveness, is supported by government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF paras 58 and 60). The Mendip Local Plan part 1 (MLP1) policy DP1 also promotes design that respects and enhances local distinctiveness.

### **Policy 4 - Design of Buildings and Public Space**

**New development that complies with other policies in this Plan will be permitted where it:**

- a. *Is designed to a high quality which responds to the heritage and distinctive character of Rode and complies with the Rode Conservation Area Appraisal; and*
- b. *Reflects the identity of the local context of Rode as described and explained in the Rode Character Assessment and complies with guidance in that document; and*
- c. *Design issues to be considered in both a) and b) above include;*
  - I. *height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of buildings and*
  - II. *ii. the scale, design and materials of the public realm (highways, footways, open space and landscape); and*
- d. *Is sympathetic to the significance of any heritage asset and its setting, and*
- e. *Respects the natural contours of a site and protects and sensitively incorporates natural features such as trees, hedges and ponds, and*
- f. *Will not result in unacceptable levels of light, noise, air or water pollution or adversely affect residential amenity; and*
- g. *Does not introduce a sensitivity to light, noise, air/water pollution or amenity consistent with its use that would be in conflict with any reasonable expectation of impacts arising from existing permitted development; and*

- h. Respects and does not detract from views of particular merit identified in the Rode Character Assessment at Figure 13; and*
- i. Has an acceptable visual impact within its built context; and*
- j. Demonstrates it will have no adverse impact on surface water drainage in the village; and*
- k. Wherever possible makes use of recycled materials and materials from sustainable, local sources and promotes the highest current standards of sustainable building and conservation of resources.*

4.3.2 Rode is located on the side of the River Frome valley and water from a wide catchment area above the village is channeled through Rode's surface and underground culverts. Over many decades houses on High Street and Lower Street have experienced occasional flooding, chiefly when the main culvert failed to cope with the volume of water or it became blocked. This main culvert runs under Rode's High Street and then goes mostly underground, parallel to Lower Street, before emerging and outflowing into the River Frome.

4.3.3 In 2001, there was a serious flood in the centre of the village and subsequently Mendip District Council took action to create larger holding ponds above the village. Since then there has been no further flooding of properties on the High Street and Lower Street. Mendip District Council inspects these holding ponds on a monthly basis.

4.3.4 Additionally, in 2016, the landowner of the fields immediately above the main culvert laid a new underground pipe. Previously water had run across the surface of the fields, collecting detritus, which risked getting into the underground culvert and creating a blockage. Since the new pipe has been installed there have been no further problems.

4.3.5 In 2012 there was limited flooding of recently built properties on the Old Brewery estate as a result of broken drainage pipes under Rode Playing Field. In 2016 Somerset County Council helped fund the construction of a soakaway adjacent to Rode Playing Field and that is expected to eliminate any further risk of flooding.

#### **4.4 Settlement Boundary**

The existing settlement boundaries as established by the previous Mendip Local Plan 2002 (MLP2002) have been preserved for review in neighbourhood plans or the forthcoming MLP2. The current settlement boundary for Rode has been rendered out of date by more recent planning permissions. As discussed in the Character Assessment however, the general principles are still relevant and supported by the evidence of the Conservation Area Appraisals. Thus it is proposed that a new settlement boundary be drawn that follows where possible the previous boundary but is revised to acknowledge planning permissions granted outside of the previous boundary.

- 4.4.1 The existing settlement boundary is proposed to be modified only where recent planning permissions have encroached on the previous boundary. In this way development decisions since the previous boundary was set are recognised while the original boundary decisions that included recognising the importance of open space within Rode are continued. The revisions to the boundary are set therefore by the designated housing sites in this plan and previous development in the village subsequent to the drawing up of the original boundary.

#### **Policy 5 - Settlement Boundary**

Land enclosed within the red outline shown on map 1 is defined as the settlement of Rode. Within this defined area infill and other development consistent with planning policy in the development plan will normally be acceptable. Outside the defined settlement boundary land is defined as 'open countryside' and development here will not normally be permitted unless it complies with other policies in the Mendip development plan.

#### **4.5 Protection of Heritage**

Rode has two Conservation Areas, 74 Listed buildings and 10 listed tombs. These are protected by national legislation, overseen as required by the local planning authority. There is a comprehensive Conservation Area Appraisal document for the village.

There are also historic features in the village that are not listed, but are important for local distinctiveness and local history. These local features are identified in this plan for protection and conservation in any future development proposal that may impact on them for the following reasons:

**Archway Pump in Lower Street** – Dates from the time the village's water supply was supplied communally and an attractive historic iron feature.

**Well head pump on Brewery site** - Dates from the time the village's water supply was supplied communally and an attractive historic iron and brick feature connected to the brewing industry.

**Ruins of Rockabella house** – The ruins of a once important house in the floodplain of the River Frome.

**Telephone box on High Street** – a traditional red box dated from the 1920's that houses community facilities now.

**Pux Well** – A natural spring and Well.

**Pump in Lower Street** - Dates from the time the village's water supply was supplied communally and an attractive historic iron feature.

**Abandoned Settlement** – In the field between St Lawrence Church and the stream from Green Park Pond lie the remains of some abandoned houses. This is believed to be the site of what was the house of the Lord of the Manor and its associated outbuildings.

**Boundary Stones** – Of some antiquity, age not known but reported as follows in P Harris's book "Discovering Rode's Past":

"Set in the side of the road at the junction of High Street and Lower Street is a large rounded orange stone. This is one of two remaining stones which marked the Wiltshire/Somerset boundary prior to its repositioning in 1937. Was it put there by the Saxons?"

**White Directional Signs** – Dating back to earlier motoring days and an attractive feature.

**War Memorial and Village Green Sign** – Both significant visual markers on the Village Green, and of 20<sup>th</sup> Century relevance.

### **Policy 6 - Protection of Local Heritage**

The following heritage features, listed below and shown on Map 2, are of local historic importance. Any development proposed which may directly or indirectly affect the significance of these assets including their retention, will be required to have regard to the scale of any loss or harm caused and the significance of the heritage asset, including to the local community:

1. Archway Pump in Lower Street
2. Well head pump on Brewery site
3. Ruins of Rockabella house
4. Telephone box on High Street
5. Pux Well off B3109 as shown
6. Pump in Lower Street
7. War Memorial and Village Green Sign

8. Abandoned Settlement by St Lawrence Church
9. White Directional Signs and Boundary Stones as shown on Map 2



**Former Brewery Wellhead Pump**



## 5 Community and Transport Policies

The village has an active community as detailed in paragraphs 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 above. It is important to maintain this however, and protection for facilities that nurture social networking and activities is seen as vital. Traffic around and within the village can cause problems, and these policies aim to create a better street environment for sustainable travel modes. As the bus services continue to be threatened with reduced or terminated services, anything that can be done to promote sustainable alternatives becomes even more important.

### 5.2 Getting around and active sustainable travel

Rode is a village in which the reasonably active should be able to get around on foot or by bicycle. However this is not always possible, due to through routes having heavy traffic flows and speeding traffic and streets in the village often having no footway and yet not being designed as a shared space either. The church is cut off from the rest of the village for example by being on the other side of the A361 with no crossing facility.

- 5.2.1 Policy 7 is promoting new development that impacts on the highway to install measures that 'calm traffic', slowing traffic and promoting easier journeys by foot and cycle. It complies with the NPPF paragraph 29 and policy in the Somerset Future Transport Plan and well as MLP1 Policy DP9.

#### **Policy 7 – Promoting Sustainable and Safe Travel**

Development proposals that impact on the existing highway and/or have significant traffic impact will be encouraged to implement measures as part of that development that contribute to a safer environment for active and sustainable travel on foot and by cycle.

- 5.2.2 Walking, cycling and horse-riding are sustainable modes of travel that do not increase air pollution or present significant road danger issues and greenhouse gas emissions. National and local planning policies all support the promotion of sustainable travel modes, and Policy 8 aims to make them easier in the parish by looking for improvements to the Rights of Way network whenever possible. There are two national routes that pass through the Parish, and a better network could encourage more visitors to Rode. Appendix 1 shows the rights of way network in the Parish, with added detail of main roads and quiet lanes (where vulnerable road users generally feel safe when using them). From this missing links and severance points have been identified, and this will inform priorities for improvements to the network. It should be noted that horses and cycles are permitted on bridleways as well as Country Lanes.

## **Policy 8 - Rights of way and the pedestrian and cycle network**

Development that impacts on Country Lanes and the Rights of Way network should protect and enhance the trees and other green environment features that give the route its visual charm and biodiversity importance. The following routes are considered “Country Lanes”:

- Straight Lane
- Crooked Lane
- Shawford Lane;
- Parkgate Lane;
- Clay Lane.

Development (including highways mediation works and development) with significant traffic impact will be required to contribute to enhancing the capacity of cycle and pedestrian networks and to extend and maintain routes directly affected by the development including the rights of way network.

Appendix 1 identifies places on the existing network where rights of way links are severed by busy traffic or could be linked by existing highways if a safe pedestrian and cycle facility on or near the highway was provided. This is offered as a guide to priorities for action for the local community.



**Straight Lane – a pleasant rural lane in Rode**

- 5.2.3 Rode has much higher than average levels of car ownership, and problems have been caused in the past where development has not implemented car parking standards fully. Therefore the Parish Council is looking to support the implementation of the parking standards of the highway authority in all new development.

### **Policy 9 - Parking**

All new development will comply with Somerset County Council's current parking standards. Rode is a predominantly rural area and the standard will be applied in a way which recognises the likelihood of residents wishing to keep more than the national average number of cars per household.

## **5.3 Community Facilities**

Rode has a vibrant community life and spirit, supported by local community facilities that have been built up over time. Policy 10 aims to protect the existing use of these facilities wherever possible, changes of use will only be permitted where the existing use has been proved not viable. Although there are no Assets of Community Value designated in Rode as yet, the category has been included in the policy as it is anticipated there will be designations within the life of this plan.

### **Policy 10 - Community Facilities and Assets of Community Value (ACVs)**

To promote and conserve the active community spirit in the village for all ages there will be a presumption against redevelopment or change of use that reduces or removes the community value of ACVs and the following Community Facilities:

- Memorial Hall
- St Lawrence Church
- Rode Chapel
- Rode Methodist VC First School
- The Playing Field and pavilion
- The Scout hut on the Playing Field
- The telephone box on High Street which houses a library and defibrillator.
- Post Office

Development that will result in the loss or significant reduction in the scale and value of the above Community Facilities or ACVs will be refused unless alternative facilities of equal or better accessibility, size and suitability are provided or it can be clearly demonstrated that the operation of the asset or the ongoing delivery of the community value of the asset, is no longer economically viable typically because the site has been marketed at a reasonable price for at least a year and no interest in acquisition has been expressed.

Proposals that sustain or extend the value of ACVs and community facilities will normally be supported if they comply with other policies in this plan.

## 6 Green Environment

6.1 Rode is located within pleasant rolling countryside on the eastern slopes of the valley of the river Frome. The area is designated part of the lower Frome Valley in the 1997 Mendip Landscape Assessment Study. The underlying geology is Oolite limestone, overlain in part by Oxford Clay, the limestone having been used for much of the older buildings in the parish. The river frequently shows evidence of disused mills and attests to a previous early industrial heritage, the parish of Rode has two disused watermills.

6.1.1 There are no nationally designated sites of ecological value within Rode, and the nearest areas of Ancient Woodland are 2km away. In order to protect local wildlife areas, and promote biodiversity in line with para 109 of the NPPF, Policy 11 has considered local areas of ecological value that are not protected with national or international designations. In order to contribute to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity locally, these sites have been identified and offered a local status and protection in this plan.

6.1.2 The following sites are designated as Sites of Local Ecological Value:

**River Frome and east bank** – Grade ... river and naturally formed river bank, mostly edged by fields used for pasture.

**St Lawrence Churchyard** – established grassland area close to open country.

**Christ Churchyard** - established grassland area close to open country.

### **Policy 11 - Sites of Local Ecological Importance**

Local Biodiversity and wildlife sites will be protected and enhanced wherever possible. The following sites, shown on Map 3, are of local importance for biodiversity and wildlife. They are required to be conserved and protected in any development proposal that would impact upon them and their ecological value:

- Frome River and east bank
- St Lawrence Churchyard
- Christchurch Churchyard

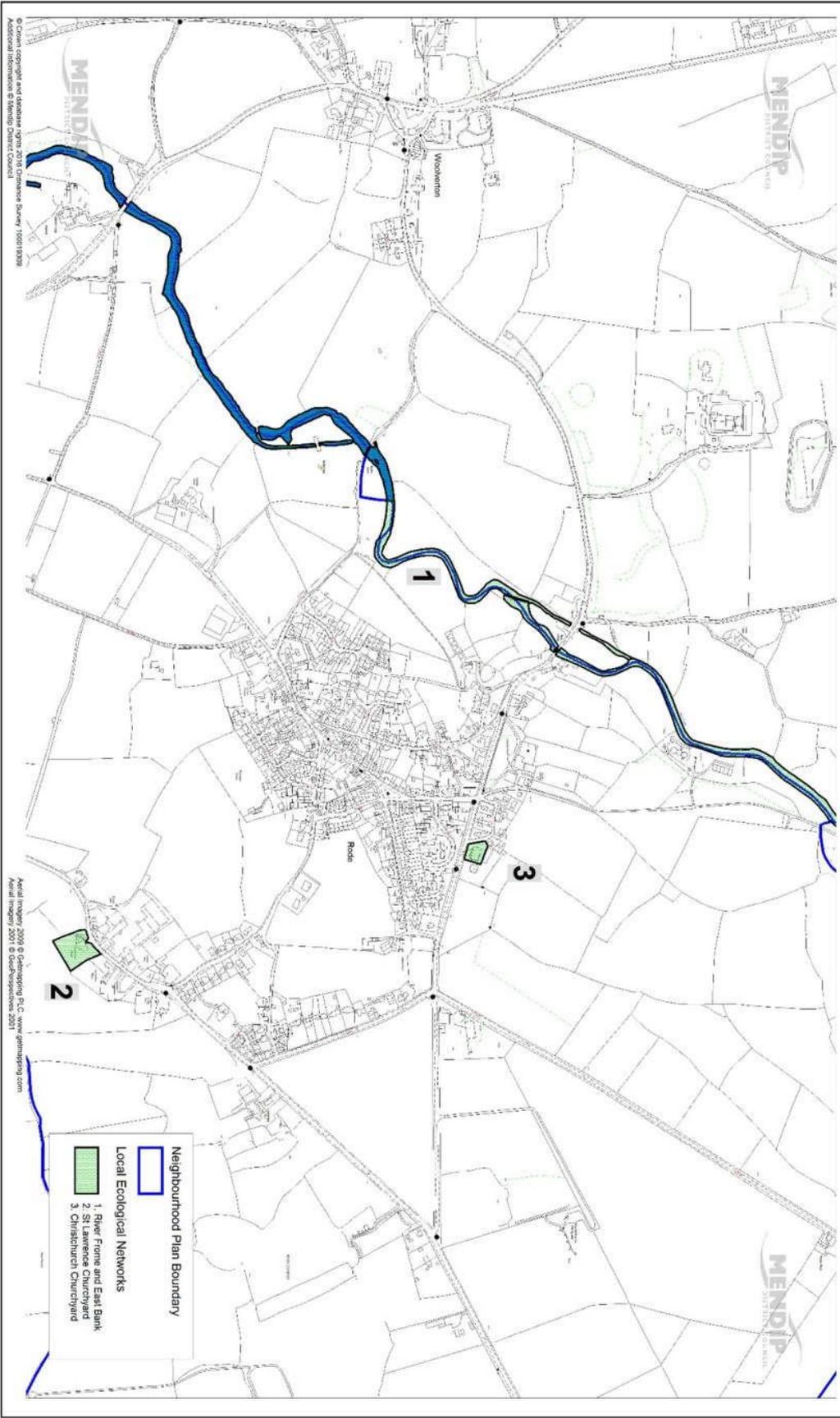
### Map 3: Local Ecological Sites

Rode Neighbourhood Plan - PSMA Licence Number 100051909

Notes:

Compiled by on 28 June 2016

**MENDIP**  
Sustainable Growth  
Cannock Grove Rd  
Sedgemoor Mill  
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TA20 3JH  
Tel: 01202 303 8988  
Fax: 01709 244050



## **6.2 Local Green Space and other Open Space**

- 6.2.1 The Village has within it important areas of open space that are part of the character of the village. In some instances these green areas are special, and highly valued by residents. The reasons for designating the following sites comply with the requirements of the NPPF paras 76-78) and are as follows:
- 6.2.2 The Recreation Ground is a key resource for exercise and other activities for a wide range of people. Its current location is accessible for all residents, and it fits well into the rural/urban fringe it is located within.
- 6.2.3 Browns Ground has the visually most important location for views taken both from it and into the village. It is a key open space within the village, and marks the difference between the old mill village and the more dispersed settlement around it. It is privately owned, but has been used for informal recreation locally for many years.
- 6.2.4 The Village Green is a small but visually very important green space within the old village and conservation area.
- 6.2.5 Pathway to Rockabella is an ecologically rich environment and cherished local walkway, that is also an important visual feature linking the village with the countryside and the river.
- 6.2.6 Land in front of Langham House. This green space was designated an Open Area of Visual Significance in the adopted Mendip Local Plan, and is important for the visual setting of an historic house.
- 6.2.7 Right of Way FR13/4 from Crooked Lane to the A36. This ancient lane is known locally as Cooper's Lane, and is thought to be part of the historical route from Rode to Beckington.

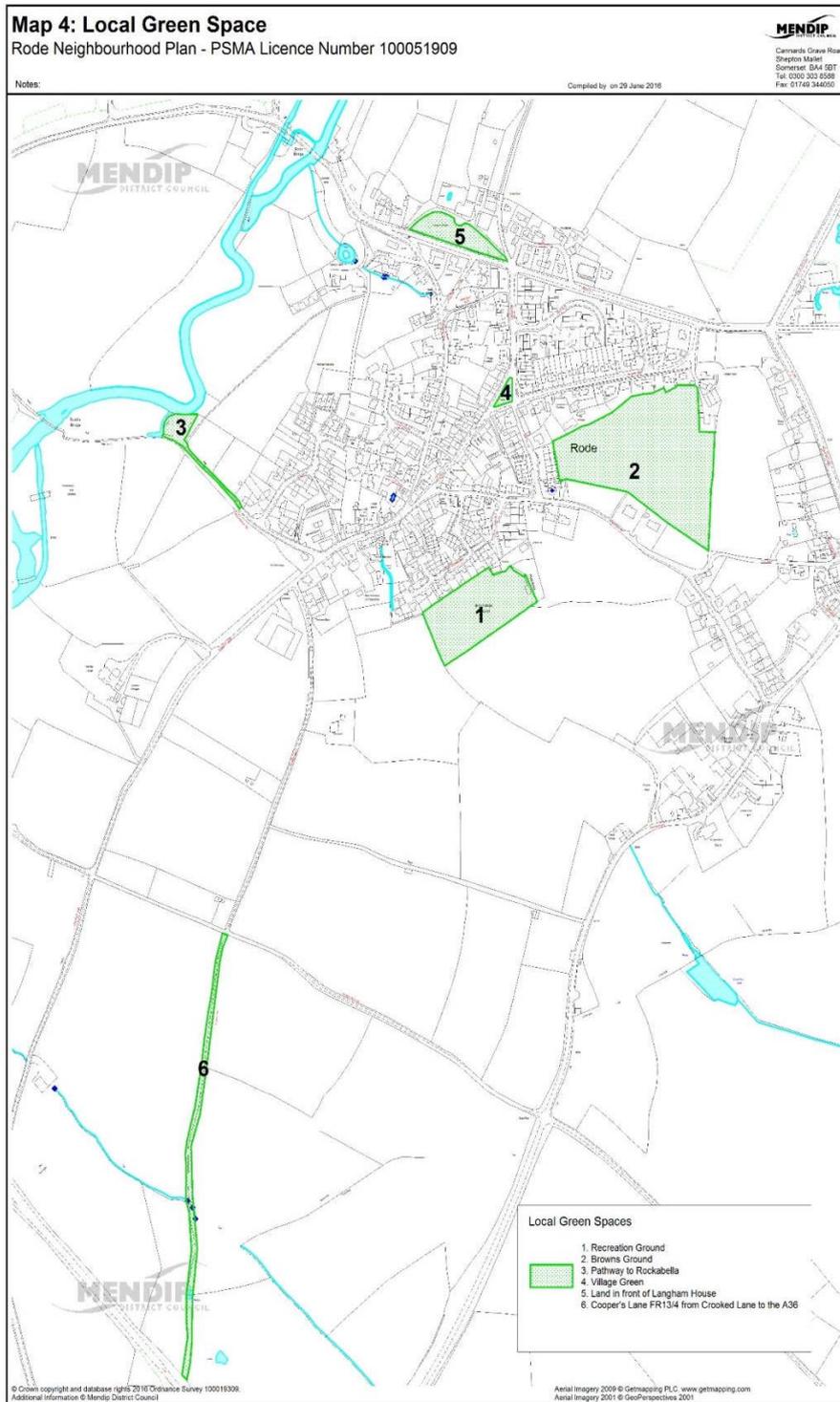
### **Policy 12 Local Green Spaces**

The following areas shown on map 4 have been designated as Local Green Space:

1. Recreation Ground
2. Browns Ground
3. Pathway to Rockabella
4. Village Green

5. Land in front of Langham House
6. Cooper's Lane FR13/4 from Crooked Lane to the A36

Proposals for development of land designated as Local Green Space that does not enhance the valued features of the Local Green Space will not be permitted except in very special circumstances.



6.2.8 Other areas of open space also perform valuable functions within the village. Rode has been assessed as being somewhat under-provided with open space in the 2012 Mendip Open Space Study, and policy 13 protects the rest of the existing open space in Rode, including open space to be created as part of the Church Farm development.

### **Policy 13 Open Spaces**

The following areas of land as shown on Map 5 have an open space function and value:

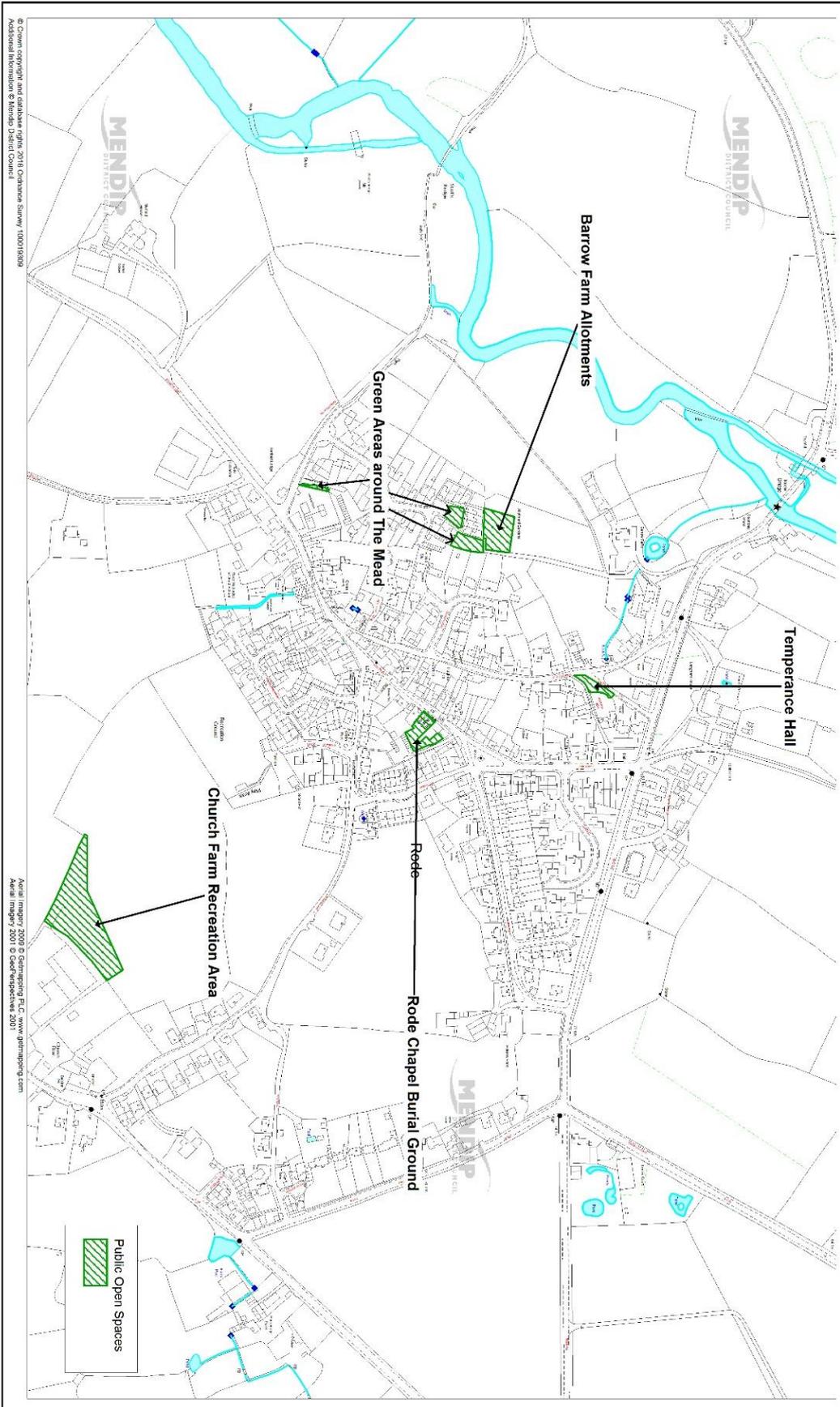
- Church Farm recreation area
- Green areas around The Mead development
- Allotments at Barrow Farm
- Temperance Hall site Halfpenny Lane
- Rode Chapel Burial Ground

Development on open space will only be permitted if it enhances the existing use of that open space. Where a development proposal would remove the open space character or use of these sites then development will only be permitted if a replacement site of equal size, accessibility and suitability is provided as an alternative or unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the open space is surplus to requirements or the development is for alternative sports or recreation provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

**Map 5: Open Spaces**  
 Rode Neighbourhood Plan - PSMA Licence Number 100051909  
 Scale 1:3938.5  
 Notes:

Compiled by on 28 June 2016

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 Planning  
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6.2.9 Rode currently has well used allotments, with a waiting list of 5, although this is likely to be greater in reality, as the opportunity to join it is not promoted. The Parish Council is keen to see these existing allotments protected, and any significant new residential development should provide allotment space at a level required by the new development to remove extra pressure on the existing allotments. The amount of allotment space required has been taken from the Bristol Parks and Estates Allotments Strategy into allotment space requirements, which sets a minimum guideline of 7 plots (253m<sup>2</sup> each) per thousand people.

**Policy 14 - Allotments**

Proposals which would result in harm to, or loss of, allotments will not be permitted unless replacement provision would be made, of at least similar quality, convenience and accessibility for the existing plot holders.

Housing developments of over 10 dwellings should provide allotment space at a minimum of 50m<sup>2</sup> per 10 dwellings.



**One of Rode's significant views – The White Horse from Bradford Road.**

## 7. References

### **Mendip District Council:**

Adopted Mendip District Local Plan 2002

Adopted Mendip District Council Local Plan Part 1 (LP1) Dec 2014

Landscape Assessment of Mendip District: Blandford Associates 1997

Mendip District Local Plan Part 2 (LP2) Issues and Options Sept 2015

Mendip District Council Open Space Study 2012

Rode Conservation Area Appraisal Draft 2009

Small Area Census Statistics

Mendip LP2 Issues and Options Technical Paper: OALS and LGS 2015

Mendip 2011 Housing Needs Study: JG Consulting March 2012

### **Rode Parish Council and Neighbourhood Plan Group:**

Rode Housing Needs Study: Community Council for Somerset 2014

<http://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com/Rode%20Housing%20Needs%20Survey%202013%20Report.pdf>

Site Assessment and Selection Report URS/AECOM 2015

[http://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com/Rode%20Site%20Assessment\\_Final%20Report\\_v5%2000\\_300615.pdf](http://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com/Rode%20Site%20Assessment_Final%20Report_v5%2000_300615.pdf)

Site Consultation Exercise Results April 2015

<http://rodeparishcouncil.webs.com/Site%20Consultation%20Exercise%20R2%20March%202015.pdf>

Rode Village Character Assessment July 2016

### **Other:**

Bristol City Council Allotments Strategy 2009 - 2019

Somerset County Council Future Transport Plan 2011-2026

Housing our Ageing Population: House of Commons 2012

