

Stoke Gabriel Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2034

PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT (REGULATION 14)
SEPTEMBER 2025



Foreword

Neighbourhood Plans are a feature of the Government's strategy to give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. The Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to establish a vision for the parish and to help deliver the local community's aspirations and needs for the period 2018 - 2034. This version of the Neighbourhood Plan is well advanced but is still at draft, consultation stage (known as 'Regulation 14' stage) and further feedback from the community is now sought. But once the document advances further, and if it becomes approved by the community in a referendum and then becomes 'made', the Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory document that will form part of the 'development plan' for the area and will be used by South Hams District Council in determining planning applications. It will sit alongside the Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034, which was adopted by South Hams District Council in conjunction with West Devon Borough Council and Plymouth City Council in March 2019.

During the Neighbourhood Plan's development process, the community have been consulted on a wide range of issues. Every effort has been made to ensure that the resulting views and policies contained in the plan reflect as far as possible the views and aspirations of residents, local employees and businesses.

A Neighbourhood Plan has many benefits. In this respect the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to:

- provide for appropriate development opportunities to meet local needs in terms of size, type, and design;
- ensure that development is sympathetic to, and improves, the look and feel of the parish; and
- protect and improve Stoke Gabriel's services, facilities and green spaces to maintain its rural nature and self-sufficiency.

Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

September 2025

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Section 1: Introduction and Background

Overview of the Parish of Stoke Gabriel

- 1.1 Stoke Gabriel is a parish in the South Hams with the village of Stoke Gabriel itself situated on a creek of the River Dart within the South Devon National Landscape (formerly known as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The hamlet of Aish is located approximately 1km north of Stoke Gabriel village and the hamlet of Waddeton is located approximately 2km east. Both are located in pastoral landscape settings, also within the designated National Landscape.
- 1.2 The parish is conveniently located for Torbay, Dartmouth, and Totnes and provides a high quality of life for those employed in these locations as well as to people working within the parish, home workers, retirees, and second home and holiday rental owners. Consequently, residential property values tend to command a premium compared to other areas in the vicinity. Torbay is the main destination for those who travel to work, followed by Totnes, Exeter, Plymouth and Newton Abbot. A significant number are employed or self-employed within the parish.
- 1.3 The village of Stoke Gabriel is served by a daily (except Sunday) bus service to Paignton and a twice weekly service to Totnes. Unfortunately, both timetables are not convenient for commuting to employment and consequently the majority of those travelling to work do so by car.
- 1.4 Originally a farming, cider making and salmon fishing community, the Parish in the 21st century presents a somewhat different picture and faces a number of challenges to maintain its identity as an attractive sustainable rural community with a high quality of life.
- 1.5 There is one place of worship, the Anglican Church of St Mary and St Gabriel (C of E) (the former Baptist Church was sold by auction in 2024). Additionally, there is a private chapel on the Waddeton estate which welcomes parishioners.
- 1.6 There are a number of other services and amenities in the village, including a village hall, a primary school, two public houses, two restaurants, and a village shop/post office.
- 1.7 The population and demographics of Stoke Gabriel Civil Parish and village are provided at Appendix A.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.8 In April 2012, the Localism Act 2011 amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 introducing new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development and conservation in their community by preparing a neighbourhood plan which then becomes part of the statutory planning process. A Neighbourhood Plan allows communities to establish general planning policies for the sustainable development and use of land within the designated neighbourhood area.
- 1.9 This document, which is the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan (the 'SGNP'), comprises a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Stoke Gabriel as defined in the Localism Act.

Why do we need a Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.10 The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Plans into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. A Neighbourhood Plan is put together by the local community and is tested by independent examination and a referendum. If voted for by the local community at a referendum, the 'made' Neighbourhood Plan becomes a part of the statutory 'development plan' used by the local planning authority and others to make decisions on planning applications and related investment proposals. The process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is presented at Figure 1.

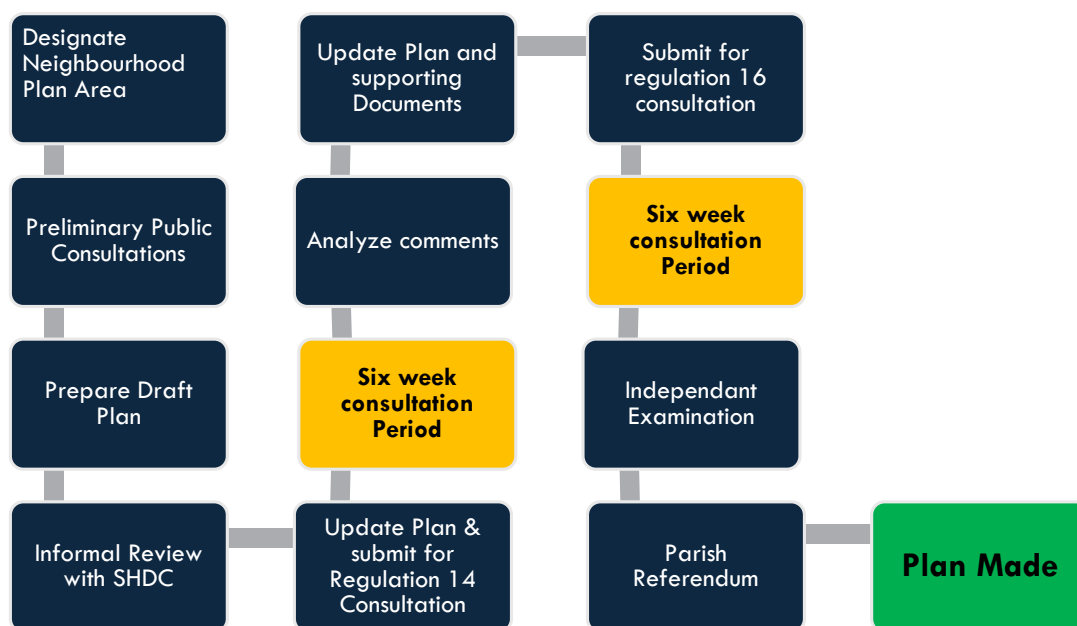


FIGURE 1: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

- 1.11 The Parish of Stoke Gabriel is a popular place to live in and to visit, which presents a range of issues and opportunities. It has seen significant growth in recent times as a result of the South Hams Rural Areas Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 2011, which saw more than 25% of rural allocations disproportionately located in Stoke Gabriel.
- 1.12 Stoke Gabriel sits within the South Devon National Landscape. The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2019 (the 'Joint Local Plan'), which superseded the Rural Areas Site Allocations DPD, acknowledges that greater weight should be given to conserving landscapes and the scenic beauty of communities within National Landscapes. Consequently, no housing was allocated to our Parish within the Joint Local Plan. Rather, the Joint Local Plan states that Neighbourhood Plans may wish to bring forward positive allocations to meet local housing need where justified by an appropriate evidence base.
- 1.13 The Joint Local Plan does not define settlement boundaries. However, it states that Neighbourhood Plans may choose to identify settlement boundaries for their areas. Consequently, a settlement boundary has been identified to reflect the aspirations of parishioners.
- 1.14 The Neighbourhood Plan reflects local ideas and opinions, aiming to protect and enhance local assets and to foster a healthy, sustainable and prosperous future for our community.

What area does the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan cover?

- 1.15 Stoke Gabriel Parish Council applied in October 2014 to the local planning authority, South Hams District Council, for the approval of the designated area of the Neighbourhood Plan to be the whole parish of Stoke Gabriel, including the village of Stoke Gabriel and the hamlets of Aish and Waddeton. This was approved by South Hams District Council on 11th December 2014. A map showing the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area is shown at Figure 2 below.

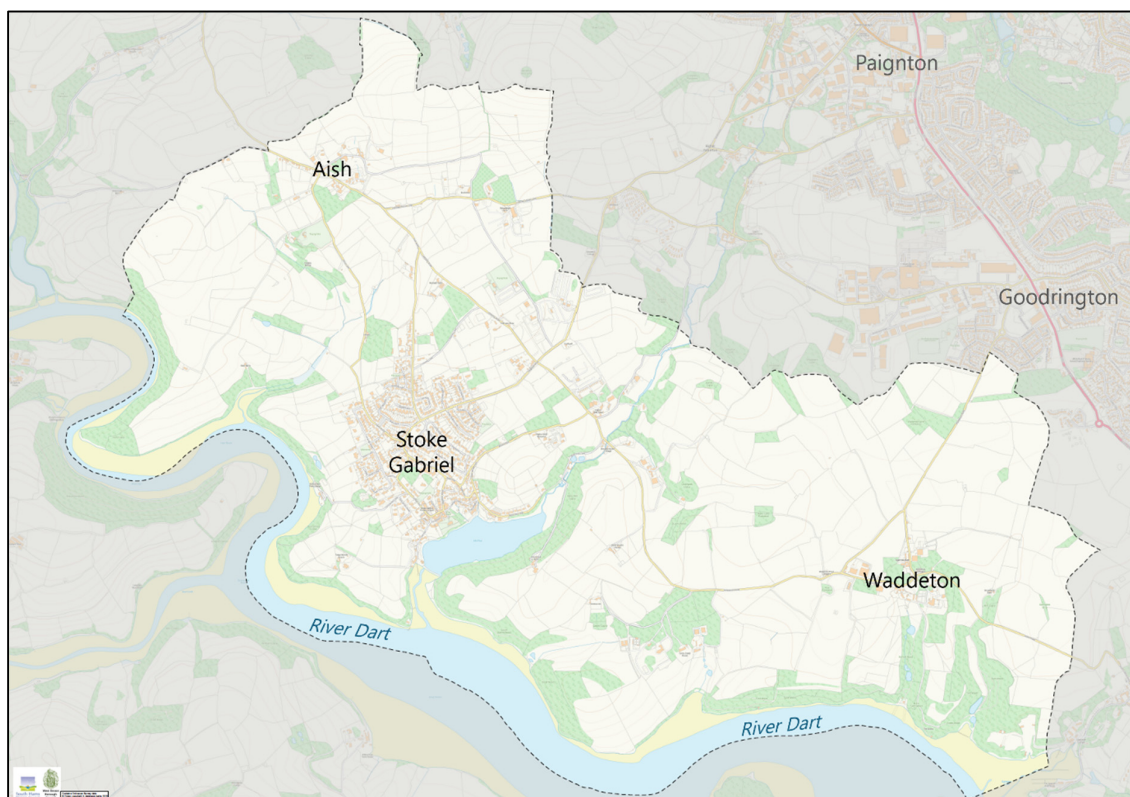


FIGURE 2: STOKE GABRIEL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA

How will the Neighbourhood Plan be used and by whom?

- 1.16 The SGNP is for everyone with an interest in the Parish of Stoke Gabriel. It will be used to:
- Guide new development;
 - Promote investment;
 - Protect valuable assets;
 - Give a voice to the community; and
 - Provide a better quality of life for the current and future generations.
- 1.17 When the SGNP has been ‘made’ it will become part of the ‘development plan’ for the Parish. This will mean that it will be used alongside other local and national planning policies to help make planning decisions and to guide and manage future development in the Parish. In this respect:
- The SGNP will be used by South Hams District Council to help guide its planning decisions.
 - The SGNP will be used by the Planning Inspectorate or the Secretary of State in relation to any planning appeals in the Parish.

Where does the Neighbourhood Plan fit in the planning process?

- 1.18 The SGNP must be in general conformity with higher-tier planning policy, namely:
- 1) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024; and
 - 2) The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan, adopted March 2019.

- 1.19 The latest NPPF published by the Government in December 2024 is an important guide in the preparation of local plans and neighbourhood plans.
- 1.20 Section 2 of this document presents the strategic policy context for the Neighbourhood Plan provided by the Joint Local Plan.

What time period does the Neighbourhood Plan cover?

- 1.21 In alignment with the Joint Local Plan, the SGNP covers the period until 2034.

Who has led in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan?

- 1.22 Stoke Gabriel Parish Council is the 'qualifying body' as defined in the Localism Act. A Steering Group was formed with representatives of the Parish Council and volunteers from the local community.
- 1.23 The SGNP has been developed through extensive consultation with the residents and businesses in the Parish including public workshops, meetings, questionnaires and surveys together people's views and opinions. Leaflets were delivered to every household and a website was created to make sure everyone had the chance to participate if they wished. A timeline of the development of the SGNP is provided at Appendix B.

Section 2: Strategic Policy Context

- 2.1 To meet the basic conditions for neighbourhood plans, the SGNP must be in general conformity with, and plan positively to support, the strategic policies of the development plan.
- 2.2 The current development plan applicable to Stoke Gabriel (and the whole of the South Hams, West Devon and Plymouth areas) is the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 - 2034. The Joint Local Plan was adopted by South Hams District Council on 16th March 2019 and planning applications are currently assessed primarily against their degree of conformity with the policies set out in the Joint Local Plan.
- 2.3 The Joint Local Plan does not identify Stoke Gabriel as being a village that can readily accommodate significant development and does not allocate any sites for further development, therefore any planning application for development within the Neighbourhood Plan Area should be considered on its own merits.
- 2.4 A large part of Stoke Gabriel Civil Parish lies within the South Devon National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONB) and therefore must take into account the NPPF December 2024 which at paragraph 189 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues... The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.”

- 2.5 Paragraph 190 of the NPPF continues:

“When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest...”

- 2.6 In terms of the provisions of the Joint Local Plan, any proposal must be able to demonstrate that it is sustainable and in particular must comply with **Policy DEV25** (Nationally Protected Landscapes) which seeks to protect development within the National Landscape. DEV25 requires that South Hams District Council as the Local Planning Authority:
 - 1) *“Refuse permission for major developments within protected landscapes, except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest.*
 - 2) *Give great weight to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in the protected landscapes.*
 - 3) *Require development proposals located within or within the setting of a protected landscape to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the protected landscape with particular reference to their special qualities and distinctive characteristics or valued attributes*
 - 4) *Assess their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on natural beauty.*
 - 5) *Support proposals which are appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area.*
 - 6) *Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the protected landscape with particular reference to their special qualities and distinctive characteristics or valued attributes.*
 - 7) *Support proposals which are appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area.”*

2.7 The policy also sets out a series of requirements to which development proposals located within, or within the setting of, the protected landscape need to adhere.

2.8 Other key policies within the Joint Local Plan that must also be considered are:

Policy TTV1: Development within smaller villages such as Stoke Gabriel and within the countryside will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated to support the principles of sustainable development and sustainable communities.

Policy SPT1: Which supports growth and change that accords with the following principles of sustainable development:

- A sustainable economy;
- A sustainable society; and
- A sustainable environment.

Policy SPT2: Which sets out a number of principles to guide development in sustainable rural communities, including:

- 1) *"Have reasonable access to a vibrant mixed use centre, which meets daily community needs for local services such as neighbourhood shops, health and wellbeing services and community facilities, and includes where appropriate dual uses of facilities in community hubs.*
- 2) *Provide for higher density living appropriate to the local area in the areas that are best connected to sustainable transport, services and amenities, as well as appropriate opportunities for home working, reducing the need to travel.*
- 3) *Have high levels of digital connectivity, supporting local communities and businesses and enabling data to be open, shared and used to better understand the area.*
- 4) *Have a good balance of housing types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes to meet identified housing needs.*
- 5) *Promote resilience to future change by ensuring a well-balanced demographic profile with equal access to housing and services.*
- 6) *Are well served by public transport, walking and cycling opportunities.*
- 7) *Have a safe, accessible, healthy and wildlife-rich local environment, with well-designed public and natural spaces that are family friendly and welcoming to all.*
- 8) *Have services and facilities that promote equality and inclusion and that provide for all sectors of the local population.*
- 9) *Have the appropriate level of facilities to meet the identified needs of the local community, including provision of education and training opportunities, employment uses, health care, arts, culture, community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, and places of worship.*
- 10) *Provide a positive sense of place and identity, including through the recognition of good quality design, unique character, the role of culture, and the protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment.*
- 11) *Explore opportunities for the use of renewable energy, including community energy schemes where appropriate, and reduce the use of energy through design and energy efficiency.*
- 12) *Provide positive outcomes in relation to the characteristics, aspirations and measurable standards set out through any supplementary planning document linked to this plan."*

Policy TTV26: Relating to development within the countryside:

“The LPAs will protect the special characteristics and role of the countryside. The following provisions will apply to the consideration of development proposals:

1. Isolated development in the countryside will be avoided and only permitted in exceptional circumstances, such as where it would:

- i. Meet an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside and maintain that role for the development in perpetuity; or*
- ii. Secure the long term future and viable use of a significant heritage asset; or*
- iii. Secure the re-use of redundant or disused buildings and brownfield sites for an appropriate use; or*
- iv. Secure a development of truly outstanding or innovative sustainability and design, which helps to raise standards of design more generally in the rural area, significantly enhances its immediate setting, and is sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area; or*
- v. Protect or enhance the character of historic assets and their settings.*

2. Development proposals should, where appropriate:

- i. Protect and improve public rights of way and bridleways.*
- ii. Re-use traditional buildings that are structurally sound enough for renovation without significant enhancement or alteration.*
- iii. Be complementary to and not prejudice any viable agricultural operations on a farm and other existing viable uses.*
- iv. Respond to a proven agricultural, forestry and other occupational need that requires a countryside location.*
- v. Avoid the use of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.*
- vi. Help enhance the immediate setting of the site and include a management plan and exit strategy that demonstrates how long term degradation of the landscape and natural environment will be avoided.”*

Policy TTV27: Relating to meeting housing needs in rural areas:

“Proposals for residential development on sites adjoining or very near to an existing settlement which would not otherwise be released for this purpose may be permitted provided that it can be demonstrated that:

- 1) It meets a proven need for affordable housing for local people.*
- 2) It includes a mix of affordable and market housing products where necessary to be financially viable. This includes open market housing, providing it does not represent more than 40% of the homes or 40% of the land take excluding infrastructure and services.*
- 3) Management of the scheme will ensure that the dwellings continue to meet the identified need in perpetuity.*
- 4) The proposal meets the requirement of all other relevant policies of the Plan.”*

2.9 The policies set out in the SGNP must therefore be in general conformity to these strategic policies of the Joint Local Plan so as to be an integral part of the development plan.

Section 3: Vision and Objectives for the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1 The vision and objectives for the SGNP were developed following extensive community consultation and engagement.
- 3.2 The Vision Statement for the SGNP is as follows:

Vision Statement for the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan

“To provide for the needs of the Parish of Stoke Gabriel to 2034 in a sustainable manner while ensuring that the character of the village and parish is maintained and enhanced.”

- 3.3 The Objectives of the SGNP are presented below:

Objectives of the Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan

- 1) ***To preserve the unique identity of Stoke Gabriel Parish through the identification and preservation of green spaces and riverside setting befitting of the South Devon National Landscape;***
- 2) ***To achieve the community’s vision of sustainable development by promoting small-scale development of the right type in the right location without detriment to the South Devon National Landscape. This must be to satisfy proven local need and must focus on primary residence;***
- 3) ***Through local consultation, to prioritize areas of requirement for funding and enhancement including leisure, retail or transport facilities through any S106 or other grant or government monies;***
- 4) ***To develop environmental, transport, communication and other policies to ensure Stoke Gabriel remains a sustainable community both for residents and continuing local employment and businesses. The SGNP will seek on site infrastructure to support the installation of, and allow the future upgrade and maintenance of, fibre optic broadband technology;***
- 5) ***To support open space, recreational and sports facilities and services which enhance the wellbeing of the community and achieve a healthy and socially inclusive environment;***
- 6) ***To promote sustainable economic growth in the local economy by supporting existing businesses and new employment opportunities which are appropriate to the parish’s location within the South Devon National Landscape.***

Section 4: Stoke Gabriel Neighbourhood Plan Policies

Purpose of the SGNP policies

- 4.1 This section presents the planning policies for the SGNP.
- 4.2 Implementing the Vision and Objectives for the SGNP, the planning policies are designed to inform and guide decisions on planning applications in the Parish of Stoke Gabriel alongside the provisions of the NPPF and the Joint Local Plan. They have been presented through:
 - Policies which seek to support the delivery of high-quality homes for local people.
 - Policies designed to support the vitality and vibrancy of the community and the wellbeing of residents and visitors.
 - Policies which seek to support the protection and enhancement of the Parish's rich, diverse and valued environment.
- 4.3 To support each policy, the following information has been provided:
 - 1) **What is the policy seeking to achieve?** This presents the overarching aim of the policy.
 - 2) **What is the evidence behind the policy?** This provides an overview of the evidence base informing the policy.
 - 3) **What does the community say?** This discusses the outcomes of community engagement undertaken for the SGNP relating to the policy area presented.
- 4.4 This information has been provided to provide a clear context for each policy in light of the evidence and engagement which has informed and shaped the SGNP.

Housing Policies

Policy SG1: Settlement Boundary

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.5 Stoke Gabriel village has been subject to major residential development over the last 15 years. The village, due to its picturesque location and its thriving community, is popular for those seeking to buy for owner occupation or a second home. A key aim for the SGNP is therefore to ensure that future development meets local needs, but still protects the special landscape setting of the village which is valued by residents and visitors alike.
- 4.6 The Stoke Gabriel village Settlement Boundary differentiates which policies and criteria will need to be achieved by a development proposal. It is the intention of the SGNP not to allocate sites for development but to have a development management policy which in principle allows housing in areas within the Settlement Boundary. It also seeks to in principle allow new housing of a certain type and scale on the edge of the Settlement Boundary where new housing would not otherwise be acceptable, and which specifically allows development that is shown to be meeting local needs.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.7 In the 2011 census the usually resident population of Stoke Gabriel Parish was recorded at 1,254, but by the 2021 census the figure had increased to 1,499. The 2021 census also records that there were 53 dwellings which were empty properties, second homes or holiday lets.
- 4.8 The previous South Hams Local Development Framework (LDF) allocated three major sites in Stoke Gabriel for residential development:
- Paignton Road – 53 homes
 - Coombe Shute – 10 homes
 - Rowes Farm – 43 homes
- 4.9 The number of new homes allocated to Stoke Gabriel by the LDF was in excess of other rural parishes of comparable size. As such, the village has seen more growth than others within the South Hams since 2011.
- 4.10 During the preparation of the Joint Local Plan, two further sites came forward for development:
- Land at Four Cross – 9 homes
 - Redevelopment of the Gabriel Court Hotel – 13 homes
- 4.11 Since the adoption of the Joint Local Plan a smaller site in Vicarage Road for the development of 4 dwellings also received planning permission.

What does the community say?

- 4.12 The community surveys undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan have highlighted that the community has a high level of concern about recent growth seen in Stoke Gabriel village. This includes relating to the scale of growth, and associated impacts on landscape, village character and community safety.
- 4.13 In addition, respondents have highlighted that many recent residential developments have not delivered housing tenures in accordance with local need in the Parish, and that the cost of new homes available has been prohibitive for many local people (both in terms of purchase and rent).

Policy SG1: Settlement Boundary

Figure 3 delineates the Settlement Boundary for Stoke Gabriel village.

Development proposals within the Settlement Boundary will be supported in principle where the scheme meets the requirements of other relevant Development Plan policies, in particular Policies SG8 and SG9 of the SGNP, and where the scheme is of an appropriate density in keeping with its immediate surroundings.

Outside, but adjacent to, the Settlement Boundary, small scale affordable housing on rural exception sites for people with a local connection, as defined by Policy SG2, will be supported.

Development proposals outside the Settlement Boundary will not be supported unless they comprise development described in Policy SG2 or are otherwise allowed for by other policies in the Development Plan.

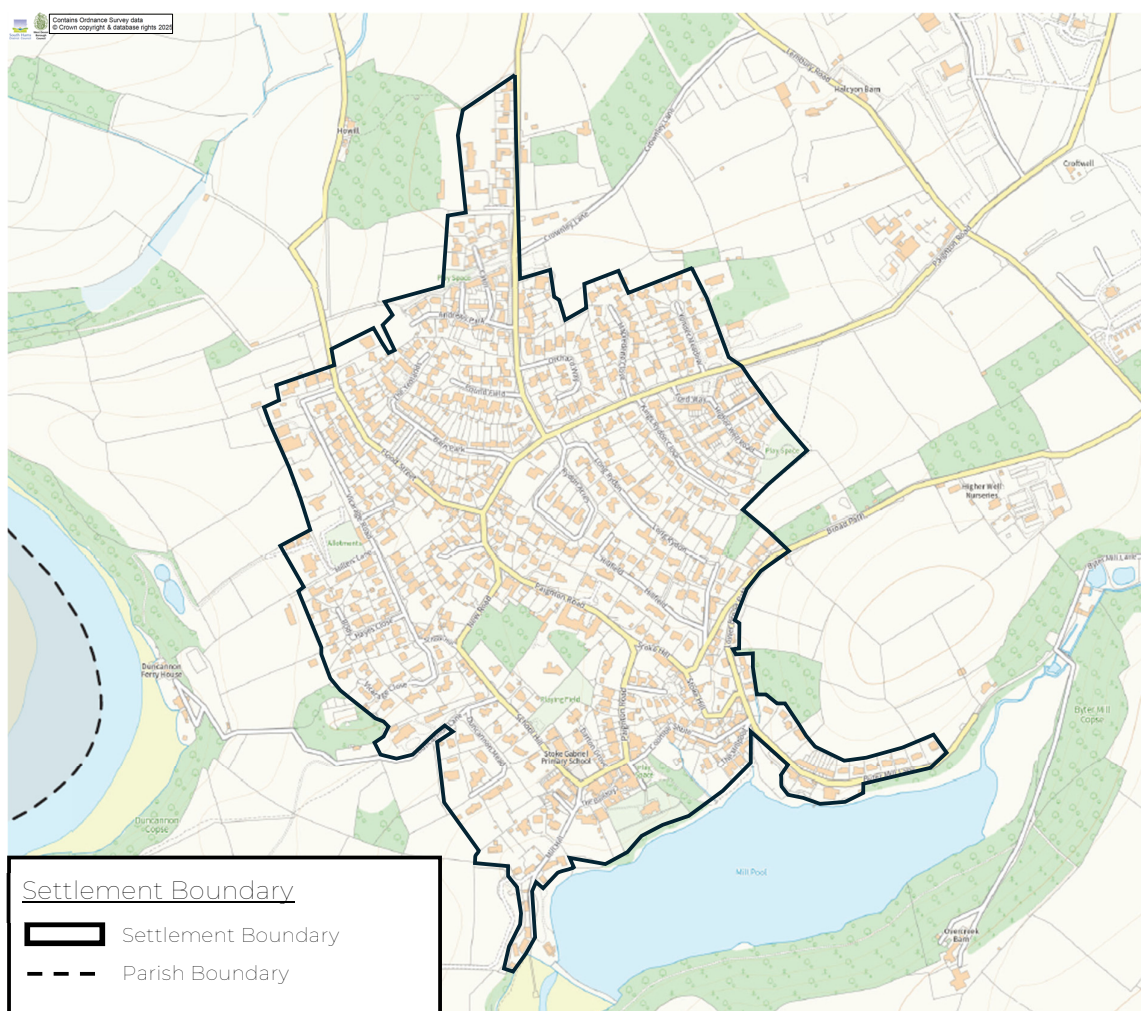


FIGURE 3: STOKE GABRIEL SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

Policy SG2: Community Led Housing in Stoke Gabriel

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.14 The policy seeks to deliver housing of a range of types and tenures which meet the needs of local people and those with a strong connection to the Parish of Stoke Gabriel.
- 4.15 The policy supports the delivery of new homes through the Stoke Gabriel Community Land Trust (SGCLT) and seeks to support the SGCLT in its aim to develop a site within the parish for community-led affordable housing.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.16 The need for new homes for local people in Stoke Gabriel was confirmed by the Stoke Gabriel Housing Needs Report carried out by South Hams District Council in September 2023 (provided at Appendix C).
- 4.17 Key findings:
- At least 19 affordable homes are required in the next five years.
 - Of those indicating a need to move within the next five years, 28.6% would require affordable rented properties.
 - 92% of respondents met the South Hams District Council local connection requirement.
 - 34.7% of respondents would be in favour of a small development of housing.
 - 32% of respondents stated that they may be in favour of a small development of housing.
- 4.18 The Section 106 Agreements relating to the major housing developments where Affordable Housing was provided as part of the overall planning permission for the respective developments delivered the following mix of tenures:
- **Rowes Farm, Aish Road:** 21 dwellings – 14 Affordable Rent and 7 Shared Ownership
 - **Kings Orchard, Paignton Road:** 15 dwellings – 10 Affordable Rent and 5 Intermediate
- 4.19 Although the S106 Agreements had a local qualifying requirement for those who could be considered for a tenancy in one of the properties, those requiring housing had to be within bands A to D of the Devon Home Choice bands.¹ The majority of those within the village who require housing as identified in the Housing Needs Survey are classified as being within Band E and therefore not eligible for consideration (albeit that they have existing family ties to the village and would potentially qualify under the local family links and occupational conditions).
- 4.20 As a consequence, these developments have not removed locally qualified people from the housing waiting list and their need for affordable accommodation is still a priority for any future development within the parish.
- 4.21 In response to these issues, the SGCLT was set up in 2017. The vision of the SGCLT is “to provide much needed homes for people on a low to middle income, who live, work and have family connections in Stoke Gabriel. These are for people who fall in the gap between being able to buy on the open market and being eligible for housing association properties.” Based on an earlier Housing Needs Survey of 2015 and their own experience, the SGCLT have indicated a need for 10-15 affordable homes (6 x 2 bedroom homes and 6 x 3 bedroom homes) for singles, couples, parents and children aged 12-55.
- 4.22 However, due to the topography of the village and the environmental constraints present locally, opportunities for identifying sites suitable for development on the principles of the SGCLT are restricted.

¹ <https://www.devonhomechoice.com/how-it-works>

What does the community say?

- 4.23 As noted above, 34.7% of respondents to the 2023 Housing Needs Survey would be in favour of a small development of housing and a further 32% may be in favour of such a development (66.7% in total).
- 4.24 In addition, community surveys undertaken for the SGNP have highlighted a desire within the community for new homes in the Parish to go to local people.
- 4.25 In addition, respondents have highlighted that in many cases the type of tenure of housing recently delivered has not been appropriate for local needs, and that the cost of new homes available has been prohibitive for local people (both in terms of purchase and rent).

Policy SG2: Community Led Housing in Stoke Gabriel

In order to progress the aim of providing affordable homes within the village, the Stoke Gabriel Community Land Trust (SGCLT) was formed in 2017 by a group of residents who fall into the gap between being able to afford to buy or rent on the open market in Stoke Gabriel and being eligible for housing association properties.

Given objectively assessed local housing needs, the SGNP supports the SGCLT's aim to develop homes on a site or sites taken forward via an affordable housing-led exception site planning route, specifically created for community-led affordable housing.

Proposals for small scale community-led residential development schemes will be supported in principle provided that:

- there is clear evidence of the proposal being supported by the community (through for example being led by the SGCLT);
- it can be demonstrated that the scheme will be well managed and financially viable over the long-term and that benefits provided by the scheme can be retained by the local community in perpetuity;
- the scale of the scheme is appropriate to the location and the level of identified local affordable housing need;
- the types, sizes and tenures of dwellings proposed meet the housing need of Stoke Gabriel as identified in an up to date housing needs survey or equivalent;
- the affordable housing is provided in perpetuity, preferably in partnership with the SGCLT; and
- New dwellings are offered in the first instance to prospective purchasers who can demonstrate a local connection (local connection criteria are as defined in the Stoke Gabriel Community Land Trust Eligibility Policy (August 2025), provided at Appendix D).

A limited element of open market housing (up to a maximum of 40%) will be acceptable only where it is demonstrated through an Economic Viability Appraisal that this is essential to enable the viable delivery of affordable housing or other community benefits on-site.

The SGNP will therefore in principle look favourably on proposals for community-led affordable-led housing on a suitable site or sites brought forward by the SGCLT, subject to the application of other relevant development plan policies.

Policy SG3: Principal Residency

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.26 In recent years there has been an increase in the number of homes used for holiday homes or second homes in Stoke Gabriel Parish. The affordability of homes for local people has also decreased. Given trends seen in the wider South Devon area, which have undermined the vitality of many communities, there is a desire amongst the community to initiate planning policies which seek to address what is seen as an increasing issue for the parish.
- 4.27 This policy therefore seeks to restrict the use of any new open market housing in Stoke Gabriel Parish to principal residences, not second homes or holiday homes.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.28 The 2011 Census found the South Hams to be ranked the fourth Local Authority in England and Wales for second homes used for holidays (people with a second address per 1000 usual residents = 45) and the fifth for total second homes (people with a second address per 1000 usual residents = 92).
- 4.29 The Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment' of 2017 (page 26) indicated that in 2014, 10% of South Hams' housing stock was second homes (with Plymouth being 0.65% and West Devon being 4%).
- 4.30 The 2015 Housing Needs Survey of 2015 (page 5) stated that 53 out of 618 (8.57%) households in Stoke Gabriel were either vacant, second homes or holiday lets.
- 4.31 The 2021 Census found that in the South Hams, 6% of all dwellings were second homes (the 2011 and 2021 Censuses appear to not have directly comparable data).
- 4.32 South Hams District Council's 'Parish Profile' for Stoke Gabriel, dated 2023, stated that the parish has 41 second homes and 18 holiday lets (59 in total).
- 4.33 Research in summer 2025 by the SGNP Steering Group found 80 properties within the parish available for holiday accommodation.
- 4.34 Whilst historically the number of homes not used as principal residences in the parish has been lower than some settlements in the South Hams, recent trends suggest that the gap is closing. There is also a recognition that with increases in house prices in other holiday hotspots, Stoke Gabriel is becoming increasingly attractive for second homes and those seeking to own holiday homes.

What does the community say?

- 4.35 Community consultation undertaken for the SGNP to date has highlighted that residents view tourism and the visitor economy as a vital component of the local economy, with the parish's attractiveness to visitors being reflective of the parish's high quality natural and built environment. Visitors are therefore fully welcomed by those living in the parish and are seen as a key component of what makes the parish special.
- 4.36 However, consultation has shown that there is an increasing concern in the community about the affordability of new homes for local people, in particular for younger families. Consultation has also highlighted there is a concern that many homes in recent housing developments in Stoke Gabriel have been bought for use as holiday lets or second homes. With the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the associated increase in demand for property in rural areas, and recent increases in house prices, there is also an increasing apprehension that second home and holiday home ownership in the parish is accelerating, with associated impacts on community vitality and social inclusion.
- 4.37 In this respect, community consultation undertaken for the SGNP has highlighted that there is strong support for a SGNP policy which seeks to restrict second homes and holiday

homes. This is in part a recognition that other Neighbourhood Plans in Devon and Cornwall have implemented similar policies with the support of their Local Planning Authorities.

- 4.38 For example, in the community survey undertaken in June 2016, 75% of respondents stated that new open market housing in the parish should carry a condition that it not be used as a second home / holiday let, with 7% disagreeing.

Policy SG3: Principal Residency

New open market housing will only be permitted where there is a condition restricting occupancy as a Principal Residence. Principal residences are defined as those occupied as the residents' sole or main residence, where the resident spends the majority of their time when not working away from home or living abroad.

The condition placed on new open market homes will require that they are occupied by the owner or their tenants as their primary (principal) residence. Owners of homes with a Principal Residence condition will be required to keep proof that they are meeting the condition, and be willing to provide this proof if/when the Local Authority requests this information. Proof of Principal Residence is via verifiable evidence including (but not limited to) residents being registered on the local electoral register and being registered for and attending local services (such as healthcare, schools, etc.).

Policy SG4: Parking Standards

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.39 The policy seeks to implement parking standards for residential development areas in Stoke Gabriel Parish which reflect the rural nature of the parish and accessibility issues.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.40 NPPF 2024 (para 112) says, *"If setting local parking standards for residential and non – residential development, policies should take into account:*
- a) the accessibility of the development;*
 - b) the type, mix and use of development;*
 - c) the availability of and opportunities for public transport;*
 - d) local car ownership levels; and*
 - e) the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles."*
- 4.41 Stoke Gabriel, Waddeton and Aish, like many rural settlements, have limited public transport services. As such, there is a reliance on the private vehicle to access key services, facilities and employment opportunities.
- 4.42 Recent developments within the settlements have not provided sufficient parking to meet the basic needs of the housing occupiers, with the consequence that cars and vehicles used by residents for employment purposes can be parked in dangerous locations, half on and half off pavements or on grass verges fronting properties. This can also produce a poor visual environment and practical difficulties for many drivers. The number of spaces provided is also insufficient to meet daily demands of tradespeople or visitors.

What does the community say?

- 4.43 The community surveys undertaken for the SGNP have highlighted parking has a key concern for residents.
- 4.44 A very high proportion of respondents highlighted that parking was inadequate in the village, and identified that due to poor public transport accessibility to key services and facilities, there was a high dependence on the private car, with a requirement for multiple cars per household.
- 4.45 Parking on pavements was also identified as an issue, and challenges for residents parking was amplified during busy visitor periods. A number of respondents also pointed out that recent developments in Stoke Gabriel have taken away previous parking provision available to the community.
- 4.46 Community consultation has also identified significant support for enhanced cycle infrastructure in the parish.

Policy SG4: Parking Standards

Proposals for any new housing development will be required to meet the following standards:

1 Bedroom dwelling: 2 off street parking spaces per dwelling

2 Bedroom dwelling: 2 off street parking spaces per dwelling

3+ Bedroom dwellings: 3 off street parking spaces per dwelling

A garage can count as an off street parking space but only if the internal dimensions are:

Single garage: 3.0 metres wide x 6.0 metres deep

Double garage: 5.7 metres wide x 6.0 metres deep

For a single garage measuring 6.0m x 3.0m, 0.5m needs to be added to either the length or the width for bike storage. If added to the length, a personal door should be included so the bikes can be taken in and out with the car in situ.

Any off street parking in front of a dwelling must have sufficient space so that no part of any vehicle overhangs the pavement and thus causes an obstruction to pedestrians.

These numbers also provide for the increase in car numbers which comes from young family members that live at home but have passed their driving test and use a car. For young people a car is often a necessity to get to college due to a lack of public transport and those who have left school often require one for employment.

Visitor parking within any new residential development should be provided at a minimum of 1 space per two dwellings. Visitor parking can be provided either off-street or on-street.

In all new residential developments, at least one electric vehicle charging point of at least 7 kW will be provided to each dwelling.

Separate and detached parking areas at the rear of properties will not be permitted as these are a potential source of antisocial / unneighbourly behaviour and a security risk to any parked vehicle. Parking courts also make it more difficult for residents to install an electric vehicle charger at a later date.

All residential and employment development will be expected to provide appropriate provision for secure and convenient cycle parking and storage. For properties with gardens, and where cycle parking is not available in garages, a store for bicycles measuring at least 2m x 1m should be provided, with easy access to the highway.

Community Policies

Policy SG5: Business and Employment

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.47 Stoke Gabriel has a wide variety of businesses located or registered in the parish. They contribute greatly to the sustainability of the community and provide essential services for residents as well as employment opportunities.
- 4.48 The SGNP seeks to ensure that businesses key to the vitality of the parish are supported, and that opportunities are realised for providing for new businesses and the facilitation of economic diversification in a way which does not impact on the rural character of the parish.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.49 Changing demographics and economics have led to growth of small service businesses, often home-based, in addition to smaller businesses typically employing less than three people.
- 4.50 Traditional small-scale commercial fishing on the River Dart ceased some time ago while agriculture remains significant in the Parish.
- 4.51 The variety of businesses is broad and they provide essential services to residents as well as to the wider community. They include pubs, shops, restaurants, education, holiday accommodation, agricultural and diversified agricultural businesses (e.g. cider making, chilli farming), marine services and vehicle maintenance, among a host of others.
- 4.52 The shops, pubs and restaurants in the village itself provide employment and valued services as well as opportunities to socialise and interact in the community. As in other communities, the number of shops has greatly reduced over the past three decades due to the growth and the proximity of local supermarkets and the advent of online shopping / delivery services. The number of pubs has reduced from three to two as drinking habits have changed, while one establishment was converted to four dwellings.
- 4.53 The three popular caravan/camping parks are all located to the immediate north-east of the village (additionally there is a large site within 200 yards of these in Torbay). These provide pitches for 327 caravans or motor homes (in addition to some static homes) as well as caravan storage associated with two of the sites. These caravan/camping parks provide seasonal employment as well as a vital source of visitors to local businesses.

What does the community say?

- 4.54 In the survey carried out in 2016 pubs and restaurants occupied three of the top four rankings of importance to the community. The Post Office, which was ranked number one, has since closed and has been incorporated into the remaining village general store. The long term survival of this is seen as extremely important to the sustainability of the community. There were proposals that this and at least one of the village pubs should be protected as an 'Asset of Community Value', which is covered by Policy DEV18 in the Joint Local Plan.
- 4.55 The survey also confirmed that effective mobile and broadband and mobile communications were lacking and paramount. These have been addressed by two mobile providers and broadband has significantly improved. However, there remain some deficiencies with this provision.
- 4.56 54 respondents ran their business from home and said that they would not need new premises during the life of the neighbourhood plan. However, 12 said that they might need different premises and nine had a potential need. 70% of these said that it was unlikely that they would find new premises within the parish citing difficulty in finding suitable space at an affordable price.

4.57 A telephone survey of 25 businesses was carried out from September 2018 and generated the following comments:

- Parking in the village is an issue, and the village shop would welcome repositioning of the adjacent bus stop to create more parking spaces. It was recognized that there are very limited options to create more central village parking spaces; use of the school field was suggested and / or compulsory purchase of land by the Parish Council of any appropriate land available in a central village location. Holiday parks mentioned not being able to park in the village as a key frustration with elderly visitors.
- A 'test pontoon' (positioned by Dart Harbour at the entrance to the creek to provide accessibility from the river at all states of tide) has been well-received and has brought business to the village. The possibility of having a pontoon which allows larger ferry boats to call in and start connecting Stoke Gabriel with Totnes and Dartmouth was also suggested.
- Public transport connections were recognized as poor within the village, and access routes in the village as not good. Road widening for caravan access and traffic would be welcomed.
- Several local businesses suggested that there should be improved signage with a large attractive sign at the Mill Pool and at the main entrances to the village outlining what shops/pubs/restaurants are sited in the village, as well as improved signage outside holiday camps. It is felt some visitors drive straight to the Mill Pool down School Hill and then straight out without being aware of what is available.
- Many local businesses cited poor mobile phone signal – some saying it was a big problem and was affecting their business; holiday parks/B&Bs saying it was difficult for visitors staying in the village; some businesses still needing to go into the garden to receive calls.
- There were no major changes of premises being planned for/cited as needed from the business respondents. The only requirement for new premises was from sole trader therapists looking to use a local therapy room and/or room for group sessions.

4.58 With regards to the 2016 community survey, almost 60% of respondents felt that specific types of business should be encouraged. These were agriculture, tourism (which is seen as important to the parish's economy), professional and educational. Manufacturing and construction were not specifically supported.

Policy SG5: Business and Employment

New business premises, storage facilities, units or yards will be supported providing that they have no negative effect on local character and are in conjunction with the other policies of the SGNP. This is to include expansion of existing businesses. Proposals which support the rural economy and agricultural diversification will be supported.

The SGNP will not support the change of use of existing static caravan/mobile home parks and storage to residential development sites. Any proposed expansion of existing mobile and static caravan/mobile home parks and storage should be scrutinised to ensure that it would not be to the detriment of the rural nature of the parish.

New employment premises or expansion of existing premises will be expected to provide adequate parking for employees, visitors and customers.

Businesses run from home and facilities for home working are supported. Any proposals for these purposes must be in keeping with the locality and must cause neither nuisance to neighbours nor detriment to the locality.

Changes of use from residential uses to business uses will be accepted outside of the settlement boundary providing they provide employment opportunities and do not cause detriment to the rural setting of the parish.

Policy SG6: Community Facilities

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.59 The SGNP seeks to ensure that Stoke Gabriel continues to be an active and safe community by retaining or improving existing facilities and encouraging new services and amenities. This is with a view to meeting community needs and encouraging the ongoing vitality of the community into the future.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.60 Stoke Gabriel benefits from a significant number of community facilities and organisations. There is a well-used centrally located village hall and also 'the Old School Room' which is the home to Pre-school during the day and available for hire evenings and weekends. Sports clubs include Stoke Gabriel Football Club (hosting eight teams), Stoke Gabriel Cricket Club (two teams) and Stoke Gabriel Boating Association, all of which have excellent facilities. Organisations include the Scout troop (with Hall), Women's Institute, Mothers Union, Art Group, Horticultural Society, Parish Plan Group, Keep Fit, Yoga, Zumba, Junior Karate, Whist, Bridge, Short Mat Bowling, Bell-ringers, Village Voices and Cycle Path Group.
- 4.61 The Primary School benefits from its own playing field while the Pre-School utilises the play area in the Village Orchard.
- 4.62 There are two places of worship, the Anglican Church of St Mary and St Gabriel and the private chapel in Waddeton. The former has an active choir and also hosts a series of community concerts in the winter months.
- 4.63 Also key to community vitality in Stoke Gabriel are the village store/post office (Stoke Gabriel Stores), its two pubs (The Castle Inn and The Church House Inn) and the village's two restaurants (The River Shack and Emma's).
- 4.64 The strong community vitality is exemplified in the annual carnival procession through the village.

What does the community say?

- 4.65 The community survey undertaken for the SGNP (2016) included the question:

'How important to you, individually or as a family are the following village facilities? (5 Most Important, 1 least important)'

4.66 A summary of responses is as follows:

How important to you, individually or as a family, are the following village facilities (5 very, 1 least)								
	Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	Rating Average	Response Count
	Post Office	5	6	40	75	212	4.43	338
	Shops	6	3	36	93	198	4.41	336
	Village Hall	7	12	52	95	170	4.22	336
	Pubs and restaurants	6	14	55	91	169	4.20	335
	Community Orchard	18	6	60	88	150	4.07	322
	Hoyle Copse	21	13	70	70	140	3.94	314
	Church	25	37	50	62	154	3.86	328
	Old Schoolroom	31	27	82	62	110	3.62	312
	Community Orchard Play Park	55	17	58	56	119	3.55	305
	Stoke Gabriel Boating Association	61	39	58	57	91	3.25	306
	Scout Hall	65	22	74	62	80	3.23	303
	Other community play areas	57	29	73	49	78	3.22	286
	Sports pitches	71	35	66	70	60	3.04	302
	Primary School	114	11	30	32	109	3.04	296
	Parent & toddler group	118	7	31	34	103	2.99	293
	Pre-school	118	14	29	37	98	2.94	296
	Cricket club	75	35	79	70	47	2.93	306
	Football club	75	38	76	65	49	2.92	303
	Allotments	87	31	73	44	58	2.85	293
	Baptist Chapel	119	50	45	32	48	2.46	294

4.67 Since the survey, the Post Office business has closed and has been accommodated within the village stores. The Village Hall continues to host many varying functions in a central location as does the 'Old Schoolroom' (which is also home to the Pre-School). The Primary

School and mother and toddler group thrive. Sports facilities have benefitted from grants including Section 106 money and many organisations continue to prosper. Supply of allotments still falls short of demand with a waiting list for the one available privately owned site dedicated to these. The congregations of the Baptist Chapel were relatively small which are reflected in the score compared to the 'Church' which is also an iconic building.

- 4.68 Participants were also asked if there were any additional community amenity or recreational facilities which they felt were of particular importance. They identified the local garage/service station as an important service, and the public toilets and visits from the mobile library as important public services. Local walks and natural areas were important (the Mill Pool, Churchyard and woodland).
- 4.69 In response to the question *'Which facilities do you feel are missing or inadequate in the parish? Where do you go to access these facilities?'* the response summary of the key items was:

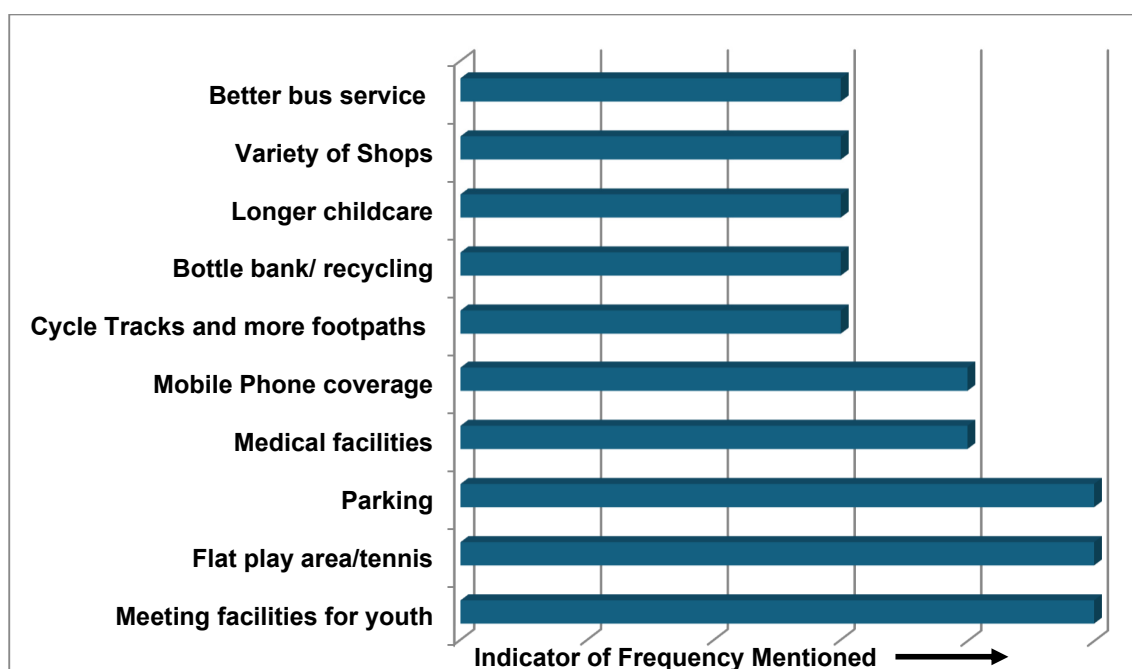


FIGURE 4: ABSENT OR SCARCE COMMUNITY FACILITIES WITH LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY FOR INTRODUCTION OR ENHANCEMENT

- 4.70 Many of these responses echo similar findings from a consultation undertaken for the 2008 Parish Plan. The status of these key items is as follows:
- The flat play area / tennis requirement may be addressed with an ongoing project at the Primary School to install a MUGA (Multi Use Games Facility) for community as well as school use.
 - Mobile phone coverage for Vodafone and O2 users has improved with a new mast but coverage from other providers is poor.
 - The bus service has improved slightly with twice a week runs to Totnes in addition to the daily (except Sunday) service to Paignton. However, the timing and frequency of these services do not support transport to and from employment.
 - The cycle path group is working on developing a cycle friendly route to Totnes. Public footpaths are fairly limited necessitating using country lanes for longer walks.
 - Parking, particularly in summer months and at school run times, is a major issue.

- Meeting facilities for the teenagers / youth of the village is a long term deficiency which needs resolution.
- There are no medical facilities within the Parish, Paignton and Totnes being the closest.
- There are two shops.
 - ▣ The Village Stores / Post Office / Newsagent, which is vital to the community despite the relative proximity of large supermarkets. There is a strong case to make this an 'asset of community value'; and
 - ▣ The River Dart Gallery specialising in photography, artwork, framing and gifts.
- Childcare is still limited to school hours.

Policy SG6: Community Facilities

In order to support the ongoing community vitality of the parish, existing community, sports, leisure and retail facilities will be retained, except where a proposed replacement facility would provide the same or improved benefits to the community.

The benefits of a community facility include:

- i) the importance and scarcity of its services
- ii) good accessibility
- iii) appearance in keeping with surroundings
- iv) its setting in the townscape or landscape
- v) general quality of the facility.

The table below details the community facilities protected by Policy SG6 and their locations are illustrated at Figures 5 and 6.

Community Facilities

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Stoke Gabriel Stores | 2. The Old Schoolroom |
| 3. The Church House Inn | 4. The River Shack |
| 5. The Village Hall | 6. Hoyle Copse |
| 7. Stoke Gabriel Boating Association clubhouse, facilities and foreshore | 8. Stoke Gabriel Cricket Club and facilities |
| 9. The Castle Inn | 10. Stoke Gabriel Scout Hall and field |
| 11. Emma's Restaurant | 12. Primary School and facilities |
| 13. The Community Orchard and Play Area | 14. Community play areas across the parish |
| 15. The River Dart Gallery | 16. Allotments |
| 17. The Church of St Mary and St Gabriel and Churchyard | 18. Stoke Gabriel Football Club and facilities |
| 19. Public toilets on Paignton Road | |

Development of additional community facilities and infrastructure or improvement of existing facilities that will demonstrably support the vibrancy and vitality of the parish will be actively supported providing it complies with relevant national and local strategic policies and the other policies of the SGNP.

Proposals which enhance public toilet provision will be supported, particularly with respect to disabled persons' access.

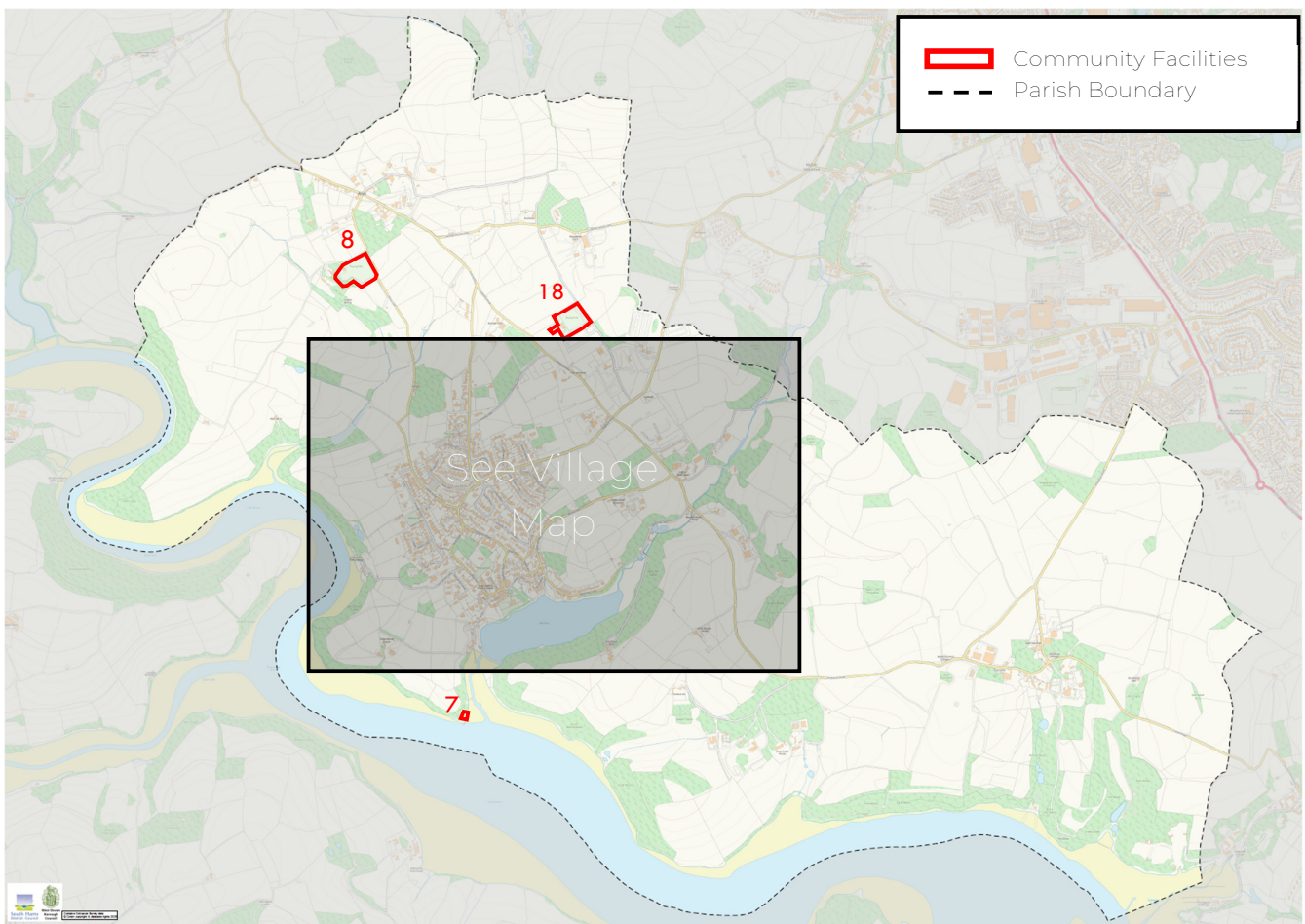


FIGURE 5: COMMUNITY FACILITIES (PARISH)

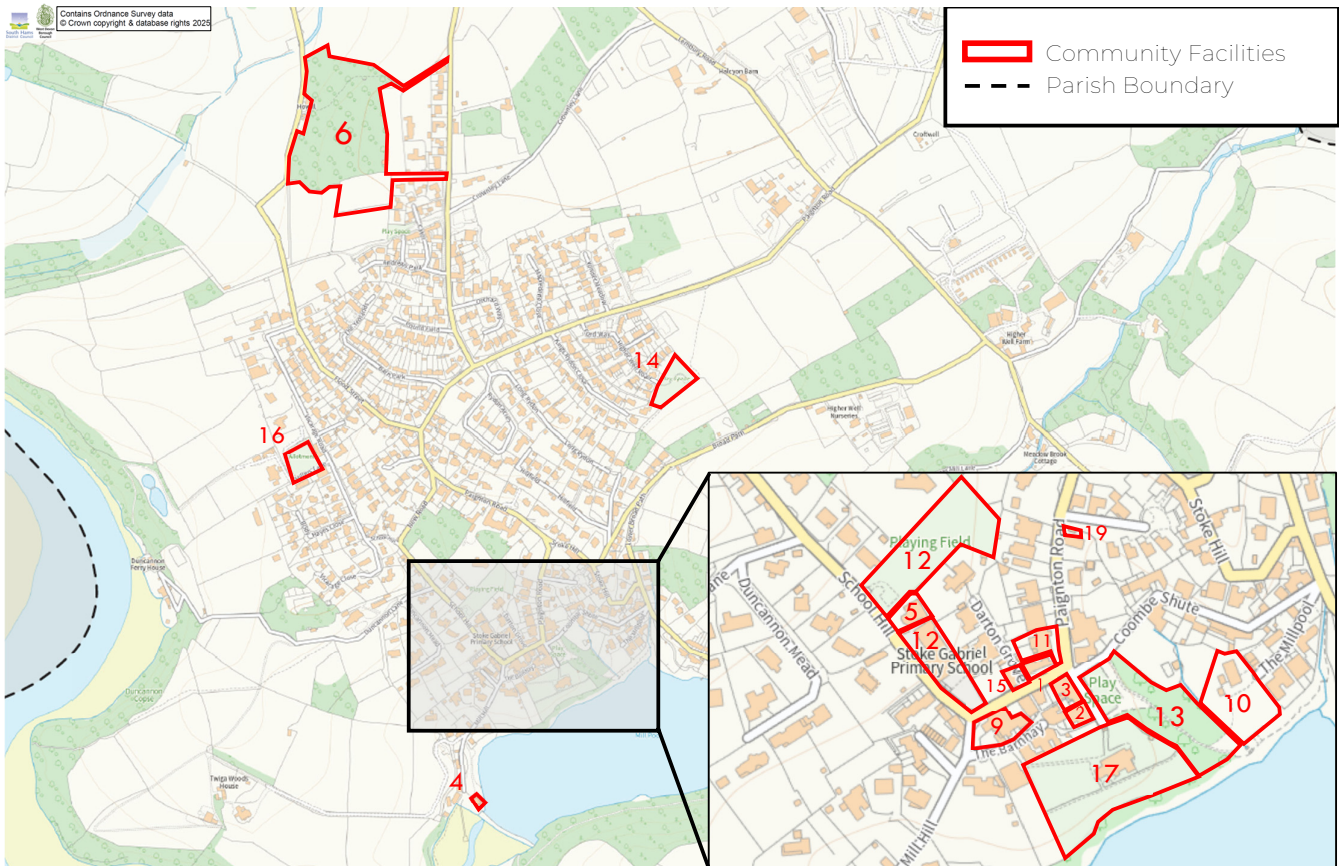


FIGURE 6: COMMUNITY FACILITIES (VILLAGE)

Environment Policies

Policy SG7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.71 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich biodiversity and geodiversity resource. A key aim for the SGNP is therefore to protect and enhance biodiversity habitats in the Parish and enhance local and sub-regional ecological networks. The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to require new development to provide 'biodiversity net gain' to augment future development in the Parish.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.72 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich biodiversity resource, comprising a range of habitats and ecosystems which support a significant number of species, including protected species. Habitats are varied and include gardens, farmland, woodland, streams and the tidal River Dart. These varied habitats support a great diversity of plants, birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The Parish's biodiversity resource is a key component in its distinctive character and comprises an important element of local and sub-regional ecological networks in south Devon.
- 4.73 The Parish also has a rich geodiversity resource. This is a key determinant to the distribution of habitats and species, and has a close influence on landscape character, the historic environment and local distinctiveness.
- 4.74 An overview of the key designations and features of biodiversity and geodiversity interest in the Parish is presented below.

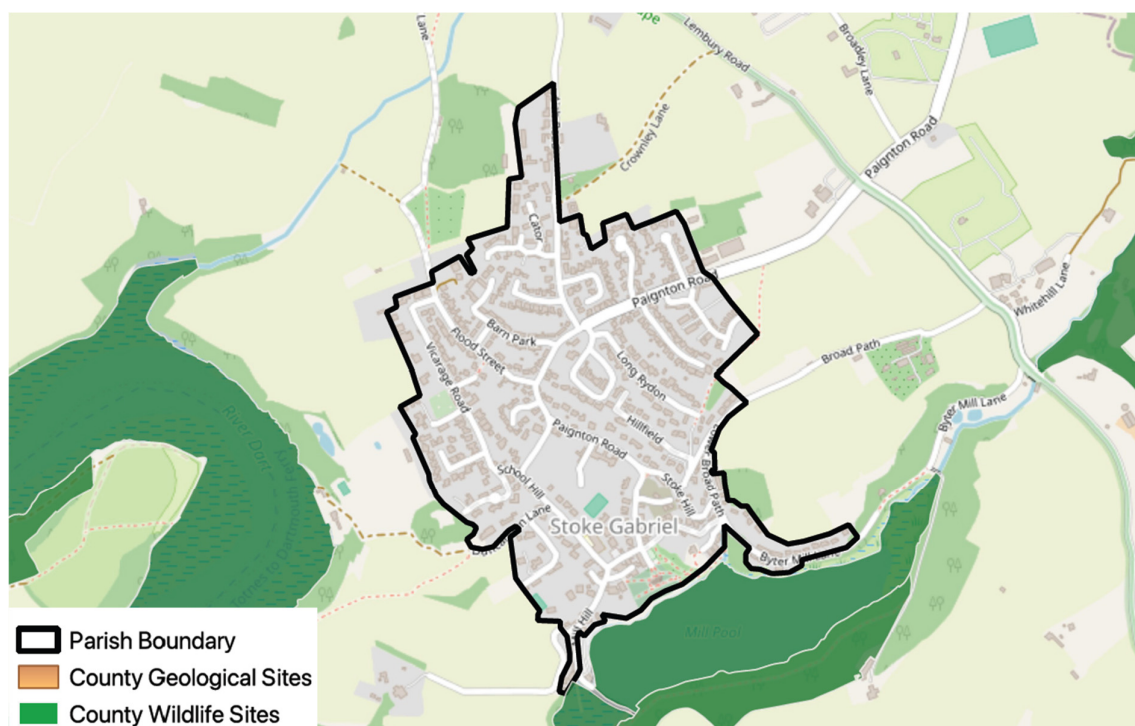
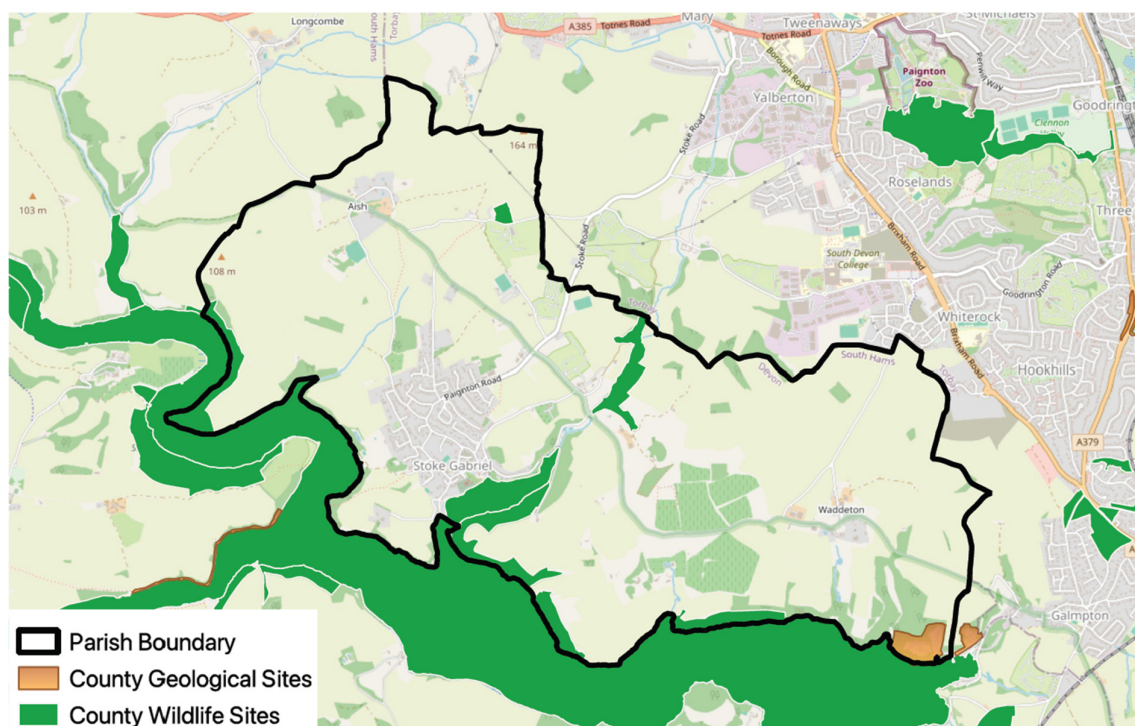
County Wildlife Sites

- 4.75 Six County Wildlife Sites are present in the Parish. County Wildlife Sites are sites locally designated for biodiversity, designated due to the presence of particular habitats and species. They are designated using a strict set of criteria and each site is assessed against these criteria by a panel of experts. Whilst they are not legally protected, they comprise a network of non-statutory wildlife sites which form key parts of Devon's ecological networks. The County Wildlife Sites in the Parish are as follows:

- Ham Copse
- Broadleigh Farm Orchard
- Byter Mill Copse
- The Mill Pool
- South Downs & Great Woods
- The Cliffs

County Geological Sites

- 4.76 County Geological Sites are locally designated geological sites that are considered to be especially important for the geodiversity they exhibit. There is one County Geological Site located in the Parish, at Waddeton Quarry. The site has been designated for its exposures of a wide range of lithological and structural features associated with the Torquay limestone, which can be seen at both the quarry and the foreshore at this location.
- 4.77 County Wildlife Sites and County Geological Sites both within and in the vicinity of the parish are illustrated at Figures 7 and 8.



Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and ancient woodland

- 4.78 UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types, and were those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- 4.79 A significant number of priority habitats are present in the Parish, including deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, good quality semi-improved grassland and mudflats.
- 4.80 There are also a number of areas of ancient woodland (woodland that has existed since 1600AD) in the Parish. Comprising some of the richest land-based habitat for wildlife, these include Ham Copse, Great Wood and Tors/Barn Woods.
- 4.81 Areas within the parish which comprise Priority Habitats and Ancient Woodland are illustrated at Figures 9 and 10.

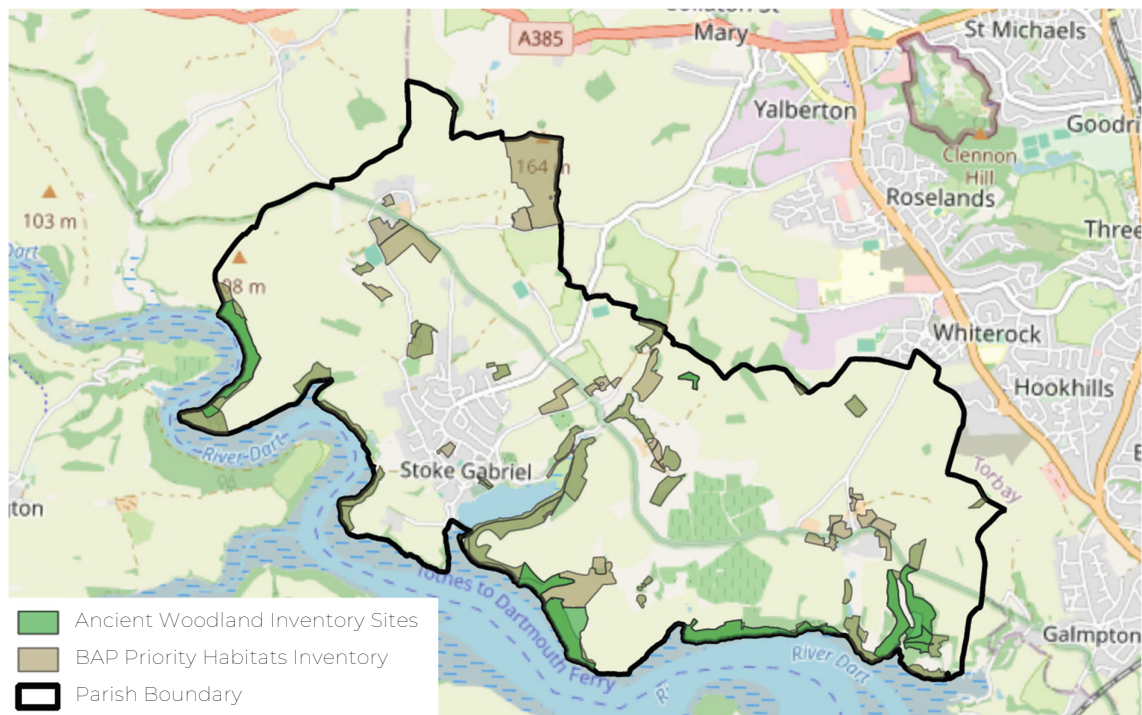


FIGURE 9: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PRIORITY HABITATS INVENTORY AND ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY (PARISH) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](#))

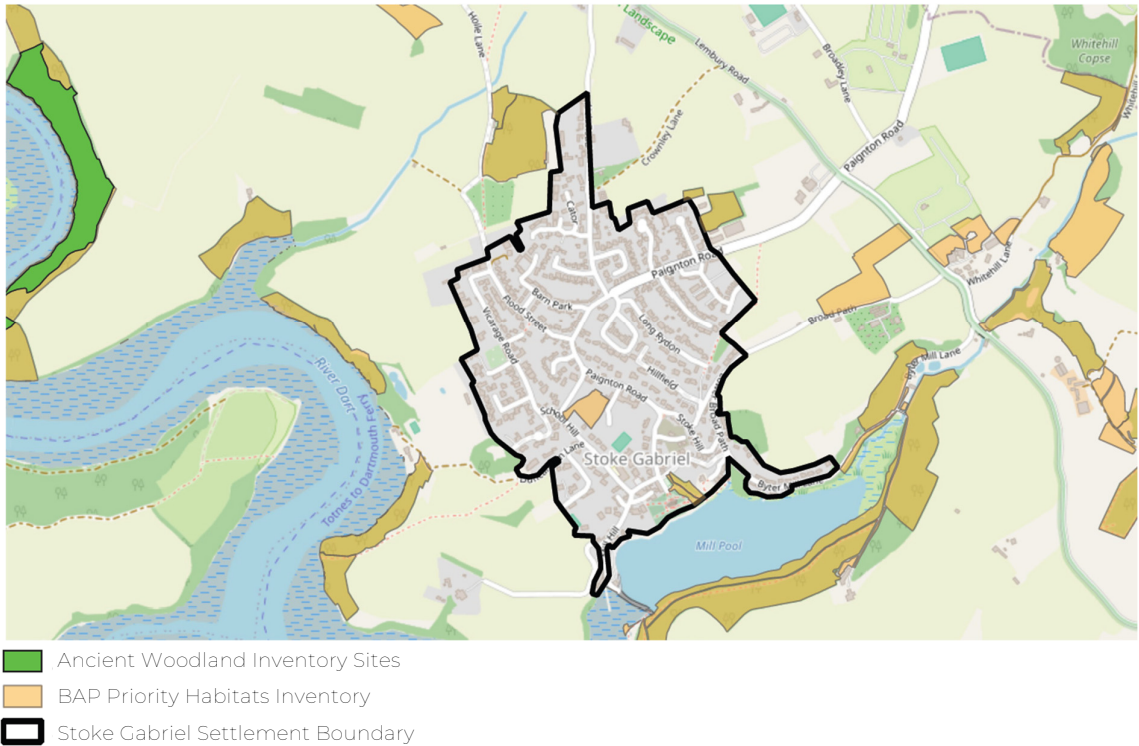


FIGURE 10: BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PRIORITY HABITATS INVENTORY AND ANCIENT WOODLAND INVENTORY (VILLAGE) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/))

Strategic Nature Areas

- 4.82 Recognising the Parish's importance as an integral part of local and sub-regional ecological networks, a significant part of the Parish is within a Strategic Nature Area. Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) are landscape scale areas of land that have been selected by Biodiversity South West as being important areas for the conservation and expansion of particular habitat types in Devon. They are areas of Devon's countryside which contain higher than average concentrations of existing biodiversity habitats. The SNAs present in the Parish include: Woodland SNA, which covers the banks of the river Dart, extending over much of Stoke Gabriel village, the Mill Pool / Byter Mill valley, and towards Aish; and Mudflats SNA, which covers the River Dart.
- 4.83 The parish's Strategic Nature Areas are illustrated at Figure 11 overleaf.

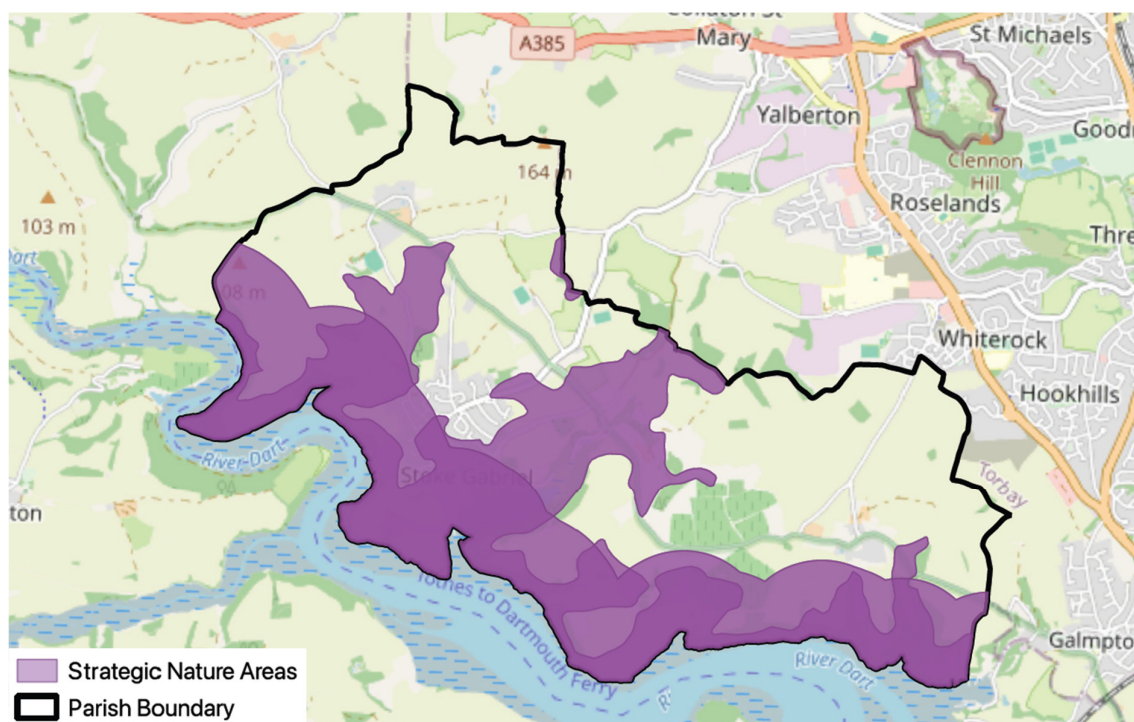


FIGURE 11: STRATEGIC NATURE AREAS (map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/))

The Dart Estuary Marine Conservation Zone

- 4.84 The Dart Estuary Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) was designated in May 2019. The MCZ is an inshore site that covers an area of approximately 5 km² and encompasses the upper part of the Dart estuary down to Anchor Stone, south of Dittisham. It covers the whole of the River Dart in the Parish, excluding the Mill Pool.
- 4.85 The site supports a diverse array of habitats and species, including a number of rare species. The estuary has an important role as a nursery ground for juvenile fish, and large areas of the site consist of intertidal mud, which is a highly productive habitat and provides feeding and resting grounds for wading and migratory birds. The site is also an important habitat for the tentacled lagoon worm (*Alkmaria romijni*), which is scarce throughout the UK and lives within a tube made of mud in sheltered lagoons and estuaries. They are particularly vulnerable to changes to their habitat.

South Hams SAC and Greater Horseshoe Bats

- 4.86 Whilst no internationally designated wildlife sites (such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar Sites) or nationally designated wildlife sites (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest) are present within the Parish, the Parish contains key habitats and species which are important to the integrity of such sites elsewhere.
- 4.87 The Greater Horseshoe Bat is one of Britain's largest and rarest bats, with a total population of about 5,500 individuals. A significant proportion of this population is found in South Devon. Greater Horseshoe Bats use the wider countryside of South Devon for the majority of their activities, including commuting, foraging, roosting, and mating. Linked to this, the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) has been designated by Natural England to help protect a population of over 2,000 Greater Horseshoe Bats.
- 4.88 To facilitate effective decision-making associated with the South Hams SAC, important strategic flyways and key foraging / sustenance zones for Greater Horseshoe Bats in South Devon have been identified using the best available scientific knowledge.

- 4.89 The eastern half of the parish, including Waddeton, is within the South Hams SAC Berry Head Greater Horseshoe Bat Sustenance Zone. This area is within 8km of the designated roosts which have been determined to potentially include critical foraging habitat and commuting routes. There are also a number of strategic Greater Horseshoe Bat flightpaths to the southeast of the Parish. The extents of the South Hams SAC's qualifying features related to the Greater Horseshoe Bat, both within and surrounding the Parish, are highlighted in the map below. Further flightpaths (not shown below) have previously been identified along the banks of the River Dart, and from the River Dart along the Mill Pool / Byter Mill Copse valley towards Yalberton.

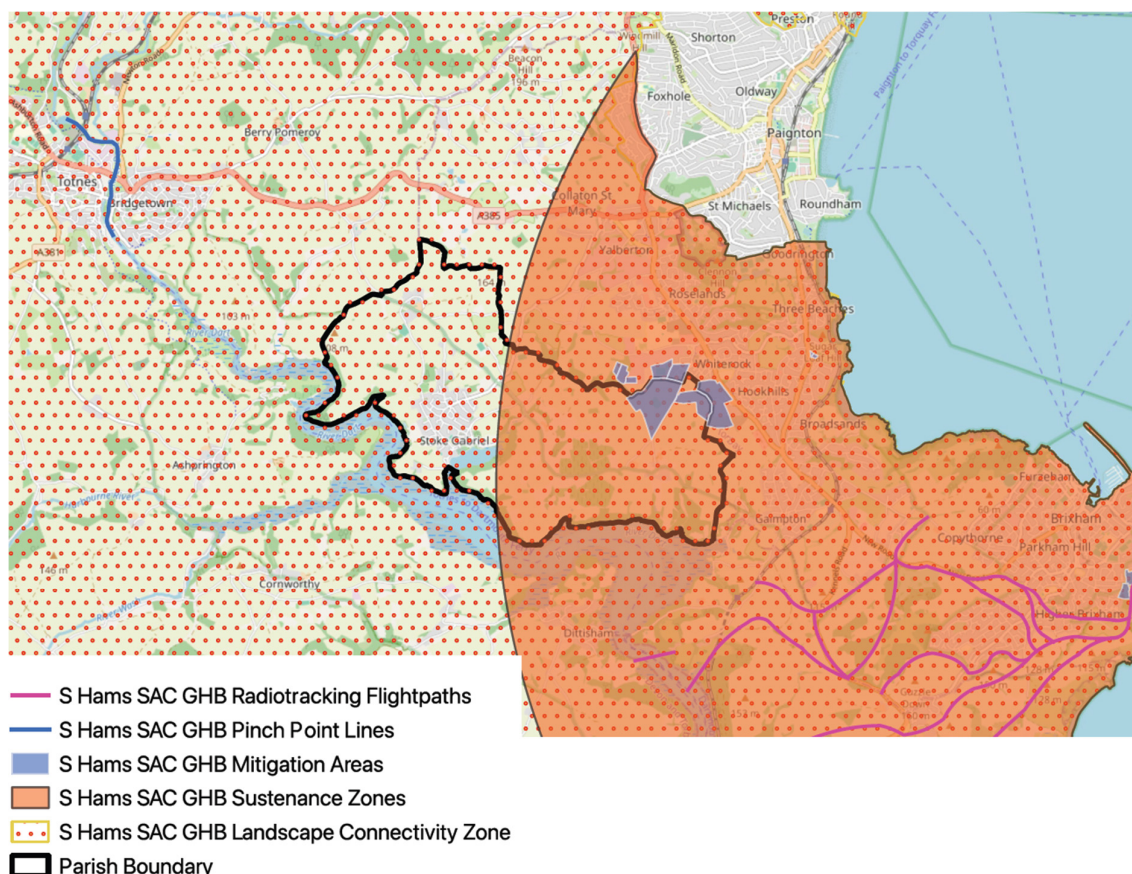


FIGURE 12: EXTENTS OF QUALIFYING FEATURES OF THE SOUTH HAMS SAC

What does the community say?

- 4.90 Community consultation undertaken on the SGNP to date has highlighted the importance of habitats and species as a key part of the Parish's character and local distinctiveness. In this context the biodiversity of the Parish was identified as a central component of what makes the Parish special for both residents and visitors alike.
- 4.91 A significant number of those responding to the SGNP questionnaire highlighted the need to protect biodiversity in the Parish, and secure environmental enhancements which would support wildlife. Trees, hedgerows and verges were identified as key parts of the Parish's landscape and villagescape which should be protected. Protection of areas of biodiversity sensitivity, such as the River Dart, orchards, woodland, the Mill Pool and the Byter Mill valley were also identified by many of those responding to the questionnaire as key priorities. This was accompanied by a desire within the community for continued and enhanced access to these assets, alongside their protection.

Policy SG7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Biodiversity sites

In considering development proposals, full account will be given to any potential adverse impacts on designated biodiversity sites, including County Wildlife Sites. Development should not take place which would lead to the loss of areas of Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitat or ancient woodland.

All development proposals will be expected to ensure that any potential adverse effects on the integrity of the Dart Estuary MCZ are avoided or mitigated.

On-site biodiversity assets and biodiversity net gain

Development proposals should maintain and enhance existing on-site biodiversity assets and deliver 'biodiversity net gain' in line with legislation, national policy and the Joint Local Plan, providing for biodiversity needs on site, where possible. Developers should seek to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development.

On-site biodiversity enhancements such as new roosting features for bats, nesting features for birds or boxes and bricks for invertebrates should be incorporated into the fabric of the development. Native hedges and flower rich meadows should be incorporated within new development where possible and appropriate.

Ecological networks

Proposals for new development should, where appropriate, provide wildlife corridors that allow wildlife to move from one area of habitat to another. Development proposals which link up existing areas of biodiversity interest will be considered favourably.

Green space and landscape buffers in development should provide new habitats through development and related planting schemes. Where ecologically relevant, fences and walls should be designed to incorporate features that allow dispersal of wildlife through areas of green space and gardens.

Where appropriate, new development should be undertaken in association with the landscape-scale enhancements proposed through, for example, the Strategic Nature Area network or in association with the national-level Nature Recovery Network.

The South Hams SAC and Greater Horseshoe Bats

Development proposals should seek to support the integrity of the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Development proposals which could have an adverse impact on the South Hams SAC or its qualifying features should comply with the following provisions:

- Commuting routes and foraging areas should be retained where they can be effectively protected and appropriately managed for bats.
- Early engagement of an ecological consultant, followed by early consultation with South Hams District Council, Devon County Council and Natural England should be undertaken to assess the site and advise on the scope of survey and mitigation that will be required.
- Mitigation proposals should be developed in close consultation with other professionals such as highways/lighting engineers, landscape architects and architects to ensure that they are realistic, achievable and deliverable and can be maintained in the long-term without creating conflicts with the needs or aspirations of highways uses and local residents.

A mitigation strategy should be submitted with planning applications, which firstly sets out how potential impacts will be avoided and/or minimised. The scope of this document will be dependent on the nature and scale of the anticipated impacts, but will need to include full details of any replacement roosts (including location and detailed design), and new connective habitat. In terms of lighting, dark corridors must be maintained around roosts, foraging areas and commuting corridors with no net increase in light levels as a result of the development in areas used by bats.

Geodiversity

Where relevant, development proposals should:

- Make a positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of geodiversity in the Parish.
- Protect County Geological Sites.

Policy SG8: Historic Environment

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.92 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich and distinct historic environment which underpins local character and a sense of place. Whilst the historic environment of the parish is under a number of pressures, including inappropriate and insensitive development and the poor management of heritage assets, there are also numerous opportunities available associated with the parish's rich historic environment.
- 4.93 The policy therefore seeks to conserve and enhance the significance of the parish's historic environment and promote opportunities for its understanding and enjoyment.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.94 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich and historic environment, reflecting its unique waterside location and setting and distinct historic evolution from the Iron Age to the present day.
- 4.95 The historic environment is already protected through various planning mechanisms implemented by Local Planning Authorities in plan-making and decision-taking. Historic England is the statutory consultee for certain categories of listed building consent and all applications for scheduled monument consent.
- 4.96 A brief overview of the key historic environment designations and sensitivities in the parish is presented below, with accompanying maps of designated and non-designated heritage assets (Figures 13 to 16). Appendix E presents a more detailed analysis of the parish's historic evolution and the features and areas of historic environment interest.

Nationally designated heritage assets

Listed buildings

- 4.97 Listed buildings are nationally designated buildings which are protected through the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.² According to the National Heritage List for England³, the Neighbourhood Plan area contains 34 listed buildings, including the Grade I listed Church of St Gabriel and St Mary, the Grade II* listed Sandridge Park and 32 Grade II listed buildings. Of these, eight Grade II listed buildings are located in Waddeton, and three Grade II listed buildings are present in Aish.

Scheduled monuments

- 4.98 The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)⁴ allows the investigation, presentation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and makes provision for the regulation of operations or activities which may affect ancient monuments and archaeological areas. Scheduled monuments are nationally designated sites which are protected under the Act. In this regard, there are two scheduled monuments within the parish, as follows:
- **Earthwork enclosures and field systems, 430m north east of Lower Well Farm:** This monument includes a group of earthworks representing settlement and farming practices of Iron Age, Romano-British and late Roman date.
 - **D-Day landing craft maintenance site on the River Dart, 560m south of Waddeton Court:** The monument includes a maintenance site built on the east bank of the River

² Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) [online] available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/9/contents>

³ Historic England (2021): 'National Heritage List for England – Advanced Search', [online] available to access via: <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/advanced-search?searchType=nhleadvancedsearch>>

⁴ Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Act (1979) [online] available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46>

Dart upstream of Dartmouth to service landing ships during the preparations, engagement, and aftermath of the 1944 D-Day landings during World War II. The site includes an arrangement of two near-parallel concrete slipways which extend out from the shore and which terminate at mean low water.

Stoke Gabriel Conservation Area

- 4.99 The Stoke Gabriel Conservation Area covers the historic core of Stoke Gabriel village and the Mill Pool.
- 4.100 The Conservation Area incorporates: the Church of St Mary and St Gabriel, Church Walk, The Barnhay and the community orchard; the former farmyards of Yarde and Stoke Farm and orchards/gardens; Paignton Road south of Rydon Cross (including the former Baptist Church and War Memorial) and the southern part of Flood Street; Stoke Hill; Coombe Shute and the area covered by the former Gabriel Court Hotel; the approach to Stoke Gabriel House and Duncannon Lane; Mill Hill and the Quay; and the Mill Pool (Figures 13 and 14 below).
- 4.101 A detailed Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan were adopted in 2007⁵. Since the preparation of these documents, the Conservation Area has seen significant change. This includes the redevelopment of the V&A car park, the redevelopment of the former Gabriel Court Hotel, and some infilling within the Conservation Area's open spaces, including between Paignton Road and School Hill. In light of these changes, there is a need to bring the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan up to date to more effectively guide changes to the conservation area which have the potential to impact on its significance.

Waddeton Conservation Area

- 4.102 The historic core of Waddeton is also a Conservation Area, featuring Listed Buildings Waddeton Court, Chapel of St Michael, remains of Waddeton Manor House, Lodge Cottage, Orchard Cottage and Tree Cottage.

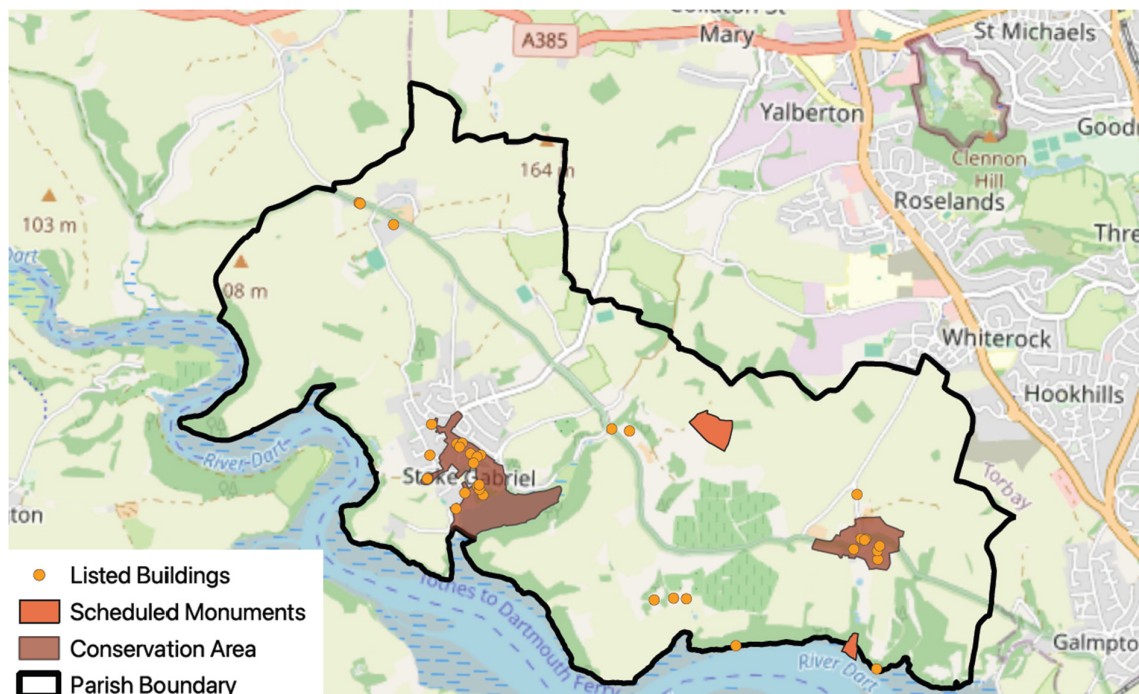


FIGURE 13: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (PARISH) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/))

⁵ South Hams District Council (July 2007)

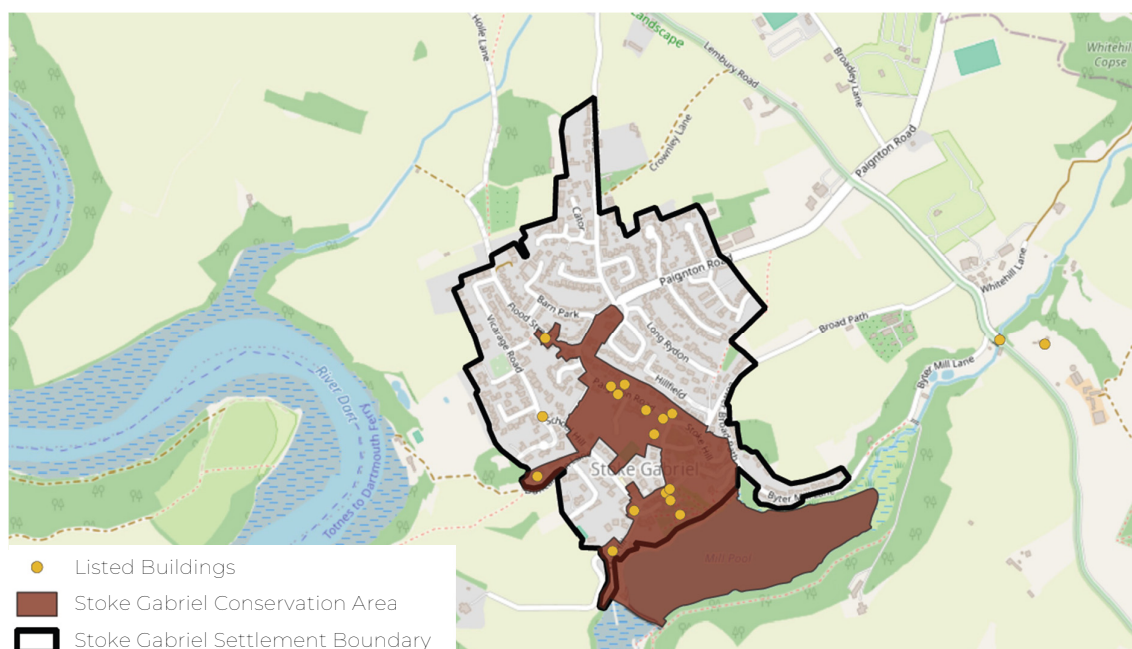


FIGURE 14: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (VILLAGE) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/))

Locally important heritage features and the parish's archaeological resource

- 4.103 It should be noted that not all of Stoke Gabriel Parish's historic environment features are subject to statutory designations, and non-designated features comprise a large part of what people in the parish have contact with as part of daily life – whether at home, work or leisure. Although not designated, many buildings and areas are of historic interest and seen as important for the community. For example, open spaces and distinctive buildings often have a local historic value, and within the Conservation Area, some non-designated buildings make a strong contribution to the significance of its historic environment. The parish also has a rich archaeological resource, reflecting its historic evolution from the Iron Age to the present day.
- 4.104 Accessed via the Heritage Gateway⁶, the Devon and Dartmoor Historic Environment Record (HER) identifies the important distinctive structures or features that positively contribute to the local distinctiveness and sense of place of the Parish. Following a review of the HER, there are 187 records which have been identified within Stoke Gabriel Parish. These incorporate a diverse range of features and areas of historic environment interest including earthworks, the War Memorial, remains of wells, kilns and mill sluices, historic field boundaries and enclosures, the site of ferry crossings, sites associated with World War II, quarries, barrows and many others. The locations of those features which comprise non-designated heritage assets are illustrated at Figures 15 and 16. A list of the non-designated heritage assets, including references to the text on the maps, is provided in Appendix E.

⁶ Heritage Gateway: 'Detailed Search' [online database] available to access via: <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

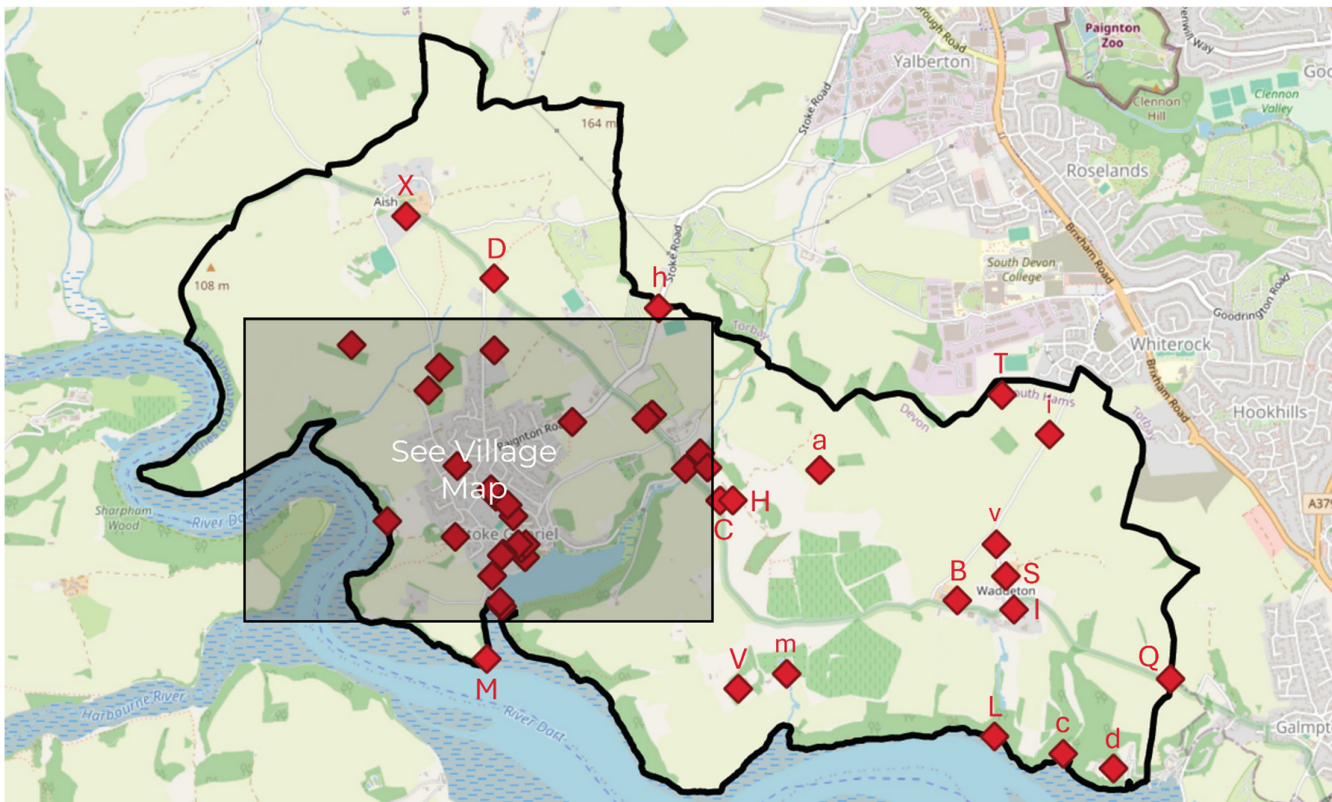


FIGURE 15: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (PARISH) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](#))

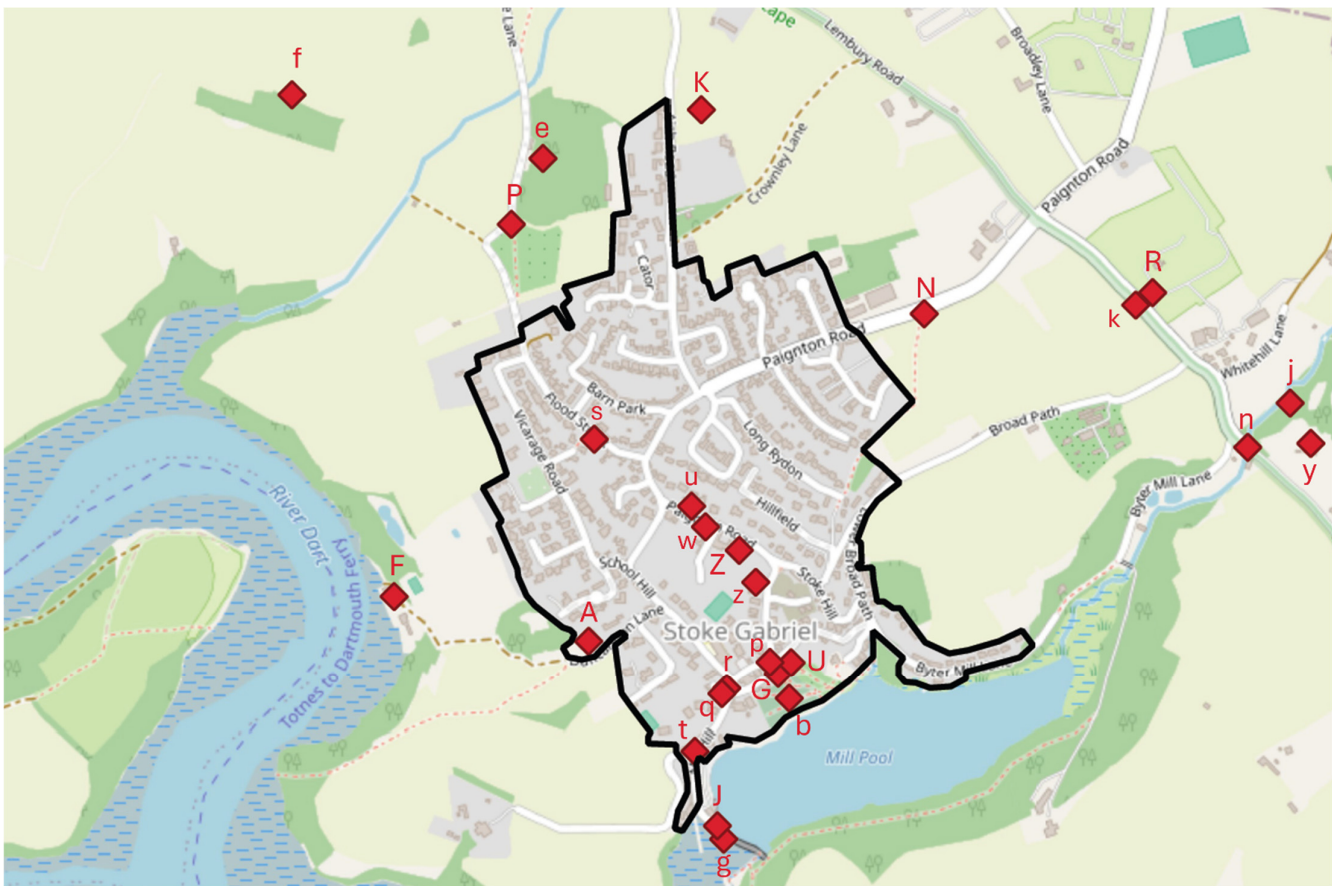


FIGURE 16: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS (VILLAGE) (map data from [OpenStreetMap](#))

What does the community say?

- 4.105 Community consultation undertaken for the SGNP to date has highlighted the importance of the parish's historic environment for both residents and visitors.
- 4.106 The parish's historic environment was identified as a key component of what makes the parish special, with historic character acting as a central draw for those living in Stoke Gabriel, Waddeton and Aish. Key heritage features such as the church, the quayside, Mill Pool, traditional orchards and the historic street scenes were identified as key assets in this regard.
- 4.107 A significant number of those responding to the SGNP questionnaire highlighted the need to conserve local character, with the historic environment being placed at the centre of these considerations. This was linked to significant concern amongst residents that incremental and insensitive development was leading to a loss of a sense of place and distinctiveness.

Policy SG8: Historic Environment

General principles for the historic environment

Development proposals should be consistent with the locally distinctive character of the parish. Proposals which do not meet these requirements will not be supported.

Proposals within or adjacent to the Settlement Boundary must be integrated into the historic landscape and settlement form with appropriate traditional boundary treatments.

Proposals which will directly or indirectly cause harm to a non-designated heritage asset (as listed in Appendix E and illustrated on Figures 15 and 16) must be fully justified with regard to the significance of the heritage asset, including to the local community, and the scale of any harm or loss. Applicants will be expected to provide an appropriate level of information to enable the significance of the asset to be determined and the impact of the development proposals upon it.

Development proposals which better reveal or enhance the significance of heritage assets, or seek to sympathetically rejuvenate underutilised assets, will be looked upon favourably. Proposals which facilitate enhanced understanding of the historic environment and increase opportunities for its enjoyment will also be supported.

In recognition of the parish's rich archaeological resource, development proposals within areas of archaeological interest will be expected at minimum to be accompanied by an initial archaeological evaluation.

Stoke Gabriel and Waddeton Conservation Areas

Development within the setting of the Stoke Gabriel and Waddeton Conservation Areas should seek to conserve and enhance their special architectural and historic interest and reinforce their character.

The design of all proposed development within a Conservation Area should be informed by and be consistent with the scale, design and character of the surroundings. It should seek to reinforce the key attributes of the Conservation Area, including high stone walls, traditional orchards, lack of street lighting, and connection to the wider landscape setting and key views. Development should seek to make use of appropriate materials and detailing to reflect local building traditions, but avoid pastiche design which poorly imitates local character. Infilling and loss of open space will be resisted, and development should preclude the loss of traditional orchards which are central to the Stoke Gabriel Conservation Area's historic significance.

Development proposals affecting a Conservation Area will be expected to demonstrate an appreciation of the key issues and opportunities identified in any Conservation Area Appraisal and/or Management Plan.

Policy SG9: Landscape Character

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.108 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich and valued landscape, much of which is protected as part of the South Devon National Landscape and/or the Undeveloped Coast under Policy DEV24 of the JLP. Landscape character is a key contributor to the Parish's local distinctiveness and sense of place and is highly valued by residents and visitors alike.
- 4.109 A key aim for the SGNP is therefore to conserve and enhance landscape character in the Parish.

1) What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.110 The landscape character of Stoke Gabriel Parish is of outstanding quality and distinctiveness. An overview of the key landscape designations, characteristics and views in the Parish is presented below.

National Landscape and Undeveloped Coast

- 4.111 Approximately 70% of Stoke Gabriel Parish is covered by the South Devon National Landscape. The Undeveloped Coast covers broadly the same area, except for land immediately north of the village. For ease of reference, the National Landscape and Undeveloped Coast are illustrated at Figure 17 below.

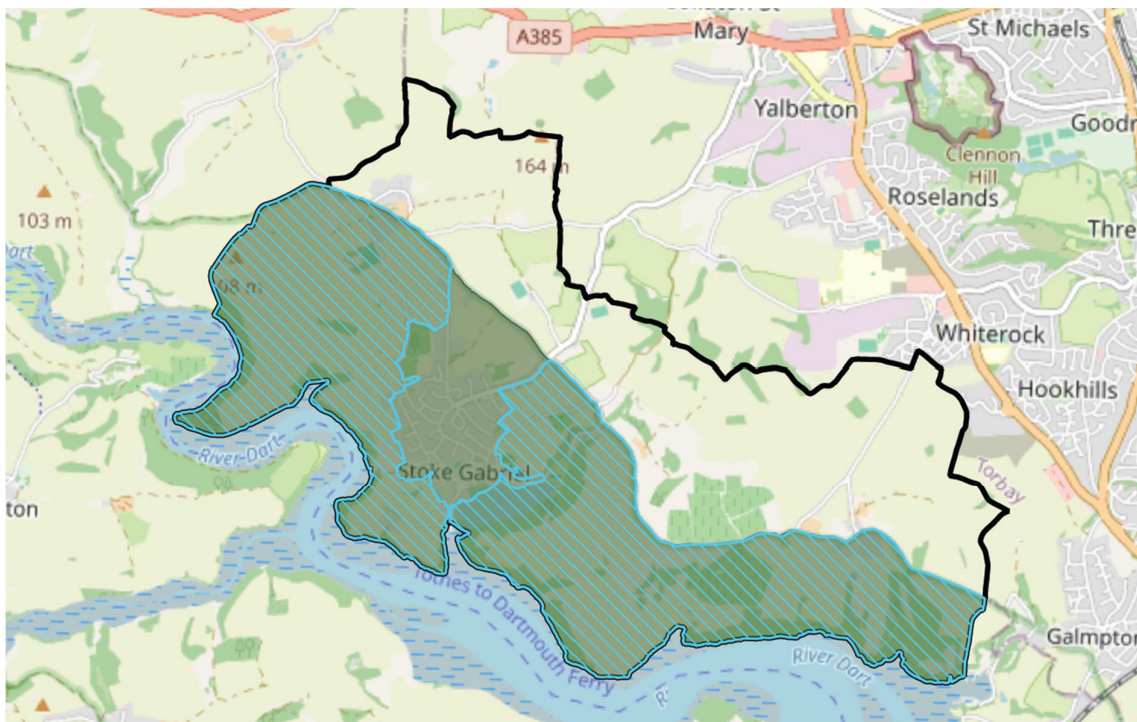


FIGURE 17: NATIONAL LANDSCAPE AND UNDEVELOPED COAST (map data from [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/))

- 4.112 National Landscapes were initially established by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The law was subsequently updated and enhanced by Part IV of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Act. In November 2023, AONBs were rebranded as 'National Landscapes'. This change was initiated by the Government to reflect the national importance of these areas, with a view to highlighting their equal place alongside National Parks in helping to achieve wider aims associated with health and wellbeing, sustainable public access, climate change and nature recovery. A National Landscape designation protects land of nationally important landscape quality, with the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape.

4.113 The South Devon National Landscape Unit is required to prepare and keep up to date a Management Plan⁷ for the National Landscape. This should define the 'Special Qualities' of the National Landscape, which summarise the unique natural beauty for which the National Landscape is designated as a nationally important protected landscape.

4.114 The ten Special Qualities of the South Devon National Landscape are set out below:

- Fine, undeveloped, wild and rugged coastline
- Ria estuaries (drowned river valleys), steep combes and a network of associated watercourses
- Deeply rural rolling patchwork agricultural landscape
- Deeply incised landscape that is intimate, hidden and secretive away from the plateau tops
- Iconic wide, unspoilt and expansive panoramic views
- A landscape with a rich time depth and a wealth of historic features and cultural associations
- A breadth and depth of significant habitats, species and associated natural events
- An ancient and intricate network of winding lanes, paths and recreational routes
- Areas of high tranquillity, natural nightscapes, distinctive natural soundscapes and visible movement
- A variety in the setting to the National Landscape formed by the marine environment, Plymouth City, Torbay, market and coastal towns, rural South Hams and southern Dartmoor

4.115 The Undeveloped Coast is established by Policy DEV24 of the Joint Local Plan and coincidentally covers broadly the same area in Stoke Gabriel Parish as the South Devon National Landscape, excluding the built-up area of Stoke Gabriel village. Any proposed development in the Undeveloped Coast should ensure it complies with Policy DEV24.

Landscape character types

4.116 In 2017 a Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was undertaken for the South Hams and West Devon.⁸ Published in June 2018, the LCA identified 18 Landscape Character Types (LCTs) in the South Hams.

4.117 Four of these LCTs cover Stoke Gabriel Parish. These are set out below, with a summary of the LCT and an overview of the overall landscape strategy for the landscape as proposed in the LCA. A map of the Landscape Character Types is provided at Figure 18.

⁷ South Devon AONB (April 2019) South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024

⁸ LUC (2017) A Landscape Character Assessment for South Hams and West Devon

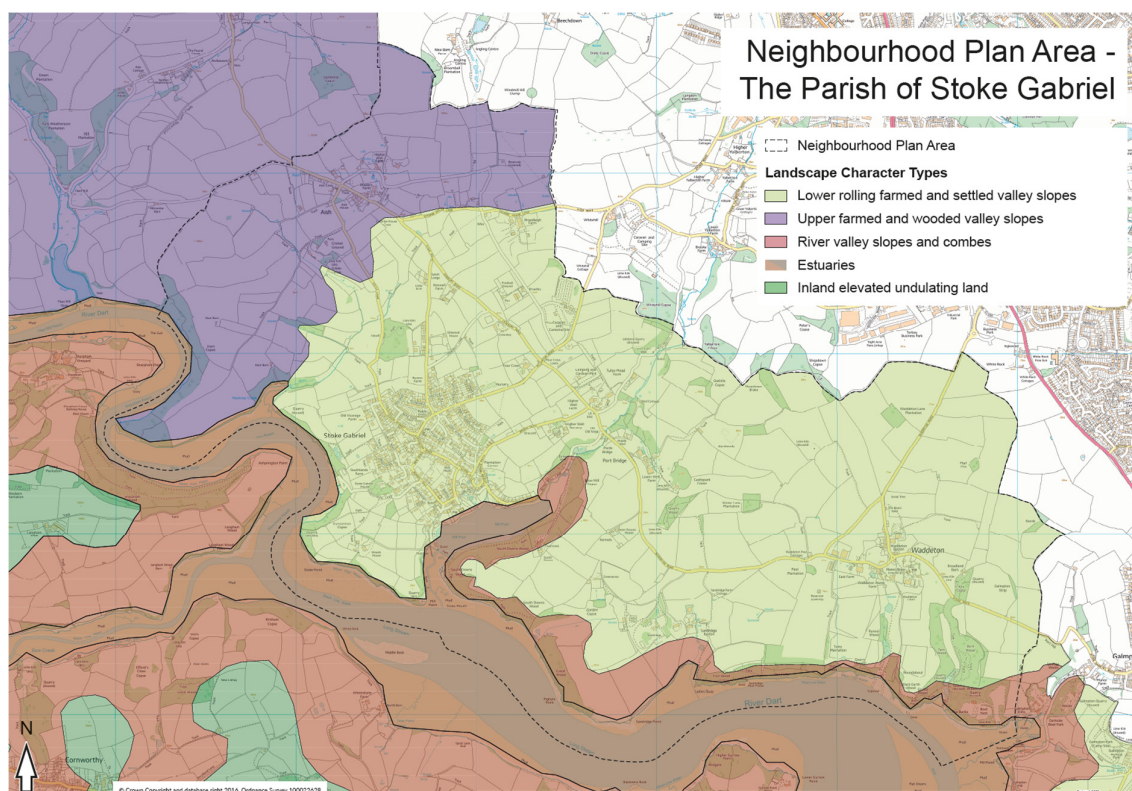


FIGURE 18: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER TYPES IN STOKE GABRIEL PARISH

4.118 ***Lower rolling farmed and settled valley slopes***

- **Which area in the Parish does the LCT cover?** Most of Stoke Gabriel village and the eastern part of the Parish, including Waddeton.
- **Summary of LCT:** Elevated undulating valley slopes and rolling hills with a well-wooded character cut by steep-sided stream valleys.
- **Overall landscape strategy for the LCT:** Protect the strong field patterns of this landscape, including the rich network of well-managed Devon hedgebanks. Manage the farmed landscape to enhance wildlife interest and local diversity restoring areas of relict traditional orchards. Protect the wooded character of the landscape, utilising new woodland planting to filter views of development. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT.

4.119 ***River valley slopes and combes***

- **Which area in the Parish does the LCT cover?** The edge of the River Dart southwards from the Mill Pool.
- **Summary of LCT:** Rounded hills and steep undulating slopes overlooking the river valleys.
- **Overall landscape strategy for the LCT:** To protect and enhance the peaceful character of the valley slopes, fringed by well-managed woodlands and fields enclosed by an intact network of species-rich Devon banks. Opportunities are sought to restore conifer plantations to broadleaves and other semi-natural habitats, creating a climate-resilient green network. Provide new recreational spaces and infrastructure links to nearby settlements.

4.120 ***Estuaries***

- **Which area in the Parish does the LCT cover?** The River Dart and the Mill Pool.

- **Summary of LCT:** Dynamic landscapes which change often with tides and weather conditions. Strongly naturalistic and tranquil with semi-natural habitats that are highly important for biodiversity. Settlements are often associated with the estuaries and they form a popular destination for both land and water based activity.
- **Overall landscape strategy for the LCT:** To protect the open character and expansive views to and from the estuary, ensuring new development on its fringes is incorporated into its landscape setting. The cultural heritage and natural evolution of the estuary is conveyed through sensitive interpretation, and local communities are involved in planning for future landscape change as a result of sea level rise and changes in coastal erosion patterns. Recreational pressure and in particular water-based activity is sensitively managed to retain the secret, tranquil character of inland creeks.

4.121 *Upper farmed and wooded valley slopes*

- **Which area in the Parish does the LCT cover?** Aish and the northern part of the Parish.
- **Summary of LCT:** Elevated undulating valley slopes and rolling hills with a well wooded character cut by steep sided stream valleys.
- **Overall landscape strategy for the LCT:** Protect the strong field patterns of this landscape, including the rich network of well-managed Devon hedgebanks. Manage the farmed landscape to enhance wildlife interest and local diversity restoring areas of relict tradition orchards. Protect the wooded character of the landscape, utilising new woodland planting to filter views of development. Maintain the sparse settlement pattern and avoiding a spread of suburban influences from larger settlements adjacent to the LCT.

Key landscape features

4.122 The parish's key landscape features include:

- The extensive network of field boundaries, some of Saxon or earlier origin, constructed as stone-faced banks using local Devonian limestone or as double-faced, mortared walls, again usually of local limestone and of later construction.
- Several distinctive stone stiles at the entrance to footpaths from the public road consisting of a single, thin, vertical limestone slab with limestone steps and side pillars. Examples are located at the outer end of "the narrows", Hoyle Lane; and at the Galmpton end of Stoke Gabriel Road.
- Several large boulders of red Permian sandstone, the harder remains of the stratum that once overlaid the whole area and gave many fields their distinctive red/orange soil colour. One such boulder lies at the upper entrance to Higher Well Farm, another inside the entrance to Waddeton Barton farmyard. Many older walls, especially at Waddeton, contain smaller dressed stones of this material.
- The remains of the fortified Romano-British farmstead on the hilltop east of Lower Well Farm.
- The Mill Pool dam, probably of late Norman construction, which encloses the eastern portion of the creek and originally provided the base for a two-wheeled corn mill.
- Over a dozen abandoned limestone quarries, many with the remains of lime kilns.
- Hoyle Copse, a complete example of a limestone quarry with its intact lime kiln, adjacent coppice wood for fuel and paddock for the ponies that transported the stone and timber. Owned and maintained by the Parish Council and open to the public.
- The ancient yew tree in the grounds of the Church of St Mary and St Gabriel.
- The Parish Orchard, next to the churchyard, one of the last of many cider orchards in the parish and now the venue for the revived annual Wassail.
- A lack of high voltage electricity pylons.

4.123 Most of the key landscape features listed above are mapped at Figure 19, however others do not lend themselves to identification in this way and other features may yet be discovered during archaeological or construction works. The map at Figure 19 should therefore be interpreted as illustrative rather than definitive, i.e. where one of the above features is not identified on Figure 19 below, it should nonetheless still be recognised as a key landscape feature.

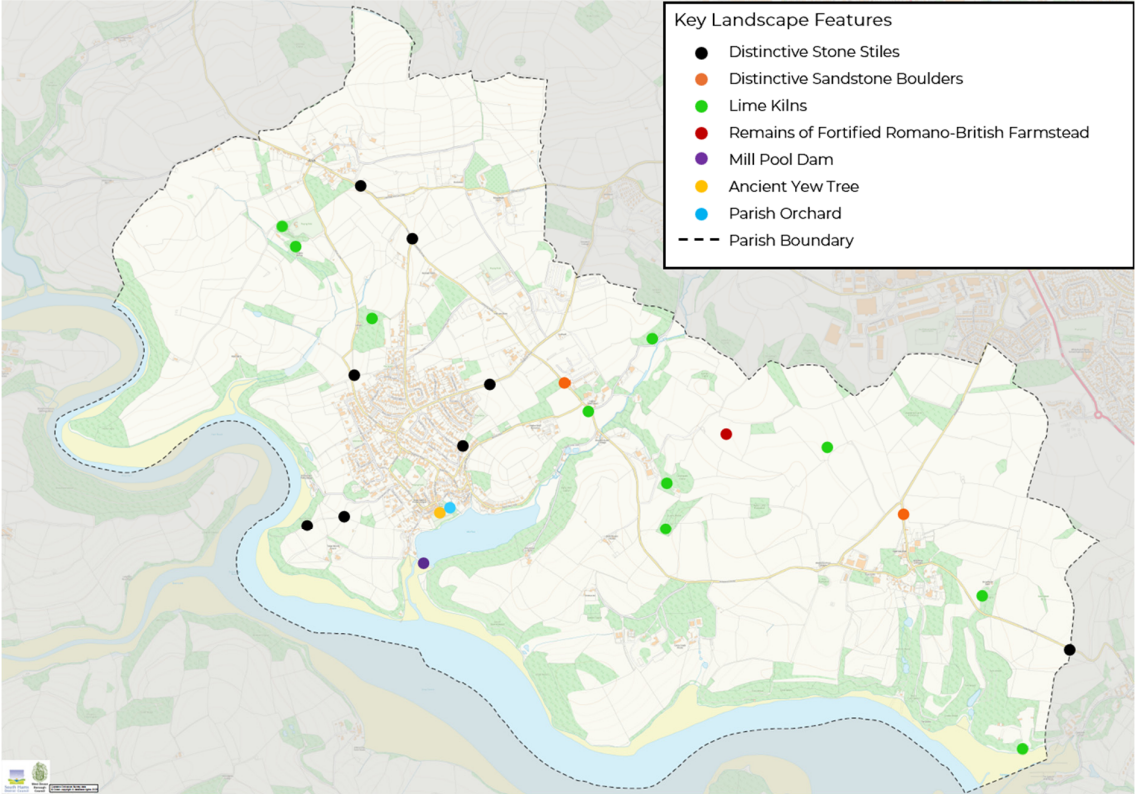


FIGURE 19: KEY LANDSCAPE FEATURES



FIGURE 20: STONE STILE ON STOKE GABRIEL FOOTPATH 3, NEAR DUNCANNON LANE



FIGURE 21: EXAMPLE OF A COMPLETE LIME KILN AT HOYLE COPSE

What does the community say?

- 4.124 Community consultation undertaken for the SGNP to date has highlighted the importance of the Parish's landscape character for both residents and visitors alike.
- 4.125 The landscape character of the area was identified as a central component of what makes the Parish special, with local character acting as a central draw for those living in the Parish.
- 4.126 A significant number of those responding to the SGNP questionnaire highlighted the need to conserve landscape character. This was linked to significant concern amongst residents that key views were being affected by incremental and uncontrolled development, leading to a loss of a sense of place and local distinctiveness.
- 4.127 The River Dart, the Mill Pool, woodland and the Byter Mill valley were identified by many of those responding to the questionnaire as key landscapes. Trees, hedgerows, Devon Banks and verges were identified as key parts of the Parish's landscape and villagescape which should be protected. Traditional orchards were also highlighted as a key component of local distinctiveness. This was accompanied by a desire within the community for continued and enhanced access to the landscape, and for views from Public Rights of Way to the landscape to be protected.

Policy SG9: Landscape Character

South Devon National Landscape

Major development⁹ within the South Devon National Landscape will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances where it is specifically designed to meet the identified local needs of the Parish and is designed to ensure that development will not cause undue harm to the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape.

Development within the South Devon National Landscape will be expected to conserve and enhance the National Landscape's Special Qualities. Any developments should have regard to the South Devon AONB Management Plan 2019 – 2024 or its subsequent replacement.

Landscape character

⁹ As defined in the NPPF (2024, para 190)

Development proposals will be supported where they can demonstrate that they would not have an adverse impact on the landscape character of Stoke Gabriel Parish.

Development should reflect the distinctive characteristics of the Landscape Character Type within which it sits, and demonstrate how the proposal relates to its location in terms of landscape character, setting and visual effects. Development proposals must clearly demonstrate how they will:

- i. Avoid the widening and/or straightening of characteristic narrow, winding lanes (or demonstrate how such modification is required for road safety purposes and can be accommodated with minimal damage to landscape character);
- ii. Retain the field pattern of Devon banks and hedges and minimise damage to trees, bushes, historic features and gateposts within them;
- iii. Repair and/or replace any characteristic natural landscape features that are affected, in accordance with a survey of all existing trees, Devon banks and hedgerows;
- iv. Retain, where present, traditional orchards;
- v. Maintain the undulating character of the landscape;
- vi. Be appropriate to the small scale and intimacy of the landscape and preserve the sense of place;
- vii. Effectively screen or blend new buildings into the shape and colour of the landscape, so as to reduce the visibility of houses from other areas of Stoke Gabriel Parish, the National Landscape and neighbouring parishes and provide suitable strategies for avoiding or minimising their visual impact;
- viii. Incorporate existing and proposed landscaping and demonstrate how the landscaping is likely to look once it has reached maturity; and
- ix. Not cause adverse impact on the parish's key landscape features as listed above.

Proposals for major development will be expected to be accompanied by a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.

Policy SG10: Key Views

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.128 Stoke Gabriel Parish has a rich and valued landscape, the majority of which is nationally protected as part of the South Devon National Landscape. Landscape character is a key contributor to the Parish's local distinctiveness and sense of place and is highly valued by residents and visitors alike. Landscape character is protected by Policy SG9.
- 4.129 Specific views as experienced by people are related to, but different from, the landscape in a more general sense. Therefore a further key aim for the SGNP is to protect key views in the Parish in their own right and protect them from adverse effects of development.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.130 An assessment of key views in the Parish was undertaken in early 2020. The purpose of this exercise was to identify those views which are integral to enjoyment of wider landscape character in the Parish, and as such should be protected.
- 4.131 To identify views worthy of protection, several assessment criteria were used, taking into account accessibility from a Public Right of Way, the view showing a range of features rather than one particular object, and the view possessing at least one of the following values - aesthetic, historical, recreational, biodiversity, or tranquillity.
- 4.132 The selection of key views has been informed by the key views survey and consultation event in January 2020 and the associated report, all of which form part of the Evidence Base.
- 4.133 Figure 22 below highlights the identified key views in the Parish.

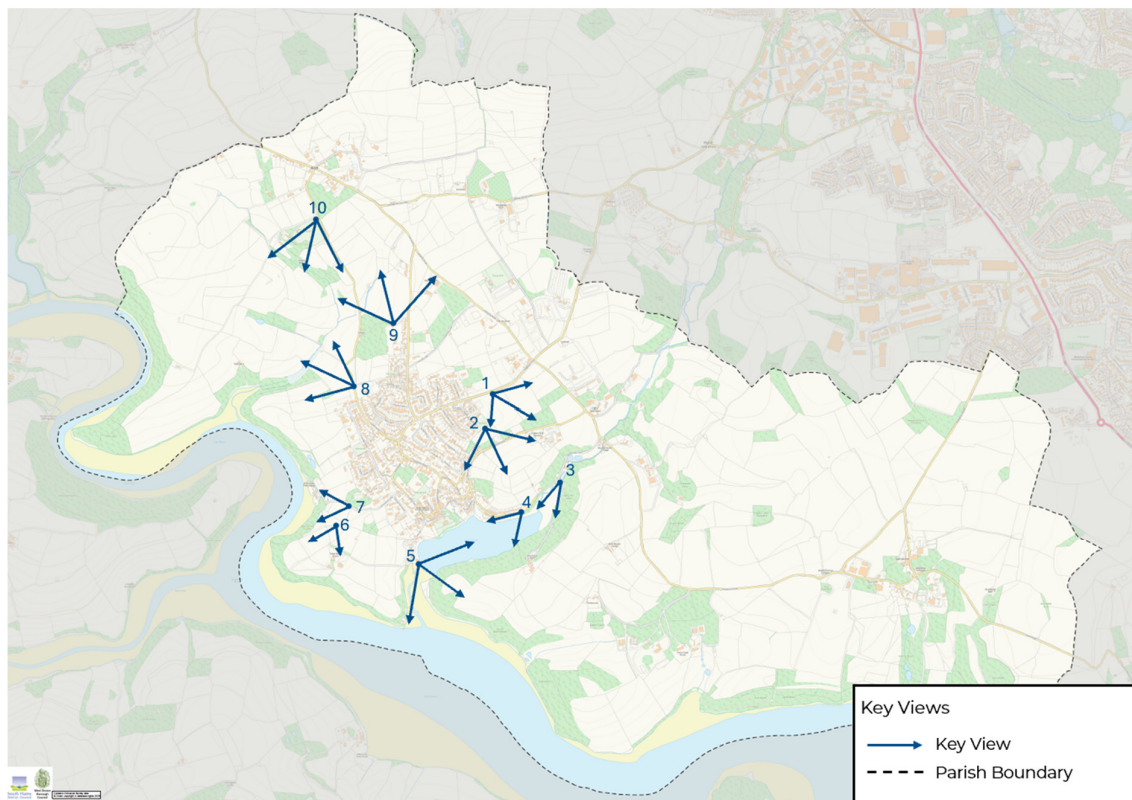


FIGURE 22: KEY VIEWS

- 4.134 Photographs of the Key Views are presented on the following pages.



KEY VIEW 1: VIEW FROM NORTH END OF STOKE GABRIEL FOOTPATH 6, LOOKING EAST AND SOUTH.



KEY VIEW 2: VIEW FROM STOKE GABRIEL FOOTPATH 6 NEAR HIGHER WELL ROAD AND ELM TREE DRIVE, LOOKING SOUTH



KEY VIEW 3: VIEW FROM EAST END OF MILLPOOL, LOOKING SOUTHWEST



KEY VIEW 4: VIEW FROM BYTER MILL LANE, LOOKING SOUTHWEST



KEY VIEW 5: VIEW FROM SOUTH END OF MILL HILL, LOOKING EAST AND SOUTH



KEY VIEW 6: VIEW FROM STOKE GABRIEL FOOTPATH 3, LOOKING SOUTHWEST



KEY VIEW 7: VIEW FROM DUNCANNON LANE, LOOKING WEST



KEY VIEW 8: VIEW FROM HOYLE LANE, LOOKING NORTHWEST



KEY VIEW 9: VIEW FROM HOYLE COPSE, LOOKING NORTH



KEY VIEW 10: VIEW FROM STOKE GABRIEL CRICKET GROUND (JE EASTLEY MEMORIAL FIELD), LOOKING SOUTH

What does the community say?

- 4.135 In terms of key views in the Parish, the community were asked to identify what they considered to be the key views to protect in the village.

Policy SG10: Key Views

Key Views are identified on Figure 22. Proposed development that would be visible within a Key View will only be supported if it can be demonstrated that the key elements of the view can continue to be enjoyed, including key features contributing to landscape and villagescape character. Proposals will not be supported which comprise buildings or other structures where the height and/or mass obstructs or undermines a Key View.

Proposals which rise significantly above the average roof height of surrounding development, or are proposed on previously undeveloped areas on the settlement edges, should set out a description of the views and vistas crossing and into the site and describe the nature of the impact or harm to the view from the proposals. This will consider the cumulative impact on the view from any existing unimplemented development proposals and identify any mitigating measures to be incorporated into the development as necessary.

Policy SG11: Dark skies

What is the policy seeking to achieve?

- 4.136 Dark night skies have been identified through community consultation as a central component of what makes Stoke Gabriel Parish special for residents. Given the relative lack of light pollution in the Parish when compared with surrounding areas, a key aim for the Neighbourhood Plan is to limit light pollution and conserve dark night skies.
- 4.137 This policy therefore seeks to maintain the Parish's dark night skies through limiting light pollution from new development. This is with a view to supporting the rural character of the Parish, enhancing tranquillity, supporting health and wellbeing, facilitating energy efficiency and limiting impacts on wildlife.

What is the evidence behind the policy?

- 4.138 Stoke Gabriel Parish enjoys significantly lower levels of light pollution than surrounding areas. The map extract at Figure 23 highlights the difference in light pollution between the Parish and adjoining locations, including the Torbay conurbation.¹⁰

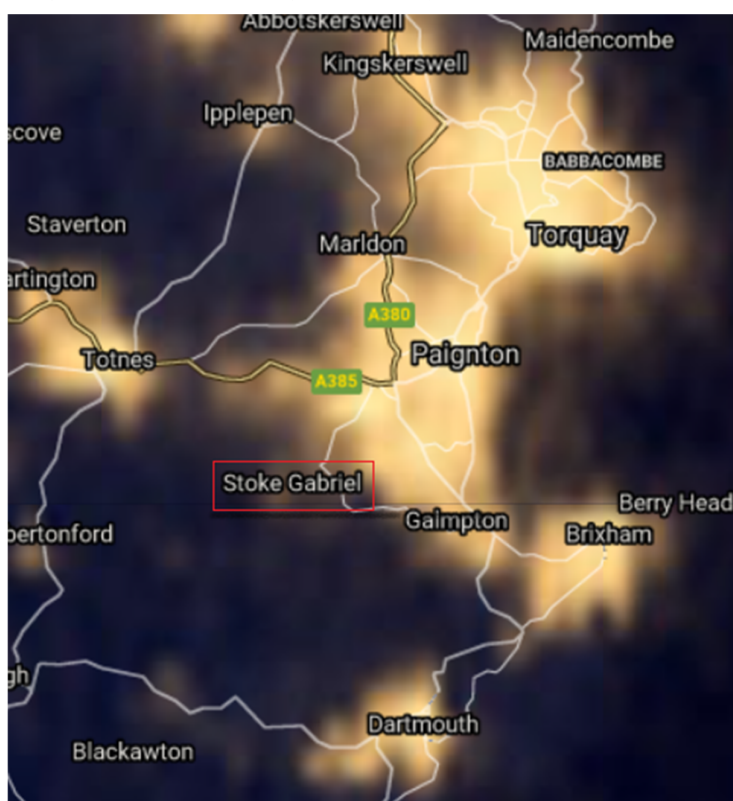


FIGURE 23: LIGHT POLLUTION IN THE VICINITY OF STOKE GABRIEL PARISH

- 4.139 Light pollution comes in many forms, including sky glow, light trespass, glare, and over illumination. Light pollution undermines enjoyment of the countryside or the night sky, especially in areas with intrinsically dark landscapes such as the Dart Estuary. Research has shown that light pollution has adverse impacts on health and wellbeing, including through contributing to sleep disorders, obesity, depression, diabetes and other issues.

¹⁰ The map extract is from <https://blue-marble.de/nightlights/2012>. Using combined data published by NASA from satellite pictures taken in April and October 2012, this project mapped night lighting across the globe.

Light pollution also indirectly undermines the efficient use of energy and climate change mitigation.

4.140 There is also increasing awareness of the impact that light pollution can have on wildlife, by interrupting natural rhythms including migration, reproduction and feeding patterns. In the context of Stoke Gabriel, this is important given the role of ecological corridors in the parish for nocturnal species. For example, in relation to Greater Horseshoe Bats, increased illumination of foraging habitat through internal, external and vehicular lighting sources are a key impact on the species, and increased illumination of sections of hedgerow/tree lines, including from internal, external and vehicular lighting sources impacts on commuting routes.¹¹

4.141 Currently, street lighting in the Parish is limited to one location in Stoke Gabriel village, Rydon Acres.

What does the community say?

4.142 Consultation undertaken for the SGNP to date has demonstrated the importance of the Parish's dark night skies for the local community.

4.143 A significant proportion of those responding to the SGNP questionnaire highlighted the need to conserve the dark skies enjoyed in the parish. A lack of street lighting and low levels of light pollution were highlighted by a large number of respondents as important parts of the Parish's local distinctiveness which should be conserved.

4.144 In this respect dark night skies were identified by consultees as a central component of what makes the Parish special.

Policy SG11: Dark Skies

Development proposals in Stoke Gabriel Parish should seek to limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light sources. There will be a presumption against street lighting of new developments or any other lighting that affects the dark night skies of the Parish.

Street lighting:

- There will be a presumption against street lighting of new developments.
- Where street lighting is proposed, a statement setting out why a lighting scheme is required, the proposed users, and the frequency and length of use in terms of hours of illumination should be prepared.
- Proposals for street lighting shall not materially alter light levels outside the development.

Security lighting:

- Security lighting should be controlled by photoelectric switches and should be on the minimum time setting.
- Sensors which can be tripped by road or footway users should be avoided.
- Lighting should be directed down and mounted below the property boundary height.
- Alternative security measures, such as an inside light that is on a time switch, or CCTV should be considered as an alternative to external lighting.

Potential impacts of lighting proposals on wildlife will be considered in accordance with Policy SG7: Biodiversity and Geodiversity.

¹¹ Devon County Council. South Hams District Council, Teignbridge District Council and Torbay Council (October 2019) South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Greater Horseshoe Bats Habitats Regulations Assessment Guidance <https://www.devon.gov.uk/environment/wildlife/wildlife-and-geology-planning-guidance>

