

EASTINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2031 (Adopted 27 October 2016)



A vision for the future of a vibrant community thriving in harmony with the character, landscape and heritage of an ancient parish rooted in

agriculture, industry and transport

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document has been developed and produced by the Parish Council and a community group of volunteers with wide ranging skills and backgrounds on behalf of the whole Eastington community.

Eastington is one of many communities within the Stroud District developing a Neighbourhood Development Plan which gives the parish the opportunity to state its vision for the future of Eastington and to develop policies to enable that vision to become a reality.

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An on-line version of this document, larger versions of the maps and the evidence base is available at www.eastingtonndp.co.uk

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Supporting Documentation available separately:

- Appendix A – Glossary
- Appendix B – Maps
- Appendix C – Character Assessment

1:0 WHAT IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

- 1:0:1 The Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is a new type of planning document produced in the Parish. It is part of the Government's new approach to planning which aims to give local people more say about what goes on in their area. This is set out in the Localism Act that received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. If passed at a local referendum, the NDP will proceed to be made by Stroud District Council (SDC) so that it can be used to determine planning applications in the Parish; alongside the District Council's Local Plan and other material planning considerations. The NDP therefore provides the local community with a powerful tool to guide the long term future of Eastington, including the village centre, its outlying hamlets and the surrounding countryside, for the period 2015 to 2031.
- 1:0:2 The NDP contains a vision for the future of Eastington Parish and sets out clear planning policies to realise this vision.
- 1:0:3 In order to develop the NDP, Eastington Parish Council as the qualifying body set up a steering group made up of four parish councillors and a number of local volunteers.
- 1:0:4 If the NDP is adopted the Parish Council (as a statutory consultee) and District Council (as the determining authority) will apply all relevant policies of the NDP in considering proposals for development within the neighbourhood area. The NDP must be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework and Stroud District Council's Local Plan which has been developed in parallel.
- 1:0:5 The Eastington NDP covers the whole of Eastington Parish. In preparing the NDP, there has been dialogue with residents and community groups of Eastington Parish, Stroud District Council, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council and neighbouring parishes preparing NDPs. An application for Neighbourhood Plan designation was approved by Stroud District Council in September 2013. The NDP area is shown in Map 1 – Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan Area.

1:1 YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS

- 1:1:1 The NDP Steering Group has followed the necessary legal steps to create the NDP. Importantly, the group developed and followed a Community Engagement Action Plan to ensure extensive engagement with the people of Eastington and others with an interest in the area.
- 1:1:2 The process is set out on page 6, Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan Process, with the opportunities for local involvement highlighted. The timetable is partly dependent on the responses received to the NDP, the number of issues to be considered by the independent examiner, and their reporting time.
- 1:1:3 Recent consultation events have included an online questionnaire, a paper questionnaire, two open events in February 2014 and October 2014 where residents were able to comment on a number of options for the NDP. Further Pre Submission consultation was held in spring 2015. These comments have now influenced this Submission Plan.
- 1:1:4 Details of the consultation to date have been summarised in the Consultation Statement which is available to download from our website at www.eastingtonndp.co.uk.

1:2 EASTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS

Eastington Parish Survey	September 2011-January 2012
Neighbourhood Planning Regulations published nationally	April 2012
Eastington Parish Council's application for Neighbourhood Plan designation approved	September 2013
Eastington Parish Housing Needs Survey	October 2013
ACRE Rural Community Profile for Eastington published	October 2013
Inaugural Eastington NDP public meeting held	December 2013
NDP consultation evening	February 2014
Data collection and theme development	February 2014
Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan Survey	September 2014
NDP consultation drop-in event	September 2014
Plan creation – bringing together evidence	September 2014-January 2015
Draft Neighbourhood Plan Pre-Submission consultation	1 st May to 12 th June 2015
Plan amended in line with consultation	June-December 2015
Submission to Stroud District Council	January 2016
Consultation	January-March 2016
Independent examination	March-April 2016
Stroud District Council considers Plan for Referendum	May-June 2016
Referendum	August 2016
Adoption – Plan given full weight by Stroud District Council to determine planning applications if approved at Referendum	October 2016

EASTINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROCESS KEY

	Formal NDP adoption stages		Eastington Parish Council evidence collection
	NDP Steering Group process		Public consultation stages

1:3 HOW THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FITS INTO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

1:3:1 Although the Government's intention is for local people to decide what goes on in their parish, all NDPs must be in line with higher level planning policy. Therefore, in this instance, the NDP must:

- comply with European regulations on strategic environmental assessment and habitat
- have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), and
- generally conform to the strategic policies of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan 2015.

1:3:2 A Basic Conditions Statement has been completed to demonstrate how the policies within the NDP generally conform to higher level planning policy. The Statement is available to download from our website at www.eastingtonndp.co.uk.

1:3:3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF paragraph 7 defines sustainability in terms of:

- **an economic role** – *contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*
- **a social role** – *supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- **an environmental role** – *contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.*

1:3:4 The Stroud Local Plan was adopted in November 2015. The plan included a strategic allocation mainly in Eastington parish to provide up to 1350 residential dwellings and 10 hectares of employment land. The village of Alkerton is identified as an "Accessible Settlement with Limited Facilities – third tier" with a settlement boundary. The remainder of the parish is classed as countryside. The policies of the NDP apply to the whole of the parish.

1:3:5 The NDP contributes to sustainable development as will be demonstrated through this document.

1:4 WHAT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN COVERS

1:4:1 Although deciding where new housing and new employment should go is an important part of the NDP, it is about much more than this. The NDP is for the parish as a whole and looks at a wide range of issues, including:

- Achieving high quality sustainable development.
- Protecting valued open space within the village as well as the surrounding countryside including the landscape, views and habitats.
- Meeting housing needs.
- Promoting local businesses.
- Local transport, road safety issues and public rights of way (PROW).
- Supporting sympathetic renovation of the Stroudwater Canal.

- Promoting the development of renewable energy projects for the financial and environmental benefit of the Eastington community.

1:5 WHAT PERIOD DOES THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN COVER?

1:5:1 The Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan covers the period 2015-2031. The end date of the NDP aligns with that of the Stroud District Local Plan adopted in 2015.

2:0 THE VISION FOR 2031

2:0:1 In the year 2031, Eastington parish has grown following the development of the strategic site previously known as “West of Stonehouse” (now called “Oldbury End”); the Local Planning Authority included this location in the Local Plan 2015 as an urban extension of Stonehouse which falls mostly within the Eastington parish boundary.

2:0:2 The parish now has a population of over 5,000 people and more than 2,000 houses. There are two centres; one at Oldbury End with a range of new shops and services, and the original centre at Alkerton where we have thriving shops and services including a butchers, post office, public houses, and a small supermarket.

2:0:3 The centre of Alkerton continues as a thriving community but the through traffic remains a major concern to the residents although the local businesses are enjoying the increase in business from serving the much larger population.

2:0:4 The much-needed and hoped for railway station at Bristol Road in Stonehouse has still not yet been delivered. This has meant an over-reliance on the car for commuting to Bristol, Gloucester and further afield.

2:0:5 The traffic congestion on the A419 was eased slightly with the addition of traffic lights and dualling of sections of the carriageway but the road remains heavily congested and fortunately there are now plans for a major improvement of the road to resolve the issue.

2:0:6 The pedestrian footbridges enable those living either side of the A419 to travel with ease by foot or bicycle to access the other areas of the parish including the very popular canal.

2:0:7 The delivery of faster broadband has enabled a higher proportion of individuals and small businesses to operate from home.

2:0:8 The canal has at last re-opened with many boats travelling to and from Stroud with its network of bistros, bars and artisan shops. The new marina on the A419 now provides a real focus for the community and an attractive leisure facility for tourists, picnics and a drink at the waterside bar.

3:0 INTRODUCTION

3:0:1 We present to you the Eastington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. This is our community's response to the Government's commitment to devolve planning down to communities. In the parish we have a long history of being actively involved in planning and development. We have supported the right housing development in the right places and we have opposed, sometimes successfully sometimes not, poor planning decisions.

3:0:2 Under the sponsorship of our Parish Council a group of around a dozen individuals have come together to create the NDP. We have been very fortunate to have a considerable range of skills in individuals who have been willing to give their time to produce this Plan. We have been supported throughout by a very experienced town planner who has worked both in the public and private sector.

- 3:0:3 The journey we have taken has been spread over three years and has involved creating many opportunities for local residents to become involved and contribute to the NDP. We have consulted with the whole community through two open meetings and three surveys delivered to every household, two of which were also available online.
- 3:0:4 Our parish has grown significantly over the last 20 years. We have seen an additional 185 houses built bringing with them more people and more investment into our community, so that today the parish can still support an array of shops and small businesses. If communities are to thrive they need new development, delivered at a rate and type that is consistent with the community in which they are built.
- 3:0:5 In our surveys residents have clearly identified the need for starter homes for our young people who wish to stay and work in the community and, in addition, they have recognised the need for our older residents to downsize when the time is right to housing that enables them to stay within the community close to friends and family.
- 3:0:6 The Stroud Local Plan strategic allocation of West of Stonehouse will bring a development of 1350 dwellings which will provide a mix of housing, from starter homes to larger family homes. Thirty per cent of the houses will be “affordable” with the remainder being market housing. This development will provide the opportunity for our residents to move locally in new starter homes and for older residents to downsize.
- 3:0:7 Our survey identifies that over 25% of people in employment work from home, or their home is their business address. This is a very high proportion compared to national figures and reflects the changing world we live in with more and more of the nation’s employment being in the service sector. Our NDP encourages this growth of employment which was widely supported in the survey.
- 3:0:8 The NDP is clear that it wishes to protect our agricultural heritage and food production while, at the same time, encouraging the recreational capacity that this land affords the community with its network of footpaths and green lanes. The canal in particular affords us great opportunities for the future as one day it will extend all the way to Saul Junction and with that will come a huge recreational and economic gain.
- 3:0:9 Most frustrating for many residents is traffic – often travelling too fast – and using the roads as rat runs. There is a lack of parking in the centre of Alkerton around the Cross, and with such a large parish people come to the centre from the outlying hamlets to access the shops and services. Our NDP encourages sustainable forms of transport with the provision of pedestrian and cycle routes to reduce the reliance on the motorcar.

4:0 OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- 4:0:1 The NDP looks at the current development of Eastington and the most desirable course for its future as determined by our community. There are four main themes:
- Environment
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Infrastructure, including Getting Around, Public Rights of Way and renewable energy.
- 4:0:2 The main aims and objectives considered under each theme are introduced in this overview which considers Eastington’s past, present and future. They were identified in detailed research carried out by the team working on each theme, aided by local knowledge, questionnaires and public consultation events.

4:1 PAST AND PRESENT

- 4:1:1 The Parish of Eastington lies in the Severn Vale within the setting of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The parish covers an area of some ten square kilometres and undulates from below 50 to over 100 feet above sea level. Although mainly agricultural land, there are small pockets of a surprising variety of habitats for wildlife from wet meadows to dryish woodland.
- 4:1:2 Eastington is a rural parish supporting both arable and livestock farming. Much of the wildlife is concentrated along uncultivated corridors provided by hedgerows and road verges, in small woodlands or by the Stroudwater Canal and River Frome banks. The canal, which currently terminates at Pike Lock, is an important environmental, heritage and leisure asset for Eastington.
- 4:1:3 Not far from this evidence of early technology, now a treasured part of the landscape, Eastington has a very conspicuous renewable energy project at the OHMG community centre where an array of solar photovoltaic panels has generated over 30,000 kwh of electricity. Its ten solar hot water panels can heat 1,000 litres of hot water so football teams shower for free. Eastington Renewable Energy Group, set up in 2013, is actively considering renewable energy projects for the economic benefit to the entire parish without having significant ecological effect or irreversible impact on valued amenities.
- 4:1:4 Our parish has provided the earliest evidence of human habitation in the Stroud district going back 30,000 years. Eastington has an unusual and distinctive settlement pattern which is derived from its historic rural past. It comprises a group of separate hamlets which join together to form the parish. Of these Alkerton has grown into what is today the core and is known as the village. It is this distinctive settlement pattern which defines the character of the village.
- 4:1:5 Nowadays, the majority of people live in relatively modern housing in Alkerton around The Cross, where there are local shops and services. Other parishioners live in the surrounding hamlets which retain older cottages and farmhouses, linked by old, high-hedged lanes and interlinked by a network of footpaths.
- 4:1:6 The parish has three major through routes which pose the challenge of speed and congestion. These roads cut through the parish but, with smaller lanes, provide the grid that cements the community.



[Nupend circa 1880]

- 4:1:7 Some older people have lived or farmed their whole lives in the parish. Younger families are attracted by modern houses in a rural village setting, between the industrial influences of Stonehouse and the commuter influences of the M5 motorway junction. It shares the employment challenges and opportunities of the district as a whole, which has been considered in research and consultation for the NDP.
- 4:1:8 In 2010, Eastington won “Vibrant Village of the Year” for its many community projects and determination to succeed as a positive community.
- 4:1:9 This rich heritage is ours to preserve and protect for future generations and unless we are both diligent and careful we may easily lose this snapshot of tranquility to the bustle of housing estates and factories.
- 4:1:10 The NDP recognises the need for additional growth in jobs and housing to meet local needs and to retain a sense of vibrancy and purpose. However, such growth must respect and preserve the character and appearance of the parish as otherwise the ambience and community spirit may be eroded. In other words, the primary objective is to ensure a long term sustainable future for the community as a whole. It is regarded as particularly important to provide enough new homes for our young people and suitable accommodation for our elderly when they need it, to enable them to remain within the parish.
- 4:1:11 The following sections summarise the four main objectives.

4:2 ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

We aim to:

- conserve and enhance the distinctive heritage of the area
- protect the identity of the hamlets within Eastington parish and prevent any further coalescence between the village and other hamlets
- protect important open spaces within the parish
- ensure necessary development is well designed and reflects the heritage and distinctive character of Eastington
- protect and enhance the high quality and sensitive landscape within the Parish and the setting of the village and each hamlet
- maintain the distinctive views and visual connectivity with the surrounding countryside from public places within built-up areas
- protect and enhance biodiversity
- encourage the restoration of the canal and support sensitive developments and activities to complement the activities of the canal and its users.

4:3 HOUSING OBJECTIVES

We aim for a mix of housing at the West of Stonehouse Local Plan strategic allocation from starter homes to larger family homes and bungalows and supported by a range of shops and services.

4:4 EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVES

The Local Plan allocates large scale sites for employment development. Outside of these allocations we aim to:

- support small scale employment initiatives that create opportunities for local residents
- support working from home.

4:5 INFRASTRUCTURE OBJECTIVES

Getting around

We aim to encourage all people living in the parish and those passing through:

- to work closely with Gloucestershire County Council Highways to identify and agree a variety of ways to improve highway safety

- to establish and improve cycle and walking routes suitable for children's buggies, wheelchairs and mobility scooters
- to ensure new housing and canal developments are connected to the village by safe road, cycle and pedestrian routes
- to support development proposals that conserve or enhance the route, character, function and recreational value of Public Rights of Way (PROW)
- to ensure any new development allows for adequate car and bicycle parking provision.

4:6 RENEWABLE ENERGY

We aim to support and encourage all forms of renewable energy.

5:0 SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

- 5:0:1 The purpose is to provide a positive framework for decision making on planning applications. This is necessary because the NDP must comply with the legal requirement that it has been prepared positively having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which presents the Government's policy to support growth by specifically setting out a "presumption in favour of sustainable development".
- 5:0:2 Sustainable development as defined in the NPPF encompasses environmental, social and economic dimensions. Indeed the policies in paragraphs 18 to 219 of the NPPF, taken as a whole, constitute what is meant as sustainable development for the purpose of the planning system. The NDP should have regard to this advice. It should also be in general conformity with the Stroud Local Plan, adopted in November 2015 and consequently, appropriate amendments have been made to the earlier draft.
- 5:0:3 In accordance with both national and Local Plan policy it is the intention of the NDP to support a presumption in favour of sustainable development and thus to demonstrate a positive approach to the management of growth within the parish. The primary objective is to secure a long term sustainable future for the community as a whole whilst retaining the unique character and sense of place that is Eastington. To provide clarity in this objective it is thought that a general sustainable development policy will help ensure that the NDP is read as a whole. This should help avoid repetition in other more detailed policy areas.
- 5:0:4 Eastington has grown from the historic grouping of hamlets into a substantial settlement based around Alkerton. However it remains largely rural in character and maintaining the quality and openness of the countryside will help define and sustain the historic settlement pattern.
- 5:0:5 With the exception of Alkerton, most of the hamlets have remained largely untouched in recent years. However Alkerton has grown into a substantial settlement where most of the facilities and services are located. The other hamlets are not included in the settlement hierarchy in the Stroud Local Plan and therefore are considered to be located in the countryside and development in them is covered by Policy CP15. Maintaining their separate identities and the sense of openness around them, as well as the historic pattern of ancient tracks and footpaths which connect them, is an important objective of the NDP.
- 5:0:6 On grounds of accessibility it is considered that the majority of future growth, other than the strategic location West of Stonehouse, should be contained within easy walking distance of those existing facilities within Alkerton and that the surrounding countryside should be protected from inappropriate development. For this purpose a settlement boundary has been set around Alkerton. However, the hamlets remain an essential part of the village structure and community. It is thought important from a social and economic perspective to nurture and support the hamlets.

- 5:0:7 The settlement boundary around Alkerton is compliant with Policy CP3 of the Stroud Local Plan and is the same as that shown in Policies Map 4 of the adopted Stroud Local Plan.
- 5:0:8 Local Plan Policy CP2 identifies an area in the north east of the parish, known as West of Stonehouse, as a strategic location for growth, including approximately 1,350 dwellings and 10 hectares of employment growth. In addition the policy provides for smaller scale housing development within development limits as set out in Local Plan Policy CP3 which defines Eastington as a Tier 3 settlement.
- 5:0:9 Local Plan Policy CP15 explains that development proposals outside development limits will not be permitted except in specified exceptional circumstances. The stated objective of this policy is to “protect the separate identity of settlements and the quality of the countryside” etc around them.
- 5:0:10 This policy framework, which clearly is intended to protect the countryside and the coalescence of settlements, is regarded as particularly relevant to Eastington and indeed, fundamental to the achievement of the overall objectives of the NDP.

POLICY EP1: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Development at a scale and in locations that accord with the development plan will be supported where it helps to maintain the continued sustainability of communities across the parish, by providing:

- new homes, including affordable housing, to meet the strategic needs of the District and to meet the local housing needs of the Parish
- new and expanded business premises including tourist and local retail opportunities
- infrastructure associated with leisure, social, community, recreational and education activities.

Development outside the West of Stonehouse allocation should take place within the settlement boundary of Alkerton as defined on Map 1. Development in other hamlets and the countryside should accord with Local Plan Policy CP15.

6:0 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 6:0:1 As evidenced by the “Eastington Parish Character Assessment”, the landscape of the parish is mainly agricultural land. However, there are small pockets of a surprising variety of habitats for wildlife from wet meadows to woodland often part of a wildlife corridor network.
- 6:0:2 Two broad ridges underlain by blue-grey Lias rocks of the Lower Jurassic period run southeast to northwest across the parish. Evidence for the age of this underlying strata is provided by the numerous ‘devil’s toenails’ (the fossil *Gryphaea arcuata*, an ancient relative of the oyster) turned up during ploughing on the ridges. The Stroudwater Canal and the two branches of the River Frome follow roughly parallel courses in the valley between these ridges. The river valley is underlain by gravelly alluvial terraces of some depth, deposited towards the end of the Ice Age when the Frome must have been much wider and rapidly flowing. A disused gravel pit, revealing deposits of gravel several metres thick lies at Claypits in the west of the parish. Wickster’s Brook, which forms the southern parish boundary, meanders the level plain to the south. Clay has been a useful economic asset for Eastington, both as a source of bricks and as puddling material for the canals.

- 6:0:3 Anyone who cycles or walks around Eastington will know that there are some steepish slopes and high points which afford lovely views. Looking southwest from Cress Green, one is at the highest point between here and the Severn Estuary. In winter, when the trees are bare, the church towers of St Cyr's Stonehouse, St Michael and All Angels Eastington, St Peter's Frocester, Slimbridge, Selsley and Standish churches can all be seen. To the south, east and north the Cotswolds rise – Stinchcombe Hill, Selsley Common, Frocester Hill, Haresfield Beacon and the distinctively shaped outliers of Cam Long Down (south) and Robinswood Hill (north). Far away, over the Severn to the northwest, lies May Hill distinguished by its topknot of conifers and, on a clear day, one can see as far the Malvern Hills to the north.
- 6:0:4 This is essentially a rural parish of agricultural land, both arable and pasture which supports dairy and beef cattle in the summer and some sheep in the winter. Several 'semi-improved' meadows have more variety of plant life and, therefore, attract butterflies and other insects in the spring and early summer. But much of the wildlife is concentrated along "corridors" provided by hedgerows and road verges, in small woodlands or by the canal and River Frome banks. A surprising diversity can also turn up in our own back gardens.
- 6:0:5 Eastington has a remnant of ancient woodland, Mole Grove, adjacent to the M5 on the north western boundary of the parish at West End. It is made up of oak, ash and some hazel which would have provided firewood for villagers. There is also a scattering of wild service trees in the wood which is a home for roe deer and foxes and a hunting ground for kestrel and the little owl, among others.
- 6:0:6 Smaller native trees and shrubs have colonised the canal and river banks as well as existing and vestigial hedgerows. They include spindle, buckthorn, field maple, blackthorn, dogwood, elder, snowberry, privet, as well as apple, plum and pear trees which are probably escapees from the many orchards that once thrived in the parish.
- 6:0:7 A move to restore some orchards is underway with the formation of Eastington Community Orchard Group (ECO) which was started with the £500 prize for winning the Vibrant Village award in 2010. Work on Coneygree Orchard started in spring 2011 and a second orchard is planned for 2015 behind Browning's Close, with public money augmented by sales of ECO apple and pear juice. Perhaps the oldest perry orchard is in Middle Street, where trees in excess of 250 years old still yield ample pears.
- 6:0:8 In the 19th century osiers were once common along the river banks and in unused corners, providing the withies (long supple canes) for basketmaking, but they have virtually died out leaving only more common willow species.
- 6:0:9 The fields which surround the village centre and the hamlets, as well as the corridors of footpaths, bridleways and the river and canal, support a wide range of small mammals, birds and butterflies. While the rural nature of the parish benefits wildlife, successive Parish surveys (starting in 1980) have underlined how villagers appreciate getting out to green fields within minutes of their front door. These open spaces are precious to our way of life.
- 6:0:10 Respondents to the 2011-12 Parish Survey identified the following green spaces as being of particular value:
- fields between Swallowcroft, Millend and Middle Street
 - paths and bridleways around Nupend and Nastend
 - lanes and waterside paths near Nastend, Cress Green and Millend.

6:1 WATERCOURSES

- 6:1:1 The River Frome enters the parish, flowing under the Bristol/Gloucester railway line in two shallow channels 100-200 metres apart. It flows rapidly north-westward over a silty or gravelly bottom on either side of its river valley. The wide valley would have been carved out of the Lias Clay during times of much higher flow at the end of the ice age. At Churchend, the northern branch of the river is further divided – a small northern branch serviced

Churchend Mill (no longer there). These two branches flow onward, just south of Eastington Primary School and either side of the meadow, Butt Leaze. The three branches of the river converge just above and just below Meadow Bridge (at the foot of Spring Hill) and thus the river broadens and deepens until it flows out of the parish under Frome Bridge on the A38, on towards Fromebridge Mill and eventually under the Sharpness Canal and into the River Severn at Framilode.

- 6:1:2 In the parish, there are footpaths along the whole length of the northern branch (south bank) and as far as the A38 but only along part of the southern branch. The river served the needs of the flourishing milling industries west of Stroud (cloth, corn and oil) of the 16th century and later, and subsequently it became inextricably linked to the Stroudwater Canal which opened in 1779.
- 6:1:3 The river from Churchend to Fromebridge does not follow a natural course. In the 1770s John Kemmett, in an attempt to make the river more navigable cut out 19 meanders along its course. Evidence for some of these meanders can still be seen on the ground in the extreme west of the parish today. Conversely, many leats were cut to increase water penetration to support withy beds – essential for basketmaking in all pre-1950s manufacturing processes.
- 6:1:4 Nowadays, milling activity in the parish has long ceased but the southern branch of the river still serves us by carrying water used in the treatment of sewage from Stanley Downton Sewage Works. This branch of the river is much more thickly vegetated below the works, a result of eutrophication due to the nitrogen-enriched water. Millend Mill now has a restored water wheel which is generating a limited amount of electricity.
- 6:1:5 The most exciting news concerning the Frome in Eastington in recent years is that otters are known to have passed along its course in the process of recolonising the Stroud Valleys.
- 6:1:6 The 2011-12 Parish Survey showed that a surprisingly large number of people said they had been affected by flooding. Much of this was highlighted in 2007 after the summer floods, most of which were aggravated by poor maintenance of ditches and even some sewers.



[Aerial view of the River Frome flood plain – 23 December 2012]

- 6:1:7 Action by the Parish Council in 2007 and 2008 went a long way to improving this and two flood wardens were appointed. After the 2012-13 floods, a new Flood Prevention Group has

been set up to lobby agencies and local councils for action as well as performing local clearances.

- 6:1:8 In line with national policy inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Given the climate change predictions of a 20% increase in rainfall over the next 30 years then it is imperative that no development should be permitted that in any way hinders the flow of water or the ability of the floodplain to flood and hold water in these low lying areas. The flood meadow between Spring Hill and the motorway is considered critical as this is the narrowest point of the entire River Frome catchment area and therefore a key flood zone for gathering the run-off of the five valleys and has to be allowed to flood. This area should be safeguarded from development as it is required for current and likely future flood management. The protection of the floodplain is also important as a wetland habitat for riparian species living in and migrating along the River Frome and its tributaries. The Adopted Stroud District Local Plan (November 2015) was supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (Levels 1 and 2) and also contains Delivery Policy ES4 to manage water resources, quality and flood risk. The drafting of this policy took account of advice from the Environment Agency and other relevant flood risk management bodies. Latest flood risk maps are available (as at June 2016) from the Environment Agency using the link below. There is a mapping facility to zoom to relevant parts of the District to show flood risk: [EA Flood Map](#).
- 6:1:9 Evidence from Environment Agency reports indicates the critical water management nature of the River Frome floodplain of the parish. The "River Frome Catchment Scoping Study" (May 2013) recommends that management techniques such as Rural Sustainable Drainage Solutions (RSuDS) should be promoted and implemented wherever possible. This is particularly important in Eastington where the parish is established upon an old adhoc agriculture drainage network ill-equipped to deal with an ever expanding domestic drainage requirement.
- 6:1:10 To further support biodiversity around watercourses, an eight metre buffer zone of non developed land (suitable green habitat) should be preserved adjacent to all the permanent watercourses in the parish in order to allow for habitation and migration of aquatic and other riparian species. These "green corridors" will also provide important migration routes through the parish to link the many disparate and diverse pockets of habitation which otherwise may become isolated. This is especially important in view of the importance of the riparian species known to exist along the River Frome axis. Bats and Barn owls are also recorded in the Frome corridor and these migration pathways should be preserved in order to allow for hunting and breeding migration routes for these species.
- 6:1:11 Where development adjacent to the permanent watercourses materially reduces or removes habitat, other areas adjacent to the watercourse should be improved and set aside to provide a compensatory habitat sink for these riparian and associated species in the foodchain.
- 6:1:12 Through Policy EP2, we aim to:
- to restore and conserve as much of the historic rural character of the parish in the next 25 years
 - to promote any opportunities to create new public access open green spaces that are in balance with the rural nature of the parish
 - to provide new and connected habitats across the parish to encourage native species and the ability of parishioners to enjoy them
 - restore the lost and buried ponds and wetland areas
 - restore and replant lost orchards
 - restore / plant at least 10 acres of mixed woodland some of which will come through the restoration of the canal corridor
 - look to encourage and develop a further 10 acres of species-rich high quality biodiverse grassland where there is public access

- create and preserve linear wildlife corridors along all the main water courses to create wildlife corridors and decrease run off and silting up of watercourses.

POLICY EP2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Development proposals should respect the natural environment and protect and enhance biodiversity.

Development proposals that may impact on:

- a designated biodiversity site (SSSI, Key Wildlife Sites), or undesignated sites, which may have rare species or valuable habitats, and local wildlife corridors shall be considered against Stroud Local Plan Policy ES6;
- ancient woodlands, hedgerows and community orchards shall be considered against Stroud Local Plan Policy ES8.

Local wildlife corridors and community orchards are identified on Map 4.

Where appropriate, development proposals should include information that:

- demonstrates the means of mitigating, preserving and where appropriate, recreating wildlife habitats and net gains in natural flora;
- provides corridors of land within which public footpaths and bridleways of significant local recreational and amenity value are provided; and
- incorporates Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS).

Development will not be supported:

- within 8m of all watercourses within the Parish
- within flood zone 3, unless exceptional circumstances indicate otherwise.

6:2 THE STROUDWATER CANAL



- 6:2:1 The canal was built in the late 18th century, linking Stroud to the Severn Estuary and bringing business to Chipman's Platt as a dock and Newtown as the base for the 'navvies'.
- 6:2:2 It was closed to navigation in 1954. There has been an interest in maintaining its amenity value ever since The Cotswolds Canals Trust became involved in a very active programme of restoration in the 1970s, undaunted by the barriers created by the M5 and A38 at Eastington.
- 6:2:3 In the 2011-12 Parish Survey 85% of respondents were in favour of restoring the canal through the parish and 69% supported its use for tourism.
- 6:2:4 At the NDP consultation event in February 2014 100% of 25 respondents said '*we should try and encourage developments and activities that complement the activity of the canal and its users*'. Ten replied to the question that we should '*try and support proposals for canalside activities and supporting businesses developed adjacent to the canal*'. Nine were in favour and one against. On the specific point of supporting a marina development adjacent to the canal within the parish, 15 out of 17 respondents were in favour.
- 6:2:5 The NDP favours a small marina specifically to support the function of the canal and its users, providing traditional rural canalside activities such as mooring, chandlery, repair, café and fuelling facilities. The marina could provide green recreation space on the northern side of the canal/marina for local residents and visitors as a tourism destination.
- 6:2:6 Such development would also allow for linear planting of orchards and hardwood on the embankments and the replanting of withy beds in the floodplains. The area could also house a cider and Perry production unit to deal with increased production from Eastington's new orchards.
- 6:2:7 The February 2014 consultation evening also evidenced strong support for better access and pathways between the village/parish and the canal.
- 6:2:8 We will aim to enable and support the re-development of the canal, its setting and adjacent spaces, to provide a traditional rural canalside environment that allows recreations and small scale development opportunities for those that live in and visit the parish.

POLICY EP3: RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANAL CORRIDOR

The continued restoration of the canal, including the development of canal-side land for tourist and recreational uses and activities, will be encouraged. Development of a marina or smaller mooring basins and canal/waterside related facilities will be permitted provided that:

- Footpaths linking villages to canal proposals are of a scale and appearance that relate to the existing canal and surrounding development
- Green recreational space and landscaping is provided as part of the development; and
- Satisfactory and safe vehicular access and adequate car parking is provided.

7:0 THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- 7:0:1 The earliest evidence of human habitation in the Stroud district was found in the gravel pit near Claypits in the form of two flint blades, thought to be some 30,000 years old. These rare artefacts can now be seen at Stroud's Museum in the Park.
- 7:0:2 Nowadays, the majority of people live in the concentration of largely modern housing within the settlement boundary around The Cross, where there is a pub, a hotel, a butchers shop, a small supermarket, post office and two hairdressers. Nearby is the village hall, a Methodist chapel and a garage. Half a mile away, by the River Frome stands the parish church, the village primary school and a small industrial estate. Other parishioners live in scattered small hamlets of a few older cottages or farmhouses. These are linked by a network of footpaths, in varying states of use and maintenance. There are three residential homes, two being Camphill Communities, and one for the elderly. The diversity in property type leads to a pleasing diversity of people in the community, with some older folk having lived or farmed their whole lives in the parish, and younger families attracted by modern houses in a rural village setting.
- 7:0:3 The village layout is based on the original medieval layout and comprises a set of interlocking access routes between the A38, which has Roman origins, and the Cotswold villages. In addition there was an important bridging point across the River Frome where some of the oldest parts of the parish lie. The parish is made up of several distinct hamlets where housing is congregated. These reflect the historically diverse phases of evolution of the village and are all essentially ribbon type developments based around the parish's agricultural/industrial past. There are 56 listed buildings and monuments within Eastington including the distinctive directional post "Alkerton Cross" which is visible as you approach the centre of the village from all three main roads.
- 7:0:4 The main village eventually evolved around the hamlet of Alkerton on the higher ground above the River Frome flood plain. The other hamlets saw little of the Victorian and later development that became focused on this part of the parish. In fact, the population of the parish as a whole remained virtually static for 100 years between 1851 and 1951, although the number of inhabited homes in the outlying hamlets declined as the village centre grew, reflecting changes in industry and employment.
- 7:0:5 In addition to the village centre (Alkerton), modern Eastington includes the outlying hamlets of: Westend, Nupend, Nastend, New Town, Claypits, and the areas of Chipman's Platt, Churchend, Millend, Middle Street and Cress Green. Each reflects something of its industrial and agricultural past in its architecture, name and street pattern and each has had its day in the sun.
- 7:0:6 For example, Churchend has our oldest buildings and the 15th century church; Nastend was the heart of the Clutterbuck's mercer business in the middle ages; Chipman's Platt was our main wharf and boat repair yard in the 19th century; Millend, the largest mill which grew to absorb mechanisation in the 19th century. New Town was a bustling centre when the canal was under construction, while Claypits provided early indigenous clay for local buildings, replaced by red Stonehouse brick in Victorian times.
- 7:0:7 Nastend was first proposed as a Conservation Area in 1997. As a small community of only 12 houses it has hardly changed since the 16th century when five dwellings were recorded there. The only access is via an ancient sunken lane, aiding its senses of isolation and individuality. Despite its small size, it has a fine heritage of vernacular buildings, seven of which are listed. They date from the 16th to the 19th centuries. A Conservation Area Statement was prepared in 2007.
- 7:0:8 Indeed the hamlets of Eastington parish represent a remarkable footprint of a pre-Georgian parish layout and its layout of roads, hedges, gardens and houses is almost unchanged since at least 1835. Reference to maps 6 and 7 (see Appendix B) shows the remarkable similarity in these features within the historic hamlets. Examples are seen in Westend with

only two new houses built in the 1800s and one in the 1900s. In Nastend, the footprint is unchanged (although one property has been rebuilt on the same site). Cress Green is virtually unchanged as this pattern persists with the other hamlets. These hamlets thus represent a valuable and social, cultural and historic resource that is preserved in this unique parish.

- 7:0:9 The hamlets are now getting a new lease of life as more businesses operate out of homes and micro-offices are reflected in the Employment section of the NDP, empowered by the digital age and the growing tendency towards self-employment.
- 7:0:10 The character of Eastington owes much to the variety of architectural forms, styles and materials represented by buildings constructed and developed over hundreds of years. In the last hundred years the look of many of the new builds has not followed the local vernacular style or architectural patterns. This diversity in building styles contributes greatly to the character of Eastington and it is important that this diversity is retained when any new development is planned.
- 7:0:11 The National Planning Policy Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people. Sustainable development involves achieving positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including replacing poor design with better design. One of the Government's core planning principles is to always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- 7:0:12 Future building should respect the distinctive height, scale, spacing, layout, orientation, design and materials of the area in which it is located.
- 7:0:13 The settlement pattern of Eastington is quite distinctive in that it comprises a number of hamlets separated by countryside and linked by ancient tracks and footpaths. The largest of these is Alkerton which today is the focus of the village. It is regarded as a particularly important objective of the NDP to protect and conserve this particular characteristic of the village. This objective is entirely compliant with Local Plan Policy CP15 which explains that development proposals outside development limits will not be permitted except in specified exceptional circumstances. The stated objective of this policy is to "protect the separate identity of settlements and the quality of the countryside" etc around them.
- 7:0:14 This policy framework, which clearly is intended to protect the countryside and the coalescence of settlements (hamlets), is regarded as particularly relevant to Eastington and indeed, fundamental to the achievement of the overall objectives of the NDP. Whereas it is important to retain the sense of separation between the hamlets and to preserve the countryside around them, it is also important to maintain their distinctive, largely semi-rural character. With the exception of Alkerton, the remainder are generally characterised by dwellings and agricultural buildings set very loosely together in large open grounds, alongside historic lanes. Whilst some limited development might be sustainable anything other than on a very small scale would be likely to have an unacceptable impact on the character of these small settlements.
- 7:0:15 Further supporting evidence for the built environment in Eastington can be found in the Character Assessment.
- 7:0:16 Development in the parish in the countryside outside of the settlement boundary at Alkerton will be considered under Stroud Local Plan Policy CP14 (Supporting Rural Economy) and CP15 (A Quality Living and Working Countryside). Local Plan Policy SA2 sets out guiding principles for the development of the strategic allocation "West of Stonehouse".

POLICY EP4: SITING AND DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION

New development that is in accordance with POLICY EP1 will be supported where the proposal:

- demonstrates a high standard of design that respects and reinforces local distinctiveness and character through attention to matters of scale, density, massing, height, landscaping, layout, materials and access;
- respects the natural environment and terrain and enhances the natural capital of the site through new features such as trees, hedges, protected wildlife habitats, wildlife corridors and watercourses;
- optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development whilst incorporating green space appropriate to the scale of the development;
- respects the privacy and amenities of neighbouring properties;
- respects the setting of Listed Buildings, and other designated and non-designated heritage assets;
- does not impact on the setting of the Cotswold AONB; and
- respects the integrity, character and appearance of adopted Conservation Areas including the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area.

8:0 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 8:0:1 Eastington has consistently provided a substantial amount of housing for people within the district since 1945. Growth has been at an appropriate level to maintain a vibrant community whilst not too great to change the rural character of the parish.
- 8:0:2 In the last 25 years some 185 houses have been built giving a present total of about 675 and growing. The ONS 2011 census showed Eastington had a population of 1,565, comprising 649 households. The rate of building has been about 8 houses per year which residents have felt has been an appropriate growth for the community (2011-12 Parish Survey).
- 8:0:3 In 2013, the Parish Council carried out a Housing Needs Survey which highlighted a local affordable need of 16 dwellings and a market requirement for 14 houses. Since then, the development at Swallowcroft currently under construction is delivering 21 market houses which more than meet the immediate market need. The development also provides for 9 affordable units which will help to meet the local need. Further provision will be available within the strategic allocation in the Local Plan known as “West of Stonehouse” (Local Plan Policy CP2 and SA2). Any additional housing will be encouraged within the settlement boundary defined on Map 1.
- 8:0:4 The NDP makes provision for the limited levels of growth envisaged in Local Plan Policy CP3 through the provision of a settlement boundary around Alkerton as defined in Policy EP1.
- 8:0:5 In order to provide for any further affordable housing that might become necessary during the Plan period and to attain local nomination rights; we include an exceptions policy based on Local Plan Policy HC4. Sites should be quite small in scale, both to reflect the limitations of the services and facilities to be found in the village and to minimise the effect of development on the character and appearance of the area.
- 8.0.6 Such sites should be located within easy walking distance of the facilities of Alkerton, preferably within 800 metres of both Alkerton Cross and the OHMG Community Centre.

POLICY EP5: EXCEPTION SITES

Planning applications for small scale affordable housing sites adjoining the settlement of Alkerton will be supported, providing the criteria of Local Plan Policy HC4 are met.

8:1 WEST OF STONEHOUSE (WoS) STRATEGIC ALLOCATION

- 8:1:1 On 19th November 2015 the Local Planning Authority formally adopted the Local Plan which includes a strategic allocation site known as “West of Stonehouse” (see Map 1). In that plan a 101 hectare site is identified for up to 1350 houses over the planning period 2015 – 2031. The strategic site is described as an “Urban Extension” to Stonehouse Town. Thirty per cent of the houses built will be “affordable” with the other 70% being market housing. The site is intended to have some local services and a primary school.
- 8:1:2 As part of this development there will be 10 hectares of employment land providing 2000 jobs. The majority of this development will be in the Parish of Eastington. Currently there are 650 houses (source: ONS Census 2011) in the parish with a population of around 1565 people. This development in addition to the 650 homes in the parish will result in a total of 2000 houses and a population of approximately 4300 about two thirds of the current population of Stonehouse.
- 8:1:3 This scale of development in the parish will have a significant impact on the communities of Eastington, Stonehouse and Standish. The affected communities will have to work together over the next three years to ensure this major increase in housing, population and traffic is properly managed and disruption to infrastructure is minimised. The main areas of impact are identified below.
- 8:1:4 The Local Plan describes this strategic site as an Urban Extension to Stonehouse. The strategic site however is separated from Stonehouse by a large industrial site and a Railway line. The only access to Stonehouse is via Oldends lane and over the level crossing and then through a single lane railway bridge. The alternative route is along the A419 to Horse Trough roundabout.
- 8:1:5 The Inspectors report following the Local Plan examination in public states “The scale and mixed use nature of the proposal (WoS) provides the critical mass to create a viable sustainable urban extension, with its own essential services, whilst improving connectivity with Stonehouse town centre and its wider range of facilities would ensure that it is integrated with the existing settlement”. This proposal has now been granted outline planning permission and Eastington will work with Stonehouse Town Council to support the local planning authority and ensure that this key policy intention is delivered.
- 8:1:6 The development proposes a new primary school to provide a one point five form entry primary school and accommodation for 94 pre school places as part of the development. Secondary education will be provided by Maidenhill or schools further afield.
- 8:1:7 Up to 200 students are currently expected to attend the secondary school in Stonehouse. The pedestrian route from the development to the school is along Oldends Lane and over the level crossing and then to the narrow pavement under the single track railway bridge.
- 8:1:8 WoS will have a mixed use “local centre” comprising use classes, A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1, D2 and B1. This will provide a range of shops and services where an impact assessment in accordance with Local Plan Delivery Policy EI9 will ensure no significant adverse impact with existing shops and services in Alkerton and Stonehouse. We will be encouraging the local planning authority to consider this work at the earliest possible opportunity.

8:1:9 The local planning authority has undertaken to protect the ancient settlements of Nastend and Nupend with Local Plan Policy SA2 with the inclusion of a “strategic landscaping buffer” to retain the unique character and setting of these two hamlets to prevent coalescence with the WoS settlement.

8:1:10 The objective of the planning application is to deliver “a series of interlinked neighbourhoods providing housing, employment, social and recreational needs within an extensive landscaped framework. Green infrastructure physically separates and provides the setting for each neighbourhood, whilst preserving the setting of the existing communities, listed buildings and the network of green lanes”.

8:1:11 Traffic is perhaps the most significant consideration. Already the A419 is heavily congested at peak times. The Sustainable Transport Assessment produced by Atkins for SDC on the 28 May 2015 stated at paragraph 9.9:

“In order to improve the sustainable transport provision at the site, significant improvements are required to the existing walking and cycling connections to local amenities.

In particular,

- *the constriction caused by the level crossing on Oldends Lane needs to be addressed.*
- *Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development will be required to ensure good connections to Nastend and Nupend and the town centre, Stroudwater Industrial Estate and Oldends Lane.*
- *Footpath links from the development to the surrounding rural network, including improvements to the canal towpath will also help improve sustainable travel options.*
- *Significant contributions towards bus services to improve existing bus frequencies and divert services into the site will be required, along with suitable bus stops, shelters and infrastructure to serve all areas of the development.*
- *Contributions towards the provision of a new railway station at Stonehouse will be required to ensure that travel by rail is an attractive and realistic option for the users of the development.”*

Eastington will work with Stonehouse Town Council and with the local planning authority and highways authority to seek improvements utilizing the policies in the Local Plan that underpin these requirements.

8:1:12 The traffic impact assessment submitted in support of the outline application for the WoS development identified appropriate mitigation schemes for the locations where the development would otherwise have a “severe” impact. It has also identified appropriate development thresholds at which each of the schemes will need to be delivered. The proposed mitigation assumes £4.36M of government funding to improve the A419 corridor, between Stonehouse and the M5, as part of the Gloucestershire Growth Deal. The A419 corridor improvements are to include:

- Chipmans Platt Roundabout - enlarge both the A419 east and westbound entries;
- Oldends Lane roundabout - convert junction to signals with segregated left turning lane on eastbound entry, combine Bond’s Mill and Sperry road to one entry.
- Downton Road signals - modify signal timings, convert current cyclist crossing infrastructure and Pelican crossing to a Toucan crossing.
- Horsetrough Roundabout - convert junction to signals.

8:1:13 The balance of population will switch from the Southern part of Eastington parish to the Northern part, with the A419 creating a strong division within the parish. It may be appropriate to review the parish boundary in years to come. The Parish Council will ensure the community is widely consulted in the event of a boundary review.

9:0 EMPLOYMENT

9:1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

9:1:1 Stroud District has a history of inventors, entrepreneurs and new-starters: people who can start small, with new ideas, grow and create wealth and employment for the district. We are likely to be most successful if we build on our history and our strengths.

9:1:2 Eastington Parish was for centuries a rural/agricultural parish based around rented land from a few large estates. Sheep, cattle and some root crop farming dominated the land employment with a supporting service industry. There were others employed in road maintenance and transport of goods between the river and the Cotswolds. A significant mercer's trade (cloth merchants) was run by the Clutterbucks of Nastend in the Middle Ages, superseded by Henry Hicks' mills.

9:1:3 The river was diverted and, via leats, several mills opened over the last 500 years at Millend, Churchend, Chipman's Platt and these provided local employment for many villagers. When the Stroudwater Canal opened in the late 18th century a new level of employment opened around the transport and distribution of goods. There were small wharves at Chipman's Platt for coal and other goods. The parish developed a more diverse farming style with some dairy and orchards for local cider etc.

9:1:4 The roads also provided key transport links towards the Cotswolds with a supporting service sector. There has been little change in these patterns in the last 100 years, apart from the closure of the canal and the change in the nature of the industries in the mills away from those requiring water power. The advent of the M5 motorway in 1971 brought significant employment to Oldends Lane, just east of the parish, and made commuting to Gloucester and Bristol much more significant.

9:1:5 The number of farm labourers declined as mechanisation came in and a larger percentage of the parishioners would migrate to neighbouring towns for employment. The one area of growth with the advent of the digital age has been the work from home sector which now makes up a significant ratio in the parish.

9:1:6 The 2011-12 Parish Survey showed that an impressive 25% work from home based on the 199 working people that responded; 38% commute to Bristol, Cheltenham or Gloucester, and 14% work in Stonehouse. The Rural Community Profile for Eastington (2013) showed that 5.6% of people in the parish work from home compared to 3.5% nationally.

9:1:7 As evidenced, the parish has a large proportion of our working population "working from home" and a significant number of people working from low cost sites, like old farm buildings or premises that they own. This approach enables:

- costs to be kept down
- lower carbon footprint and, maybe
- less traffic congestion
- more local employment.

9:1:8 Employment and jobs are changing very rapidly. Technology with smart phones and the rise of the robots are making real inroads into the type of jobs available. Zero hours contracts, apps that book your holiday or air flight, robots that drive cars or wrap parcels are imposing huge challenges on traditional employment. The service sector is still growing and manufacturing is returning, albeit slowly, from low cost labour countries. If we are to regain competition advantage and earn good wages/salaries then we must keep other overheads

down. Our evidence (see section 9.2) suggests large factory units employing 70% or more commuters contribute little or nothing to our local community. They do however create a substantial carbon footprint and create congestion on our roads with 'rat runs' through Alkerton and along Grove Lane in Westend

9:1:9 For these reasons the NDP wishes to support and encourage Home Working and low cost premises for our local entrepreneurs, larger employers like Smiths, KB Coaches, Spencers and the Oak Frame Company and smaller businesses such as the garages in Bath Road, Chipman's Platt or Nupend Farm where there is also a car body repair business need to be supported and encouraged.

9:1:10 Keeping costs low also supports the capacity of these businesses to take on apprentices and potentially employing more locals who will be the business entrepreneurs of the future. To encourage and support this highly successful model into the future we have formulated two NDP policies (see below).

9:2 WHAT BUSINESSES HAVE TOLD US

9:2:1 Two parish residents spent eight days meeting and interviewing all local employers identified in the parish. These ranged from one man businesses right up to multi-national employers. The researchers were keen to see how local employment was contributing to the achievement of the vision. The findings were extremely interesting and informative and supported by the local branch of the Federation of Small Businesses.

9:2:2 Over the years, Eastington parish has become progressively more prosperous and now has 50 businesses undertaking an extraordinary range of diverse activities employing 558 people. They include a hugely successful pub, a small boutique hotel with bistro restaurant, butchers with abattoir, a thriving mini-supermarket, post office, two hairdressers and three garages. In addition, the parish has a software business involved in setting global software standards with customers in the US and Japan, a national award winning wedding cake designer, a rehabilitation physiotherapy company which provides a unique service in the South West of the UK and a US multinational corporation which runs its sales and marketing office for Europe, Middle East and Africa from a two-man office in the parish.

9:2:3 Interestingly, the survey identified that the majority of local jobs were provided by smaller employers. The majority of commuting jobs – jobs in the parish where the employee lives outside the Stroud District – were accounted for by larger employers (see Fig. 1).

	Total employees in Eastington parish	Where employees live as indicated by the employer				
		Cycling distance	GL10 3 Eastington	GL10 2 Stonehouse	Stroud	Outside Stroud & GL10
Total	558	173	19	27	81	258
%	100%	31%	3%	5%	15%	46%
No of companies	50	46	2	4	10	23
Analysis by company size – no of companies						
less than 20 employees	45	46	2	4	9	20
20 employees or more	5	–	–	–	1	3
Total	50	46	2	4	10	23
LOCAL JOBS: where employees lived within cycling distance						

Size of company	Number of jobs	Ratio
less than 20 employees	147	85%
20 employees or more	26	15%
Total	173	100%
COMMUTING JOBS: where employees work in the parish but live outside the district		
Size of company	Number of jobs	Ratio
less than 20 employees	68	26%
20 employees or more	190	74%
Total	258	100%

Fig 1

9:3 LABOUR FORCE CHANGES

9:3:1 The rush to transfer factory jobs to the low wage economies in developing nations is reported to be slowing, not just as the new technologies dramatically reduce the labour content, but also because of the need to integrate design and manufacture. This is sometimes described as mass-customisation (eg personalised photo calendars, products custom made). High fuel and transport costs work in our favour here too, encouraging products to be made where they are consumed.

9:3:2 This effect of the digital-manufacturing-revolution is every bit as powerful as the mechanisation of the textile industry that built most of Stroud. We believe that understanding this and our parish's role in this change is the key to fostering local employment. Moreover, being at the start of this wave, we have the opportunity to lead with the parish playing its part.

9:4 OUR STRENGTHS: WORK-LIVE OPPORTUNITIES

9:4:1 Stroud district has a number of traditional large employers, many of whom started here as small inventors and entrepreneurs. The area has a history of small specialist entrepreneurial businesses growing. From the cottage weavers of previous centuries to the small scale crafts, inventors, designers and producers of today; these businesses generally start in domestic back-rooms, garages and low-cost, low-risk environments. They point to a substantial opportunity to turn and further improve the fortunes of our district and create more jobs; more jobs for people that live and work here.

9:5 CREATING EMPLOYMENT

9:5:1 Employment - how, where, why and when - is key to a thriving community. Where people work is a major determinant of where they live. Stroud district is a net exporter of labour (about 22%) exacerbated by the easy motorway access. This is considered to be a marker of limited community sustainability and increased reliance on the motorcar in turn increases our district's carbon footprint. So, as we plan for the parish's next 20 years, we need to take careful account of our local employment opportunities that reduce commuting and ensure there is a balance between increasing employment and increasing housing numbers for the parish. Stroud Local Plan Policy CP11 (New Employment Development) emphasises the importance of siting new development in accessible locations, so that it can both benefit from and contribute to sustainable transport infrastructure in the area.

9:5:2 Transport links are good to the parish with the M5 motorway junction 13 on the edge of the parish and a railway station just 3 miles away in Stonehouse.

- 9:5:3 The local market town of Stroud is only five miles away but the increasingly congested A419 limits access at peak times. This tends to encourage parishioners to go to Cheltenham, Cribbs Causeway in Bristol or Gloucester and some of the retail parks to the south of the city.
- 9:5:4 Employment Land allocations has been addressed through the Stroud Local Plan with two areas of employment land identified within Eastington parish; one at Meadow Mill Industrial Estate lying in the flood plain (Local Plan Policy E11) and a second at West of Stonehouse (Local Plan Policy SA2). Whilst these are intended to serve the district as a whole they will also provide employment opportunities for Eastington residents. Evidence shows that the employment land allocated within the Stroud Local Plan exceeds the forecasted growth employment figures, and therefore no further allocations of employment land have been made through the NDP for Eastington. There is already also a strong base of relatively small businesses in the parish and evidence demonstrates that the majority of local jobs are provided by small employers and self-employment. There is also a national trend, fuelled by increasingly sophisticated technology for homeworking. This is regarded as sustainable and something that should be encouraged as set out in Policies EP6 and EP7; this is also in line with Local Plan Delivery Policies E13 and E14.

POLICY EP6: BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

In locations outside the employment sites allocated in the Local Plan, development proposals of an appropriate scale and which create, expand and generally help develop business initiatives will be supported subject to there being no significant adverse impact on neighbouring properties, or the locality in general, by reason of such things as noise, fumes, odour or other nuisances and traffic related nuisance or visual impact.

Proposals will be supported for:

- the conversion of existing dwellings to provide space for home-working
- the conversion of disused agricultural and other rural buildings of traditional sound construction for small business use
- the loss of business premises will be resisted, particularly those that offer a community service, unless evidence is provided that the proposal satisfies Local Plan Policy E16.

POLICY EP7: WORKING FROM HOME

Planning applications will be supported for the use of part of a dwelling for office and/or light industrial uses, and for small scale free standing buildings within its curtilage, extensions to the dwelling or conversion of outbuildings for those uses provided that:

- no significant and adverse impact arises to nearby residents or properties from noise, fumes, odour or other nuisance associated with the work activity;
- any extension or free standing building shall be designed having regard to policies in this Plan and should not detract from the quality and character of the building to which they are subservient by reason of height, scale, massing, location or the facing materials used in their construction.

10:0 INFRASTRUCTURE

10:1 GETTING AROUND: EASTINGTON – MORE THAN JUST A THROUGH ROUTE

10:1:1 Eastington is intersected and bounded by three major roads: the M5 motorway, the A38 which forms the western boundary of the southern half of the parish, and the A419 which intersects the parish carrying traffic from Junction 13 of the M5 motorway to Stonehouse, Stroud and beyond.

10:1:2 As a parish we have no control over these routes, but we can work to alleviate the effect the traffic generated by these roads has on our community. We aim to have our voice properly considered in future developments to keep roads, footways, cycle routes and Public Rights of Way (PROW – footpaths and bridleways) accessible and safe.

10:1:3 We need to ensure that Eastington is seen as a place where people live, not just a place to drive through – a safe community where young and old can go about their daily life free from the problems of speeding commuter traffic using village roads as a 'rat run', HGVs on unsuitable roads and anti-social parking in the village centre. The NDP seeks to improve these key issues which parishioners have identified as important in the 2011-12 Parish Survey. Wider aspects of 'Getting Around' the parish include walking, cycling, horse riding, public transport and disability access, and also the impact of new developments in the locality. Parishioners have suggested the need to ensure the safe walking and cycling around the village and its hamlets to access services - such as shops, school, businesses and churches.

10:1:4 Previous consultation surveys within the parish have highlighted the concerns outlined in the following sections:

10:2 ROAD SAFETY

10:2:1 There is the issue of speeding traffic through the parish - within the 40mph zones of Grove Lane (Westend), Spring Hill and Claypits and the central village 30mph zone which includes the length of Bath Road from the Frocester end until it reaches the M5. Local traffic surveys in 2006, 2010 and 2015 showed a significant amount of traffic on this road exceeding the speed limit (see Fig. 2).

10:2:2 Pedestrians have difficulty crossing the roads at the Village Hall, The Old Badger pub, shops and the OHMG (Owen Harris Memorial Ground) Community Centre due to volume and speed of traffic.

10:2:3 The footways (pedestrian pavements) need improving and widening in places throughout the parish.

10:2:4 The high volume of HGVs travelling through the parish needs controlling.

Eastington – Bath Road			
Traffic speed surveys carried out for seven days (Mon-Sun) in November 2006 / November 2010 / September 2015 Source: (GCC Highways M500 surveys)			
	Into village – from Frocester 2006 / 2010 / 2015	Out of village – towards Frocester 2006 / 2010 / 2015	Combined 2006 / 2010 / 2015
Mean Speed (mph)	29 / 30.4 / 33.8	28 / 30.5 / 38.8	28.5 / 30.4 / 36.3
85th %ile speed	34 / 36.2 / 40	31 / 37 / 46	32.5 / 36.6 / 43
Average Mon-Fri Volume	2172 / 2137 / 2323	2064 / 2316 / 2297	4236 / 4453 / 4619
Average Mon-Sun Volume	1958 / 1886 / 2191	1857 / 2027 / 2159	3815 / 3913 / 4350

Fig 2

10:3 PARKING

10:3:1 There is a significant problem with lack of short term parking spaces in the central village for shops and businesses and work is underway to address this matter. There are also short-term difficulties with parking around Eastington Primary School in Churchend in term time both at drop-off and collection times, with no immediate solution to the problem.

10:3:2 Recent development in the village, particularly at Bradestones Way, has demonstrated that the motorcar remains an essential means of transport for people living in a rural area such as Eastington. As the following photographs taken at Bradestones Way demonstrate, a lack of adequate parking provision leads to unsightly and potentially dangerous parking on footpaths. This has led to numerous parishioner complaints and disagreements between neighbours. Therefore it is felt that on any new housing development a minimum of two parking spaces is provided for each dwelling. The NDP Survey in September 2014 further supported this view with 89% of respondents agreeing.



[Bradestones Way, Eastington 2012]



[Bradestones Way, Eastington 2015]

10:4 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

10:4:1 Roads and sustainable transport such as footways, footpaths and cycle routes are the backbone of a community and keep it moving forward. Clogged and unsafe routes kill it. Eastington has three hamlets to the north of the A419 (Westend, Nupend and Nastend); Claypits isolated between the A38 and the M5 and seven areas in the rest of the parish: Cress Green, Middle Street, Millend, Newtown, Churchend, Chipman's Platt and Alkerton at the heart of the village. Some share road issues, others have their own very specific problems, such as the 30mph Bath Road running through the village centre to and from the A38 and Frocester where vibration within houses caused by HGVs is a common complaint from those living along this road.



10:4:2 In November 2014 Eastington Parish Council commissioned a traffic consultant (Helix Transport Consultants Ltd) to review a range of specific and general issues highlighted by parishioners, eg central village parking and speeding traffic.

10:4:3 The comprehensive report was delivered in December 2014 and provides the potential improvement options, based on current best practice, needed to develop a rolling programme of improvements for the parish during the next five years. The parish will work with Gloucestershire County Council Highways to seek these improvements. This report is available on line at www.eastingtonndp.co.uk.

POLICY EP8: TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

Development proposals should:

- encourage sustainable means of transport, including measures to provide for and where possible enhance the provision of multi-use pedestrian and cycle routes;
- be well located to reduce reliance on private cars and instead to provide safe and convenient walking and cycling routes to local services and facilities and to offer a link to public transport services to destinations further afield;
- provide car parking spaces in accordance with adopted standards or where the developer can adequately justify their own parking provision with evidence accompanying any planning application. Evidence will need to demonstrate that the level would not have a detrimental impact on the local road network;
- provide facilities for cycle storage and, in the case of housing for the disabled, buggy storage; and
- ensure that traffic movement within the parish and parking facilities within the village centre and around the school are not significantly impaired. Proposals that improve and enhance the situation will be encouraged.

Planning applications for major development or development with a significant impact on the local road network should be accompanied by a Transport Statement which clearly identifies the travel and transport issues associated with the proposal and how the proposal will address these issues.

10:5 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY (PROW)

10:5:1 Eastington's footpaths and bridleways criss-cross the parish linking outlying hamlets and areas within the settlement boundary (see Map 2). They are a major resource for informal recreational activities as well as providing a safe route to school and shops. They also create important natural habitats. It is important to retain the sense of peace and tranquility, as well as the enjoyment of the surrounding countryside, that these footpaths and bridleways provide.

10:5:2 Responsibility for monitoring and developing this network primarily lies with Gloucestershire County Council, but the Parish Council and Eastington Public Rights of Way Defenders (PROWD) Group take a responsibility for preserving these important community assets. The NDP welcomes initiatives such as access and management agreements that aim to open up, promote and maintain PROW networks for community use.

10:5:3 Development proposals that develop and improve the PROW network will be supported, provided that the proposals are compatible with, and sensitive to, the local environment.

10:5:4 The Eastington NDP Survey (Sept 2014) showed strong support for the development of paths along the canal from Saul to Stroud for cycling and walking with a link to the centre of Eastington (127 out of 140 respondents) and 129 respondents supported the provision of safe walking and cycling routes connecting new developments to the village centre.

- 10:5:5 The network of public footpaths and cycleways which link the various hamlets, offer a safe and enjoyable experience of the countryside. They are a valuable recreational resource which should be protected for future generations. They also provide an opportunity for the development of wildlife corridors.
- 10:5:6 Particular attention is drawn to Section 7 of DEFRA Rights of Way Circular 1/09 which advises that in considering potential revisions to an existing right of way to accommodate new development, any alternative alignment should avoid the use of estate roads and preference be given to paths through landscaped or open space areas away from vehicular traffic.
- 10:5:7 The following policy seeks to ensure that footpaths and bridleways retain a sense of tranquility and visual enjoyment even if development should occur nearby. In such cases the opportunity should be grasped to route them through landscaped wildlife corridors.

POLICY EP9: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

New development should protect the existing rights of way network and its ambiance. Where public footpaths or bridleways are routed or realigned through new development, they should be designed as part of landscaped wildlife corridors rather than being routed along estate road pavements as part of the highway network.

10:6 SCHOOL PROVISION

- 10:6:1 The parish is fortunate and proud to have its own primary school located at Churchend. The school has been led with such distinction for many years and identified by OFSTED as “outstanding” year after year. It is beholden on the NDP to consider the future of our local and immensely popular school so it continues to offer a very high standard of education for our youngsters well into the future.
- 10:6:2 The primary school is one form of entry with a maximum size of 150 pupils. The school lacks adequate off-road parking, the footprint is restricted and the playing field is almost one mile away preventing ready access to this facility.
- 10:6:3 The location of the school on the narrow access lane (Millend Lane) also makes set down and pick up very difficult for parents with many using the main road to park on in the afternoon.
- 10:6:4 Over the years, numerous attempts have been made to acquire adjoining land for a playing field but much of the surrounding land is in a flood plain suggesting that for periods, particularly in the winter, a playing field could be unusable requiring pupils to retreat back to the tarmac surrounding the school.
- 10:6:5 This reality prevents expansion of the school into the current open spaces. As the local population grows over the next 15 years, a new site for the school may need to be identified to allow the school to relocate, or additional educational facilities provided.
- 10:6:6 A new primary school is included in the West of Stonehouse planned development in addition to the existing primary school at Churchend. The NDP will assess the matter again on the first review within five years and will seek that new developments within the parish recognise the population growth in Eastington and make provision for a school with ready access to playing field facilities.

10:7 FOUL AND STORMWATER DRAINAGE

10:7:1 Foul and stormwater drainage is of great concern in the Parish, and this was covered previously at section 6.1.

10:8 COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY

10:8:1 The ability to supplement large power station generation of electricity with multiple local small and micro-scale 'renewable' units, has grown substantially over the past decade. While some motivation to cut greenhouse gasses has been in some part due to a moral, ecological responsibility to our descendants and lower emission targets set by governments, a substantial part of that motivation has naturally come from the commercial financial incentives

10:8:2 Not surprisingly, growth in solar and wind generation has been most rapid in countries where governments have given the highest incentives by subsidies to 'feed in tariffs', as will have been witnessed by anyone travelling across mainland Europe.

10:8:3 Although feed in tariffs are being reduced to more realistic and sustainable levels, the UK Government is actively encouraging communities by way of financial rewards and professional assistance in the preparation of good business cases for rural community renewable energy schemes. Whereas communities in the past could only hope for a relatively small financial contribution from private commercial generation schemes in their area, there now exists real opportunity for a very substantial and prolonged flow of income directly to a community.

10:8:4 Several parishes across the UK have already benefited from the UK Government's Rural Community Energy Fund and there are now successful examples of schemes set up not far from Eastington. Such a flow of funds into a community can greatly increase the number of successful local projects or substantially reduce rates payable by parishioners, and Eastington would qualify for the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF).

10:8:5 The most common renewable energy schemes have been solar panels and wind turbines. It is therefore important that local people carefully judge any potential scheme, considering the balance between financial benefit to the community and the visual and ecological impact on its surroundings.



[Solar Panels on community hall at OHMG]

10:8:6 It took many decades before electricity pylons, poles and wires became commonplace in our landscapes. There can be few people who believe these to be aesthetically attractive, however, the substantial benefits of electricity to modern life has somewhat tempered their perceived effect on our surroundings. As villages, towns and landscapes evolve to keep pace with modern life, by way of new buildings and new landscape management practices, it will be ever important that local people decide how best such changes should occur.

10:8:7 At a Neighbourhood Development Plan consultation event in February 2014, the community was asked for their views on renewable energy scheme for the benefit of the community based on hydro, solar or windpower. Sixteen people responded and were largely in favour of such a scheme (see Fig. 3). They were asked for their additional views on each form of power.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT COMMUNITY BENEFIT RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR:					
	Positive	Negative	Uncertain	No Response	Total
Hydro	10	1	3	2	16
Solar	8	2	2	4	16
Wind	8	3	2	3	16

Fig 3

10:8:8 In line with Local Plan Policy ES2 (Renewable or Low Carbon Energy Generation), it is considered that a suitable scale, micro-generation technology should be encouraged, both in the form of a community energy project as well as through the provision of domestic and micro energy generating schemes. Before the submission of any proposal it is important that full and proper consultation should take place with the local community. It is expected that new development will incorporate the maximum practicable commercially available renewable energy generating technology at time of construction. Whilst it is not possible to set a definitive policy requirement, it will be a factor in the consideration of planning applications.

POLICY EP10: SMALL SCALE RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY SCHEMES

Planning applications will be strongly supported for small scale energy generating infrastructure using renewable or low carbon energy sources to serve the community in general or individual properties or groups of properties provided that all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- the impact of the energy generating infrastructure either individually or cumulatively with existing infrastructure does not conflict with other policies in the development plan
- the energy generating infrastructure is located as close as practicable and is in proportion to the scale of the existing buildings or proposed development it is intended to serve
- adjoining properties are not significantly adversely affected by reason of noise, flicker, vibration, odour, loss of public visual amenity or electromagnetic interference.

11:0 MONITORING

11:0:1 The NDP will be reviewed every five years by Eastington Parish Council throughout the life of the plan; in particular the following areas will be considered:

11:1 ENVIRONMENT

11:1:1 The Character Assessment produced alongside the NDP contains much information about Eastington's natural environment. The aims regarding ponds, wetlands and orchards will be monitored by both the Gloucestershire county wildlife survey group and the Parish Environment subgroup on an ongoing basis. This latter group would look to target strategic sites for further restoration of habitat and the other environmental targets in harness with an onus on all landowning parishioners to aim to achieve the parish targets. The Environmental group will also produce a Character Assessment specifically looking at the Environment.

11:2 HOUSING

11:2:1 The Housing Needs Survey will be repeated every five years to ensure the parish is keeping up to date with the requirements of its residents. The parish will work closely with the Local Planning Authority regarding new developments planned for Eastington to ensure the needs of the parish are met.

11:3 INFRASTRUCTURE

11:3:1 Designated Eastington Parish Councillors, members of Eastington's Approaches to Reducing Speed (EARS) Group and Eastington's PROWD Group will carry out monitoring for this area. A five-year rolling programme of improvements will be established and monitored for the end of each year in readiness for budgetary preparation for the next financial year.



[Alkerton Cross at Sunset]

References:

2011-12 Eastington Parish Survey
2013 Housing Needs Survey
ONS Census 2011
Eastington ACRE Rural Community Profile October 2013
AECOM Stroud District Employment Land Study February 2013
Atkins Rural SuDS – River Frome Catchment Scoping Study May 2013
Stroud District Council Landscape Assessment November 2000
Stroud District Council Landscape Sensitivity Appraisal 2013