

# Landkey – Shaping Our Future

Landkey Parish Council



A document to assist and influence North Devon Council, Devon County Council, developers, statutory bodies and infrastructure providers on the strategic priorities for the Parish of Landkey.

**Consultation Draft September 2022**

## Introduction and the Purpose of this Document.

This draft document was initially produced by a small Working Group. This Group was set up following a public meeting in July 2017 called to discuss the feasibility of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Landkey. The Parish Council had already registered the Parish with the District Council as a potential Neighbourhood Plan area and therefore sponsored the public meeting and supported the Working Group. The Group met monthly during the latter parts of 2017 and early 2018.

It soon became clear that a formal Neighbourhood Plan in the statutory sense was probably beyond the capacity of the Working Group. However, following discussions with the Planning Policy unit of North Devon District Council the members of the Group began to question the need for such a Plan. The then emerging Torridge/North Devon Local Plan quite closely reflected the views of the Parish Council and of the Working Group. However, it was felt that a document could be produced which sets out the broad aims and aspirations of the community of Landkey and this document is the result of this work.

A draft of the document was initially considered by the Parish Council in June 2018 but was not progressed at that time. The Parish Council retained its interest in pursuing the document and it was updated at the start of 2022 to reflect the changes which had occurred in and around Landkey since the original draft.

These changes include, for instance, the Harford Way development of 77 homes which has been completed and the grant of planning permission for the Venn Quarry holiday village where ground works have been taking place.

The North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 has been adopted and this includes the Westacott Strategic Extension, which is planned to deliver a comprehensive scheme, including approximately 950 houses, 5 hectares of economic development and an additional primary school. While outside the Parish of Landkey, it is close to the boundary and the scale of development will impact on the Parish.

Recently, a scheme for 150 dwellings on land off Birch Road has been resolved to be granted by North Devon Council and other development proposals may come forward for consideration in the years to come. This document is intended to establish key priorities for all those bodies that are looking at development proposals within the Parish of Landkey. It is also intended to help and influence public bodies, such as the Highway Authority with road proposals, public utilities on their projects and private developers who are promoting their schemes.

**There will be public consultation on this document during the Autumn of 2022 and, once updated to reflect public and other comments, it is expected that the final document will be approved by the Parish Council in late 2022/early 2023.**

Following public consultation it is planned that this document be given to all statutory bodies, North Devon Council, Devon County Council and other developers and providers of services for the Parish of Landkey. Whilst it will have no legal or statutory status itself it is hoped that it will be seen as carrying the weight of public and community opinion and as such be given due recognition by those bodies.

It should not be assumed that the Parish Council and/or local residents will support a proposal simply because it meets one or more of the priorities; however, it will certainly be more persuasive if a proposal does.

## Parish Profile

The Parish of Landkey consists of a large village and a small number of surrounding hamlets and farms. The village of Landkey is largely linear, spread along the main road, with some modern housing estates to the north of the village. The main part of the village is a Conservation Area, as is the small core centred around a historic church at Landkey Town. The settlement is bounded by the North Devon Link Road to the north, though the parish itself extends northwards towards Barnstaple and Goodleigh. The southern boundary is marked by a rising landscape of mainly agricultural land. At present Landkey village is bounded by open space and green fields on all sides. It is now one of the largest rural parishes within the North Devon District.

Although originally an agricultural settlement Landkey is now mainly a dormitory village as it is contiguous with the regional centre of Barnstaple. It includes a 200+ place Primary School, a village shop/post office, a pub, a tea room, a nursery school, a golf course and club, and various business units. The Millennium Green and the village Playing Fields are at the heart of the village and are the Community's prime public open spaces.

There is a church community and a number of active local community groups and organisations within the village and a well used Village Hall. There are several small businesses located within the village. The current population has now risen to over 2,000.

Landkey continues to have a mix of housing types from small cottages to executive style new homes. The stock is primarily owner-occupied although there are some affordable housing units located within the village. Property values in Landkey have traditionally been higher than those for similar houses in Barnstaple and other nearby towns.



## Key Priorities

This document identifies key priorities that local residents and the Parish Council wish to see addressed in the years to come. The intention is that with every scheme (even small developments) that is advanced by a public body or developer, the scheme will incorporate proposals to help deliver one or more of these priorities. Even small contributions to help deliver a priority are to be welcomed, as cumulatively progress can be made over a number of years.

It is vital that proposals do not undermine these priorities.

The Parish Council, in responding to consultations and influencing projects, will use this document to assist in its deliberations and responses. The Parish Council will look at a proposal on its merits and, while it should not be assumed a project will receive support, a proposal is more likely be considered favourably if a proposal delivers against the priorities.

There are six key priority areas set out below. There is no priority order and no one priority is more important than another. Much will depend on the nature of a proposal and the contribution it can make to helping to deliver actions against the priorities.

- A. Improving Accessibility
- B. Safeguarding the Landscape Setting to Landkey Village
- C. Addressing Central Village Car Parking and Traffic Issues
- D. Protecting and Enhancing the Environment
- E. Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities
- F. Ensuring New Housing Meets a Local Need



## A. Improving Accessibility

Landkey is close to Barnstaple, yet in many ways is poorly connected by foot, bicycle and public transport. There are no footpaths or bicycle lanes that connect the village to the town. The lanes are narrow and unlit, making evening travel by foot or bicycle uninviting. There is an hourly bus service from Monday to Saturday; however, this service only runs until the early evening. There is no public bus service on a Sunday.

At the moment, school children are expected to walk to their nearest secondary school along the unlit rural lanes connecting Landkey with Barnstaple and this is a cause for concern.

For many, at the present time, there is little option but to rely on the car to access Barnstaple and for those without a car there is no realistic alternative to the relatively infrequent bus service.

The development of the Westacott Strategic Extension, with the provision of a pedestrian and cycle link over the Link Road will improve access into Barnstaple and is to be welcomed. However, this would not be a direct route into Barnstaple for walkers and may not be convenient for all cyclists depending on their intended destination.

There are other opportunities that could be pursued and it is a key priority of this Plan to make Landkey a more sustainable location by increasing the ability to access Barnstaple by foot, bicycle and bus.

### **Our Priorities**

- A1. Install a public footpath connection to provide a safe, direct and continuous pedestrian route from Landkey to Barnstaple. In detail, this would extend the existing footpath in Blakes Hill Road up to the bus stop and then up to and along Mountsandford Road, past the Golf Course, to join with the footpath in Landkey Road by the new housing development. Consideration should be given to whether the section along Mountsandford Road could incorporate a cycle lane.
- A2. Use planning obligation monies and other opportunities to improve the Landkey public bus service, in particular, by extending the evening services, introducing a Sunday timetable and with more frequent services at times of greatest demand.
- A3. Ensure that proposals for the Westacott Strategic Extension provide direct, separate and easy to use pedestrian and cycle links through the development to connect with existing routes into Barnstaple.
- A4. Pursue all opportunities, even if incremental at each stage, to provide a public footpath alongside the road between Landkey and Swimbridge.
- A5. Support and encourage North Devon Council and Devon County Council to provide longer distance routes along dedicated footpath and cycle links to South Molton from Barnstaple, passing through Landkey.

## B. Safeguarding the Landscape Setting to Landkey Village

Landkey village is generally linear in form, running parallel with the Venn Stream and Blakes Hill Road. The village sits in a landscaped setting with agricultural fields rising on the surrounding hillsides. This countryside setting forms an important component to the attractive character of the Landkey parish. Future development needs to respect the form and setting of the village ensuring that development does not encroach up the surrounding hillside and open spaces, and maintains a clear visual separation with Barnstaple and Swimbridge.

### Our Priorities

- B1. All new development should maintain the clear and distinctive separation of Landkey village from the built form of Barnstaple and Swimbridge.
- B2. Not to allow incremental encroachment of development which would undermine the landscape setting of and around the village, particularly on elevated valley sides.
- B3. Maintain the buffer of open fields between Landkey and the North Devon Link Road.
- B4. Maintain a buffer of fields and open spaces alongside the Tarka Trail and the Venn Stream and tributaries and leats.
- B5. Ensure that all planning applications for new development of 5 or more units on green field sites around Landkey are landscape led and accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
- B6. Ensure that new housing is not permitted outside the village settlement boundary as identified in the Local Plan, unless the scheme is an Exception Site delivering a high percentage of affordable housing for the parish and has an acceptable landscape impact.



## C. Addressing Central Village Car Parking and Traffic Issues

Blakes Hill Road runs through the village and is a busy road. In some places, local residents, understandably and legally, park alongside the road because of a lack of off road parking for some properties in the area. However, while this has the benefit of slowing traffic the parked vehicles can, at times, cause congestion. When the North Devon Link Road is blocked, which sadly happens on a regular basis, all the traffic is diverted through the village causing gridlock.

Addressing the parking and congestion problems along parts of the main road through the village is a key priority, although at the present time there is not an immediate and clearly apparent solution available. However, with appropriate management and with the provision of more off-road spaces where opportunities arise, it would be possible to improve the quality of the life for local residents and the easier passage of vehicles through the village.

It is vital that all decisions affecting development and parking alongside the main road contribute to improving the situation and any proposals that exacerbate the problems; however, minor or incremental should be resisted.

Furthermore, a great source of concern with Landkey residents is the Landkey Road Junction with the North Devon Link Road. This has been the scene of regular accidents and near-miss incidents, and is avoided by many residents who, wishing to travel towards Tiverton, journey through Filliegh rather than turn right onto the Link Road. Road improvements are under way along the North Devon Link Road and this includes the provision of a roundabout at the Landkey turning. This is very much welcomed and in time it would be helpful to review how it is operating to ensure that it is meeting its intended purpose to address highway problems at this road entrance into and out of Landkey.

### Our Priorities

- C1. Protect the public car park behind the Castle Public House in acknowledgment of its critical function and keep under review any opportunities for its enhancement and improvement.
- C2. Ensure that new development in the vicinity of Blakes Hill Road meets all its on-site car parking requirements.
- C3. Examine opportunities for a further public car park(s) for local residents and not to allow any potential for a public car park to be prejudiced by other forms of development.
- C4. After a reasonable period of operating, to work with Devon County Council to review the effectiveness of the roundabout at the Landkey Junction and make any further improvements to ensure safe and efficient flow of traffic for all road users.

## D. Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Landkey is an attractive parish and it is important that all new development meets the highest standards of design, materials, layout and landscaping. There are some features through the Parish that would benefit from addressing. For instance, in places the overhead electric cables and telephone lines detract from the village character and clutter the street scene.

The Parish is well known for its Mazzard cherry trees and it is important that these iconic trees are protected and more examples planted.

There have been occasions during very heavy rain fall when surface water within parts of the village has not been able to disperse at sufficient speed into water courses or drains. This has led to localised flooding, including into properties. It is essential that all development schemes provide sufficient attenuation of surface water within the site and that opportunities to address localised flooding where this has occurred in the past, or may do so in the future, are taken and implemented.

### Our Priorities

- D1. All new development should have underground telephone, internet and electricity connections.
- D2. All opportunities should be taken to underground the electricity and telephone cables throughout the Parish and with a particular emphasis along Blakes Hill Road.
- D3. New development, whether large or small, should meet the highest standards of design, materials, layout and landscaping. Developers should demonstrate in their submissions how they have met these requirements such that the proposals are sympathetic to the identity and best characteristics of the Landkey Parish.
- D4. In all new developments a detailed landscaping scheme, sympathetic to the Landkey Parish location, should be provided. In particular, there will be an expectation that all landscaping schemes shall include Mazzard tree planting unless the developer can demonstrate why this would not be appropriate.
- D5. All new developments should demonstrate how they clearly address surface water runoff within the site and opportunities are identified and then taken, by all landowners, as well as infrastructure providers such as the Highway and Water Authorities, to improve the system for the discharge of surface water within the village to prevent localised flooding.

## E. Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities

Landkey enjoys a wide range of community facilities and new facilities have been provided over the past years. The Millennium Green, for instance, is a new community facility that has enhanced the village and provided a well used local facility. Nevertheless, some community facilities within the village have been lost in the past such as shops and a pub. It is important to be supportive and vigilant to protect existing services and facilities.

While the Village Hall is centrally located and until the covid pandemic was very well used by a range of very active groups, it has a constrained site and because of its size there are limits on the range of activities that are possible. Any opportunities should be taken, perhaps with the assistance of planning obligation monies, to examine options and/or improvements that would consolidate the importance of a village hall within the parish. This could include improvements to the existing site and/or the consideration of a new community hall on the land owned by the Parish Council off Harford Way.

As part of the Harford Way development a Multi-Use Games Area and allotments were provided. These are welcome local facilities and meet a need not previously provided for within the village. The allotments are generally well used and any further development of housing, of a medium scale and above, should provide further allotments to continue to meet the local need for such a leisure facility.

The Landkey Primary School is modern and well used. It is important that there is a continued focus on the provision of excellent facilities to help deliver the very best education for Landkey school children.

### Our Priorities

- E1. Existing community facilities shall not be lost unless alternative facilities of at least equivalent value and with reasonable accessibility are provided elsewhere in the Parish. Where compatible with the surroundings their expansion and/or diversification will be supported.
- E2. Options regarding the Village Hall and Old School Centre, and the potential for a new community hall for the Parish, should continue to be examined, including the ability of developer contributions to be directed to these facilities.
- E3. Opportunities to provide local allotments should be a component of any medium sized development.



## F. Ensuring New Housing Meets a Local Need

The provision of affordable housing as part of the overall housing stock is an important component of having a balanced and sustainable local community. Only a limited proportion of the housing stock within the Parish is available to rent for local people in housing need and it would be good to increase the range of rented and shared equity affordable housing within the Parish.

There is also a desire from some local residents to be able to downsize from larger houses to more manageable properties and still be able to remain within the Landkey community. New residential development of 10 units or above should seek to address, as part of the mix of property types, the housing needs of the local community.

### Our Priorities

- F1. In any open market development schemes, including the Westacott Strategic Extension, the provision of affordable housing should be maximised and, as a minimum, meet the Local Plan requirements.
- F2. New housing in any open market development should provide a mix of housing types, including single storey and accessible housing, so that there are opportunities for local residents to remain within the village.

## The Next Steps

The Parish Council will promote the priorities in this document when responding to consultations on planning applications and when approached by developers, statutory bodies and others who are considering schemes within the Parish.

The priorities do not come with funding. However, the Parish Council will actively seek to persuade those bodies, organisations and developers which are responsible for the delivery of schemes and infrastructure to focus funding and delivery within the Parish of Landkey in accordance with the priorities.

This document is considered to have a life of about five years and the Parish Council will comprehensively revisit the priorities at that point. During the next five years, the Parish Council will monitor the progress with the delivery of schemes against the priorities and it will actively pursue those priorities where it can, such with the objective to improve pedestrian links with Barnstaple. The Parish Council will monitor progress against the priorities in this document on a regular basis, including with an annual monitoring report at one of its regular public meetings.

This is an important document that seeks to steer development and proposals for the benefit of the residents and visitors of the Parish of Landkey and it is hoped that, in time, the consistent delivery of schemes which fulfil the priorities will make a lasting improvement to the quality of life and the environment within the Parish.

