

Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2030



June 2019

Submission Version (2)



CHURCH MINSHULL NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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1 FOREWORD

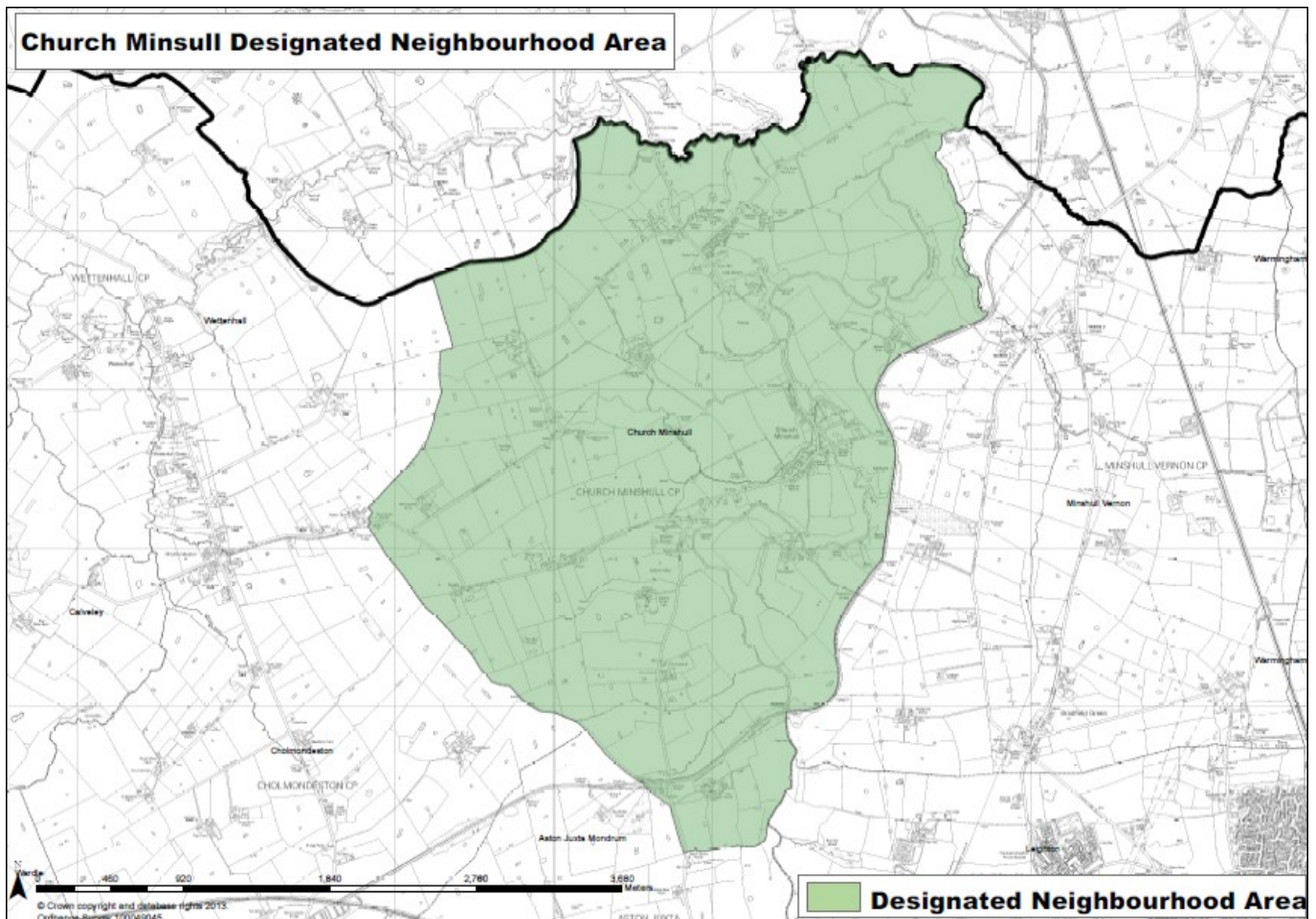
- 1.1 The Localism Act of 2011 gave new rights and powers to communities. It introduced Neighbourhood Planning into the hierarchy of spatial planning in England, giving communities the right to shape their future development at a local level. It is a powerful tool in that it has statutory weight and must be taken as a material consideration in planning decision-making.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework states ‘Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Plans can shape, direct and help deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies of the area, or undermine those strategic policies.’
- 1.3 All Neighbourhood Plans must:
 - have appropriate regard to national planning policy;
 - contribute to sustainable development;
 - be in general conformity with strategic policies in the development plan for the local area;
 - be compatible with EU obligations and human rights requirements.
- 1.4 Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the adopted local plan. In 2017 Cheshire East adopted the first part of a new Local Plan which sets out the strategic planning framework for the Borough to 2030. Church Minshull is in the rural area, where the draft local plan indicates that in the interests of sustainable development and the maintenance of local services, growth and investment should be confined to proportionate development at a scale commensurate with the function and character of the settlement and confined to locations well related to the existing built-up extent of the settlement, although it may be appropriate for local needs to be met within larger settlements, dependent on location.
- 1.5 The Local Plan is being prepared in two stages with the part two plan, the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document (SADPD) currently being prepared. A first draft of the SADPD was published for consultation in Autumn 2018. This document establishes a development framework for the Local Service Centres and Other Settlements and Rural Areas (where Church Minshull is located), in addition to detailed development management policies. Church Minshull has not been designated as an infill village, and the whole parish is classed as being within open countryside.
- 1.6 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan was produced by the Parish Council and members of the community following a Parish Council Meeting in January 2016. A steering group was formed who consulted and listened to the community on a range of issues that influence the well-being and sustainability of Church Minshull’s rural community. Every effort has been made to ensure

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that the vision, aims, objectives and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan reflect the views of the majority of Church Minshull residents, whilst having regard to local and national policies.

- 1.7 Following the pre-submission consultation on the draft Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan, adjustments have been made to reflect representations received.

FIGURE A - MAP OF DESIGNATED AREA



2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 HISTORY

- 2.2. Church Minshull is a village and civil parish in the unitary authority of Cheshire East and the ceremonial county of Cheshire, England. The village is located approximately 5 miles (8.0km) north west of Crewe and to the west of the River Weaver and the Shropshire Union Canal. The modern village centre is a designated conservation area which contains many houses of Tudor style architecture. A large area in the east of the parish falls within the Weaver Valley Area of Special County Value.
- 2.3. In the Domesday Book of 1085, this Saxon hamlet had the name 'Maneshale', which means 'the shelving piece of land belonging to a man called Monn'. By 1130 the name had changed to Munschulf, 'Church' being added in 1266 and the spelling changed to Church Munschull by 1289. The Minshull family took their name from the village and were Lords of the Manor, living at Minshull Hall until 1366.
- 2.4. The oldest house in the village is Wades Green Hall, mainly constructed in 1554, but with parts of the East end built in the 1300s. The original Minshull Hall was built in the 11th Century, but only a portion of the moat remains. The existing Hall is now a farmhouse of Victorian brick with some interior beamed walls, dated 1654. Tudor and Jacobean 'black and white' or 'magpie' houses attract visitors to the village, as they do across Cheshire.
- 2.5. Recorded in November 1824 were many trades and crafts carried out in the village, including Blacksmith, Wheelwright, Joiners, Cordwainer, Gamekeeper, Bricklayer, Weaver, Tailor, Carrier, Victualler, Thatcher a Laundry Woman and many domestic servants. There was a Shop Keeper, Post Mistress, Butcher, 2 School Mistresses and one Schoolmaster, Farmers and Farm Workers, Paupers and Spinsters. When the railway works came to Crewe in 1843, men from Church Minshull walked to Crewe to work in the heavy engineering workshops.
- 2.6. As in so many small communities travel has become easier and the need to be self sufficient has ceased. Closure of the Primary School in 1982 and of the Shop, Post Office and Petrol Filling Station at Lea Green later, made travel out of the Village essential. Over the years changes to properties have happened sometimes imperceptibly however the biggest impact on the centre of the village was the development of Village Farm from dairy to housing, in 1999. Twenty dwellings were made by converting the farm house and existing barns and adding 12 new houses.
- 2.7. The population has changed little in over 150 years. In 1851 the population was 380, and in 2011 this had risen only to 425. The historic maps at Figure B highlight how little Church Minshull has changed over the years.

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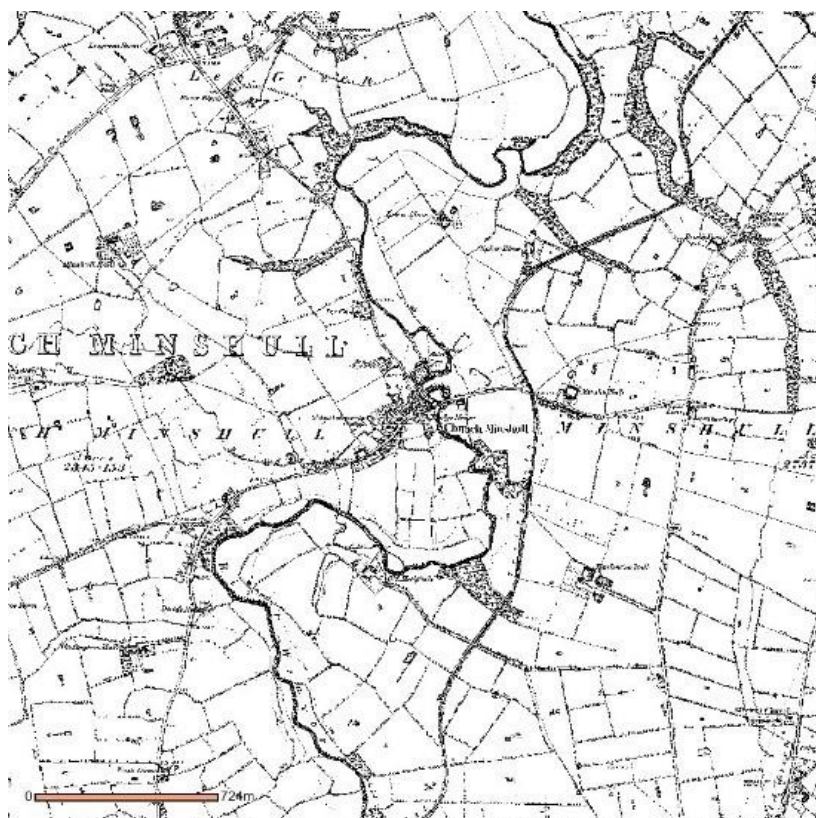
- 2.8. Church Minshull contains 22 buildings that are recorded in the National Heritage List for England as designated listed buildings, a sizeable amount for such a small village. Of these, four are listed at Grade II*, and the others are at Grade II. A high proportion of the listed buildings are houses or cottages, many of which are timber-framed, and date back to the 17th century. The Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and the River Weaver pass through the parish. Five structures associated with the canal are listed, three bridges, an aqueduct, and a former warehouse. The other listed buildings are farmhouses, farm buildings, the village church and its gates, a public house, and two bridges.
- 2.9. Church Minshull Conservation Area was designated in 1969. It was reappraised in 1998 and 2007.

FIGURE B - CHURCH MINSHULL HISTORIC MAPS

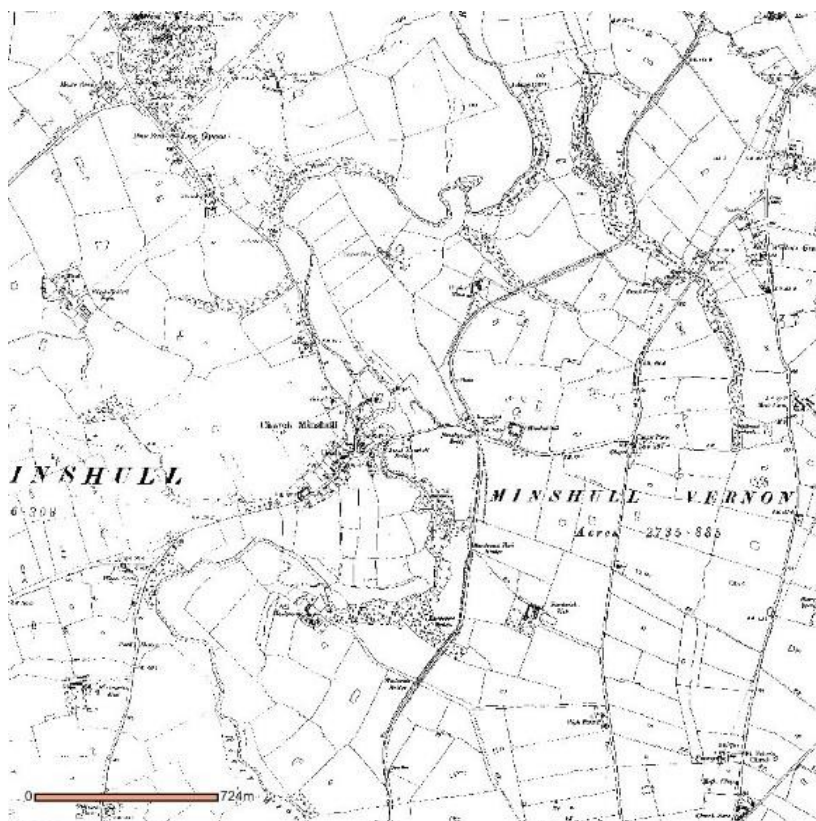


Church Minshull at 1851

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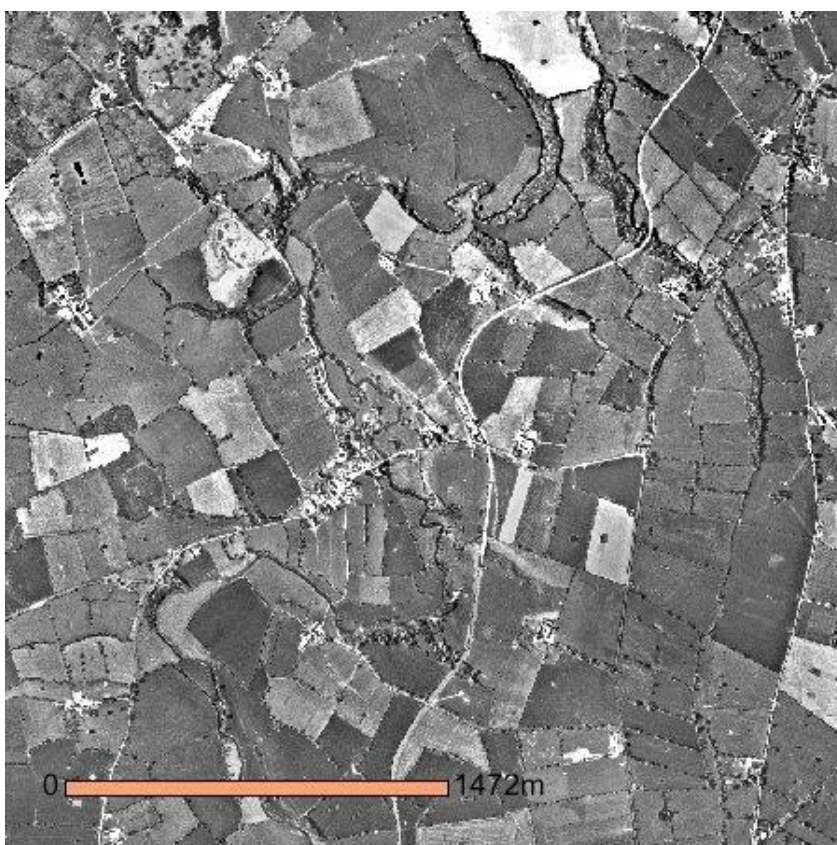


Church Minshull at 1875



Church Minshull at 1910

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Church Minshull 1970s



Church Minshull 2000

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2.10 Landscape

2.11 The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment 2008 classifies the parish of Church Minshull as lying partly within the East Lowland Plain and partly within the River Valleys classification. The key characteristics of the River Valleys classification include

- Steep sided river valleys
- Meandering river courses
- High levels of woodland along the river and tributary valleys, of which a significant proportion is ancient woodland
- Tributaries in wooded cloughs
- Grassy banks - including acid grassland
- Bridges and viaducts
- Isolated halls and farms



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2.12 Away from the river valley the Parish is classified as lying within the East Lowland Plain, which is characterised by -

- Flat and almost flat topography
- Small to medium sized fields (up to 8ha) used for pasture and arable farming
- Mainly hawthorn hedgerows and hedgerow trees, some mixed species hedgerows
- Dispersed hamlets and farms with predominantly low density, and some nucleation
- Intensive farming and large farm businesses
- Large number of small water bodies
- Scattered species-rich grasslands
- Riparian ancient woodlands and field sized coverts
- Medieval moated sites



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2.13 BUILT CHARACTER AND DESIGN

2.14 Cheshire East Council has recently prepared a design guide

https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/supplementary_plan_documents/design-guide-supplementary-planning-document.aspx

2.15 The guide is geared principally toward larger scale housing proposals, but is also relevant to smaller scale development. The intention is to both guide and improve the quality of new development but to also provide a basis for Cheshire East to reject design that does not contribute in a positive way to Cheshire East as a place. The guide highlights that Cheshire East is a fantastic part of the country, where picturesque market towns nestle within unspoilt countryside. It is a very special and unique place that should be protected. Its character and attractiveness underpins the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough and its residents.

2.16 Five settlement character areas have been identified, and Church Minshull falls within 'Market Towns and Estate Villages', which predominantly comprises of dispersed, nucleated villages and hamlets (with one large settlement, Nantwich).

2.17 The design guide highlights that the interaction of the settlement edges with the wider open countryside is very different to the north of the borough, due to the nature of the wider rolling landscape in which the settlements sit. The boundaries range from native hedgerows, post and wire stock fences to timber and concrete posts and panel fences.

2.18 In the settlement character area of Market Towns and Estate Villages, brick is the predominant building material for external walls, with both Flemish and English Garden Wall bonds being common. Red or dark brown is the most common colour, and often there is variation in colour within and between bricks producing a textured and patterned effect. Roofing material is predominantly slate or clay tile, and tall chimney stacks are a prominent feature of many buildings. Variety is provided by the mix and juxtaposition of housing typologies including terraces, semi-detached and detached properties, often along the same street.

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2.19 CHURCH MINSHULL TODAY

2.20 Church Minshull is a village of around 425 people, living in 205 households. Based on the 2011 census, we know that:

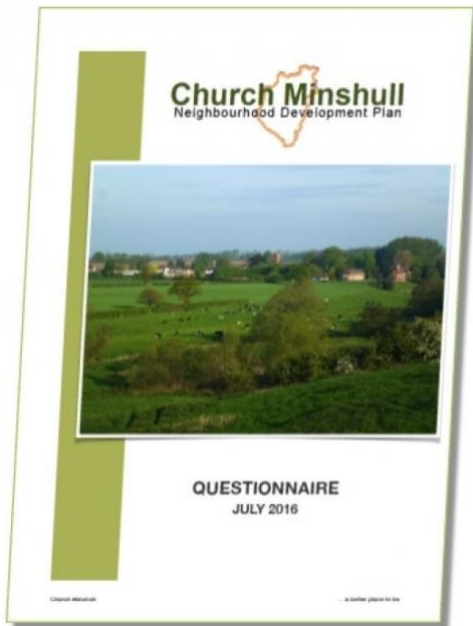
- The population is older than the average in England, with less children under the age of 16 than the national average
- The community is fortunate to have nobody living in the most deprived 20% areas of England and fewer than the national average of children living in poverty.
- Average weekly income is higher in Church Minshull than in England as a whole, with fewer than average benefits, council tax or pension credit claimants living in the parish
- There are less economically active residents than nationally, but a larger than average number of residents who are self-employed, work 49+ hours per week, and who work from home
- Church Minshull has a large proportion of detached homes (44.7%) with 14% semi-detached properties and 16.3% terraced properties, compared to the national averages of 22%, 30% and 24% respectively. There are far fewer purpose built flats (1.4% compared to the national average of 16.7%) but substantially more Park Homes accommodation (22.3% compared to the national average of 0.4%).
- Church Minshull also has a higher proportion of owner occupied homes than average, and house prices are slightly lower than average, with an affordability ratio of 14 (median house price v median income). This is slightly lower than the national average of 15.4
- Church Minshull households are less overcrowded than average, but there are a slightly higher number of houses without central heating and more people than average in fuel poverty
- In Church Minshull, the car is relied upon as a mode of transport, with more cars per household than the average. Only 2.1% of people use public transport to get to work, compared to the national average of 11%
- Church Minshull is further away than average from key services such as a job centre, secondary school, GP, Pub or Post Office, leading to difficulties for those without a car
- The population density is low, with only 0.37 people per hectare, compared to the national average of 4.1 persons per hectare.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan is a community plan and must derive its vision, objectives and policies from the community. Church Minshull has a thriving and engaged community, and a well-supported Community Led Plan, which focussed on issues and actions not solely land use based had been published in 2014, with a number of the suggested actions already having been successfully completed. Communication and consultation, in various forms, has also played a major role in formulating the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2 It was considered essential to:
- Promote a high degree of awareness of the project
 - Invite residents to join the Steering Group
 - Encourage everyone to contribute to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan
 - Promote consultation events and provide regular updates on the status of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development
- 3.3 Key to this programme was publicity to gain residents engagement. This was gained via public meetings, postal information and electronic media via the Church Minshull Village Arena website.
- 3.4 Further information on consultation methods and the results from the consultations can be found in more detail in the Consultation Statement that accompanies the submitted version of the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.5 The suggestion to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan was first raised at a Parish Council meeting in November 2015, and the decision to agree to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Church Minshull was resolved at the Parish council meeting on 4th January 2016. A public meeting was advertised and held on January 12th 2016. The meeting was exceptionally well supported with approximately 66 residents attending and it was apparent that there was support for undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.6 The proposed Neighbourhood Area for the Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan was subject to consultation from 18th February 2016 to 31st March 2016 and was formally designated on 31st March 2016.
- 3.7 A questionnaire was delivered to every household in the parish during July 2016. 165 responses were received, an excellent response rate of almost 75% which again reflects the engaged and proactive community. The questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed with the draft vision and aims and objectives for Church Minshull drawn up by the steering group, and asked for opinions and comments regarding issues covering housing; whether residents were in housing need; the character of Church Minshull; the countryside and environment; the local economy and travel patterns.

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- 3.8 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan was submitted to the list of statutory and other bodies provided by Cheshire East Council as required under Regulation 14, Town and Country Planning, England Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012. Following the Regulation 14 consultation, a number of amendments were made to the Neighbourhood Plan.



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4 VISION AND AIMS

- 4.1 The vision was prepared by the steering group, and one of the questions in the questionnaire sent to all households was whether or not respondents agreed with the proposed vision. 98.77% of respondents supported the vision, which has therefore been included as the basis for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4.2 The vision for Church Minshull is -

VISION

We want Church Minshull to thrive as a vibrant and distinctive Parish and to evolve and grow in a sustainable way. We want the Parish to continue to provide an outstanding quality of life for current and future residents.

- 4.3 The following aims were identified and supported, and the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan seek to deliver these aims -

AIMS

- To provide housing which is in keeping with existing properties as local need arises
- To maintain the rural character of Church Minshull
- To maintain and improve the high quality natural environment
- To encourage a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all its residents and supports a distinctive and a flourishing local economy

5 HOUSING POLICIES

- 5.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan has the following aim:
To provide housing which is in keeping with existing properties as local need arises
- 5.2 New Housing Developments

POLICY H1 - NEW HOUSING

The whole of Church Minshull Parish is designated as 'open countryside', and new housing will be permitted that accords with Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan. In circumstances where the restrictive approach set out in Policy PG6 cannot be applied, then small scale development (under ten dwellings) that does not significantly harm the landscape or character of the area will be supported, where such schemes adjoin the main settlement of Church Minshull. Any such developments must be appropriate in scale, design and character of the locality.

- 5.3 Evidence and Justification
- 5.4 Church Minshull is a rural settlement. No strategic need has been identified to deliver housing beyond local needs in the Cheshire East Local Plan. This Neighbourhood Plan recognises that in order to maintain a sustainable and flourishing community, some housing development may be appropriate to meet local housing needs. However, one of the main responses from the consultations was that people value the open countryside setting of Church Minshull, and it is the aim of the Neighbourhood Plan that new housing development will remain of a scale and in locations appropriate to the open countryside, as accords with Policy PG6 of the Cheshire East Local Plan (appendix 1).
- 5.5 Development in Church Minshull has historically been at a slow and steady rate. According to the 2011 census, the population of the village was 425. In the 1851 census, taken more than 150 years previously, the population was 380. The rural feel and open countryside are greatly valued by the local community, and large scale development would be out of character with the village.
- 5.6 In the Cheshire East Local Plan, the village is defined as being outside settlement limits and in open countryside, where new housing is normally only permitted through conversions or replacement dwellings; limited infilling; limited affordable housing through rural exception sites; or for development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset. The protection of the open countryside from urbanising development is a principal objective of the Local Plan Strategy. Indeed, one of the policy principles

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underpinning the emerging Local Plan vision is to develop brownfield sites, where possible, to minimise the use of greenfield and the open countryside.

- 5.7 The questionnaire that was sent out to all residents in Church Minshull showed overwhelming support of over 94% for the housing aim of providing housing in keeping with existing properties as local need arises. There was also support for infill development (89%); small rural sites of up to six dwellings (81%) and the redevelopment of brownfield land for housing (94%).
- 5.8 The housing policy H1 will allow for housing appropriate to the open countryside setting of the Parish as has historically largely been the case in Church Minshull. The policy recognises that should the circumstances arise where the restrictive approach set out in the Cheshire East Local Plan Open Countryside policy PG6 cannot be applied (for example because the Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land), then small scale development (under ten dwellings as defined in Local Plan Policy SC6) will be supported where such schemes adjoin the main settlement of Church Minshull and are appropriate in design and character to the locality. This is in order to remain in keeping with the character of Church Minshull and to continue to protect the open countryside.
- 5.9 Housing Mix -

POLICY H2 - HOUSING MIX

Having regard to viability and/or other material considerations, in order to meet the housing needs of the community of Church Minshull new homes on developments of 3 or more should include a mix of house size and type - including where possible detached, semi-detached, terraced properties and bungalows and have regard to viability and/or other material considerations.

- 5.10 Evidence and Justification
- 5.11 In December 2016 Cheshire East Council prepared a Housing Advice Note for Church Minshull. This can be viewed at <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html> The advice note recommends that should any small scale developments come forward in the plan period, developments should provide for a range of housing types, tenures and sizes, with a particular emphasis on smaller market housing to balance the housing stock profile and provide more opportunities for younger residents including first time buyers as well as some downsizing opportunities.
- 5.12 The Housing Advice Note highlights that the proportion of the very elderly

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population is greater than the Cheshire East average and that there are a large proportion of households who will become very elderly over the plan period. However, it is recognised that whilst there is a need to consider carefully the provision of specialist housing for the elderly, the viability of such provision and the need to ensure that sheltered/ retirement provision is close to services and facilities, may lead to such accommodation being better provided for in larger settlements. Again, smaller properties available for downsizing and for residents to maintain their independence for longer would be a way of helping to address this issue.

- 5.13 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire showed a large level of support (90.13%) from respondents agreeing that, where appropriate, new housing developments should include a mix of size, design and type of building. There was a mix of responses as to what house type respondents would like to move to within the parish, were they to move. Approximately 20% wanted a larger home, 36% wanted a smaller home, 6% a cheaper home, and almost 20% a level or physically adapted home. Likewise, there was a mix of responses as to what type of property respondents would like to move to, with 43% of those who replied desiring a 3 or 4+ bed roomed house, 28% choosing a bungalow, 8% a park home, and 17% a 1 or 2 bed roomed property. Less than 2% of respondents were hoping to move to a flat. To reflect the needs of the community, a mix of property types and sizes would therefore be appropriate, should any small scale housing developments come forward in the plan period.
- 5.14 With respect to Park Homes, the number of residents currently represents 22% of the population in the village (see section 2.20). As this represents a significant proportion of the village, located at some distance from the centre of the village, it is not considered that this number of park homes should increase further.
- 5.15 This policy reflects the outcome and recommendations of the Housing Need Advice Note, and is also in line with the NPPF which strives to deliver a wide choice of homes for the needs of different groups in the community, with a range of sizes, types, tenures to reflect local need, and Policy SC4 (Residential Mix) of the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy.

6 CHARACTER, DESIGN AND HERITAGE POLICIES

- 6.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan has the following aims:
- To provide housing which is in keeping with existing properties as local need arises
 - To maintain the rural character of Church Minshull
- 6.2 Character and Design

POLICY CDH1 - CHARACTER AND DESIGN

The design and layout of new developments should demonstrate how the relevant features and design characteristics identified in the Cheshire East Design Guide (2016) and the Church Minshull Character Assessment (2018) have been incorporated in the proposals.

New development should take the following into account, where appropriate:

- a) Development adjoining open countryside should provide a sympathetic transition between the rural and settlement landscape, through appropriate landscaping, design and boundary treatments.
- b) Development should be bordered by boundary treatments appropriate to its location.
- c) Development should safeguard existing significant trees, hedgerows and walls.
- d) Development should be set back from the main highway.
- e) Development should create gaps in frontages to enable views to the countryside.
- f) Development should include traditional materials and detailing in new designs, reflective of the high quality traditional features present in the village
- g) Development should reflect the existing density of nearby properties.
- h) Development should provide appropriate landscaping for the localised context.
- i) Development of, and within close proximity of the defined Character Buildings should be sensitively designed with special regard to design, setting, materials and street scene.
- j) Development at the gateways to the core settlement should be treated sensitively incorporating a traditional style and vernacular.
- k) New development should be focussed within and adjacent to the heart of the settlement.
- l) Development should support features beneficial to wildlife.

- 6.3 Evidence and Justification.
- 6.4 The rural setting of Church Minshull within the landscape is important to the local community. The Neighbourhood Plan group has prepared a Character Assessment of Church Minshull to help inform the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. The survey work was undertaken in early 2017, and the

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report completed in 2018. The report assesses the character of the village, including the local design vernacular, elements of the landscape, and significant local features. The Parish can be defined as having a core residential area and a rural, agricultural hinterland. The Character Assessment can be viewed at <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>

- 6.5 It is important that any new development is of high quality design, enhancing the local character of the parish. Church Minshull has a distinctive character with attractive buildings set within a rural landscape, which is valued by the community. Every effort needs to be adopted to ensure new developments respect this. The National Planning Policy Framework states that developments should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
- 6.6 The Character Assessment gives detailed information on the layout and structure of the village.
- 6.7 The Character Assessment defines a number of Character Buildings. These include 22 buildings that are recorded in the National Heritage List for England as listed buildings, four being Grade II* and four being Grade II listed (see section 2.8). These character buildings are significant landmarks within the village, and in order to ensure their continued value to the setting and character of the Parish, the Assessment recommends that development of and within close proximity to these buildings should be undertaken sensitively with special regard to design, setting, materials and street scene.



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6.8 Key gateways into the village are defined on the Key Map.



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- 6.11 Additionally, Cheshire East Council has recently prepared a design guide that has been out for consultation. This can be found at:
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/supplementary_plan_documents/design-guide-supplementary-planning-document.aspx
- 6.12 The guide highlights that the character and attractiveness of Cheshire East underpins the quality of life enjoyed by the Borough and its residents.
- 6.13 Church Minshull falls within 'Market Towns and Estate Villages', which predominantly comprises of dispersed, nucleated villages and hamlets. In the north, where Church Minshull is located, fields are small to large, regular, semi-regular and irregular fields boundaries are demarcated with hedgerows and singular trees. The combination of the flat topography, low hedgerows and post and wire fences creates a large scale landscape with extensive views across the Cheshire Plain. Small copses and coverts are scattered across the area with a low proportion of ancient woodland.
- 6.14 The design guide highlights that the interaction of the settlement edges with the wider open countryside is very different to the north of the borough, due to the nature of the wider rolling landscape in which the settlements sit. Built form which fronts on to a street or lane should be bordered by boundary treatments in keeping with their location.
- 6.15 In order to reflect and enhance the character of Church Minshull, the Cheshire East Design Guide and the Church Minshull Character Assessment should be consulted on all new development proposals.
- 6.16 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed with the aim 'to maintain the rural character of Church Minshull'. Over 99% of respondents agreed with this aim, showing huge community support. There was also support of over 95% for suggested proposals outlined in the questionnaire that new development should reflect the character of the Parish, particularly buildingscale, traditional building materials, design and density; and new development should safeguard existing trees, hedgerows and walls and incorporate new tree and hedgerow planting as well as boundary walls.
- 6.17 One of the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework is to secure well designed places. Developments should respond to local character and history, whilst not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.



6.18 Important Views and Vistas

POLICY CDH2 - IMPORTANT LOCAL LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

Development Proposals must not significantly harm, individually or cumulatively, the setting of Church Minshull or characteristic features within the local landscape.

6.19 Evidence and Justification

- 6.20 The rural setting of Church Minshull within the landscape is important to the local community, and in particular there are specific characteristic features which should, where possible, be preserved, along with the setting of Church Minshull within the open countryside.
- 6.21 The report assesses the character of the village, including the local design vernacular, elements of the landscape, and significant local features. The Character Assessment can be viewed at <https://www.villagearena.org/information/cm-np.html>
- 6.22 The Character Assessment identifies character buildings and key gateways (see Figure C - Key Map of Church Minshull). These character buildings are significant landmarks within the village, and in order to ensure their continued value to the setting and character of the Parish, the Assessment recommends that development of and within close proximity to these buildings should be undertaken sensitively with special regard to design, setting, materials and street scene.
- 6.23 The key gateways are important in defining the approach and setting the style of the village. The Character Assessment recommends that any development at these gateways must be treated sensitively and incorporate traditional style and vernacular, in order to reflect their importance to the setting and character of Church Minshull.
- 6.24 Additionally, Church Minshull has a conservation area (see Policy CDH3) and development within the Conservation Area should be designed to ensure a truly contextual and harmonising change that will enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

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6.25 Heritage and Conservation

POLICY CDH3 - HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION

a) Proposals which conserve and enhance Church Minshull's historic assets and their setting will be supported, particularly if the proposals would help retain the assets such as footpaths, the canal, public house, the church and the village hall.

b) Proposals for development must take into account the scale of any possible harm or loss and the significance of any heritage assets and will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that substantial benefits will be achieved when weighed against the harm or loss. Measures should be put in place to avoid or minimise impact or mitigate damage.

c) Any proposal for a new building or external modification to any existing building within the Conservation Area shall be designed to ensure a truly contextual and harmonising change that will enhance the character of the Conservation Area. Such proposals must take account of any potential detriment to the existing appearance and unique identity of the area as described in the Church Minshull Conservation Area Appraisal 2007 or any updated documentation.

d) Proposals which preserve the heritage and vibrancy of the canal will be supported.

6.26 Evidence and Justification

6.27 Church Minshull is fortunate to have a very long and rich heritage, even appearing in the Domesday survey as 'Maneshale'. Church Minshull contains 22 buildings that are recorded in the National Heritage List for England as designated listed buildings, a sizeable amount for such a small village. Of these, four are listed at Grade II*, and the others are at Grade II.

6.28 The Grade II* listed buildings are Wade's Green Hall, dating from the early 17th century, a partly timbered partly brick farmhouse; Minshull Hall Farmhouse, which dates from the late 17th century; the timber framed Mill house, dated 1697; and St. Bartholomew's Church, dating from 1702, in the neoclassical style and built on the site of a previous timber framed church.

6.29 A high proportion of the other listed buildings are houses or cottages, many of which are timber-framed, and date back to the 17th century. The Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and the River Weaver pass through the parish. Three structures associated with the canal are listed, a bridge, an aqueduct, and a former warehouse. The other listed buildings are farmhouses, farm buildings, St. Bartholomew's gates and piers, the Badger public house, and three bridges.

6.30 These heritage assets are an essential part of Church Minshull's character and

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are valued by the community. It is important that they are protected from inappropriate development and, where possible, enhanced.

6.31 Church Minshull Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969, is shown in Figure D.

6.32 FIGURE D - CHURCH MINSHULL CONSERVATION AREA



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- 6.33 The Conservation Area was reappraised in 1998 and again in 2007. Eleven of the parish's Listed Buildings lie within the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal <https://www.villagearena.org/doc/D36345.pdf> gives detail on the boundary of the Conservation Area; the topographic framework; spatial quality; architectural character; building materials; natural elements; land uses; relationship to external surroundings; negative elements; and principal visual elements which should be taken into account for any development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area.
- 6.34 The Church Minshull Conservation Area Appraisal highlights:-
- There are long views across the Weaver Valley which contribute to the identity of the village
 - Undulating terrain and steep inclines are rare in this part of Cheshire, making it impossible to confuse Church Minshull with other villages
 - There is substantial native tree cover set in large copses, particularly noticeable from public footpaths
 - Views from the canal towpath show the village silhouetted by farmland set amongst copses which filter out modern development - the more substantial buildings in the village and the central roofscape of the older core are pre-eminent
 - The village is based on linear form around a strongly curved road, with development principally contained to single plot depth from the back edge of the road
 - The main sense of focus is provided by the Church because of its visual domination and visibility from distance. The church tower is a visual reference point and can be seen from well outside the settlement edges.
 - The village is enhanced by the value and quality of its surroundings - the open countryside is evident all round
 - Building alignment in the centre of the village is more intense at the northern end of the settlement on the B5074, characterised by strong edges formed by walls or buildings defining the back edge of the pavement. At the southern end of the village on the B5074 there is more dispersed plot development and larger plots, with buildings sitting away from the immediate back edge of the pavement
 - The predominant alignment of buildings is for them to be constructed with the roof ridge parallel to the road. Incidental buildings are orientated in a fashion which adds spatial variety
 - Church Minshull is characterised by buildings in the 'black and white' tradition constructed largely in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
 - Brick and stone buildings and infrequent solid brick buildings elsewhere in the village add to the architectural character
 - Roofs are predominantly covered in grey Welsh slate, with a number being in plain clay tiles and the former school house having red and blue clay tiles

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- Boundaries are in a tradition of low/medium height stone walling often with hedging on top, or combinations of brick or stone; wavey elm fencing; or Cheshire railings. This limited amount of boundary treatments add to the strong and identifiable character of Church Minshull.
 - Trees and hedges play an important role forming focal points, a transition from countryside to the built fabric and as boundary elements
 - Large individual buildings such as farmhouses and the mill contrast with smaller artisan dwellings, which establish the 'grain' of the built fabric
 - The perception is of a settlement that is solidly rural in nature with no depth or suburban form to it
- 6.35 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed that new development will have regard to the Conservation Area within the village. Over 96% of respondents agreed with this proposal. 100% of respondents agreed that the Conservation Area should be protected and reviewed, highlighting the real importance the history and heritage of the village is to the community.
- 6.36 One of the aims of the NPPF is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

7 ENVIRONMENT POLICIES

- 7.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan has the following aim:-
To maintain and improve the high quality natural environment

7.2 Footpaths and Towpaths

POLICY ENV1 - FOOTPATHS AND TOWPATHS

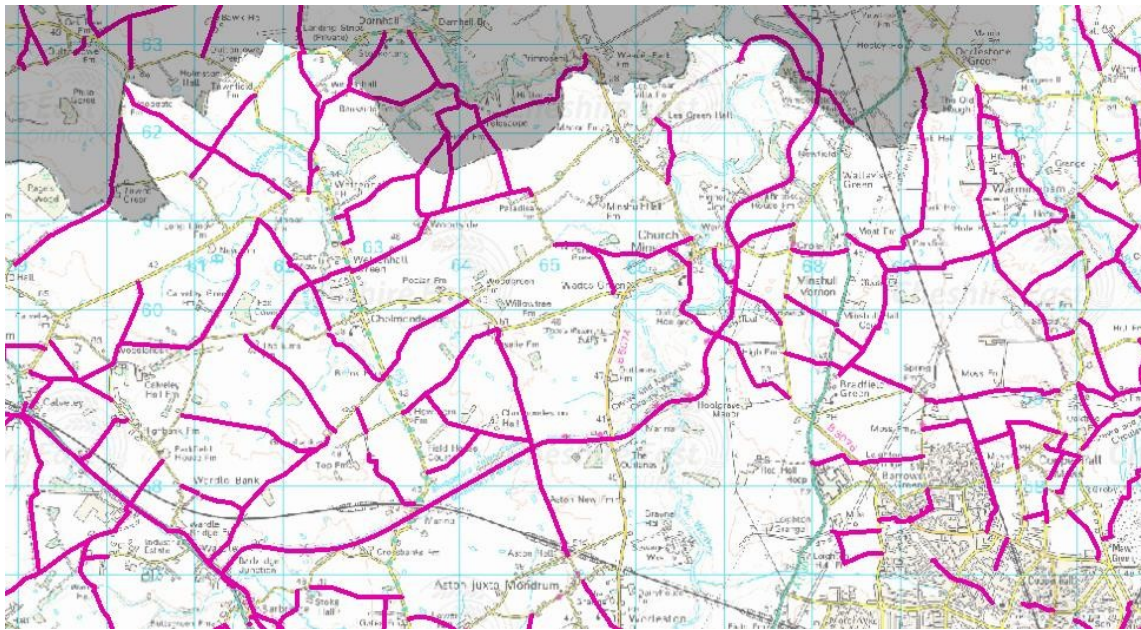
Proposals to maintain and enhance the network of public footpaths and the canal towpath will be supported as being beneficial to the community for health and wellbeing. Additions, connectivity, links and improvements to the existing network of public footpaths will be sought in connection with any new developments, where viable and practical.

Proposals which lead to the loss or degradation of any footpath or the towpath will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances. Proposals to divert public rights of way must provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.

- 7.3 Evidence and Justification
- 7.4 Church Minshull has a number of public footpaths that allow wonderful views and access to the countryside. The large extent of these paths can be seen on Figure E - map of footpaths.
- 7.5 The Shropshire Union Canal runs through the parish, with the canal towpath affording excellent opportunities for walking and cycling through the countryside, with the Aqueduct Marina being a real asset to the community.
- 7.6 The Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed with the aims of maintaining and promoting public footpaths and walking routes in the Parish, and that any new developments should incorporate footpaths and cycle ways to link up parts of the Parish with the centre of the village. 98% and 90% of respondents agreed respectively. Additionally, there were many comments detailing the difficulties which can be experienced walking through the village or to the canal towpath, due to the lack of footpaths and pavements. 98% of respondents agreed that the promotion of safer routes within the Parish should be encouraged.

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7.7 FIGURE E - MAP OF FOOTPATHS IN CHURCH MINSHULL PARISH



- 7.8 The Neighbourhood Plan aims to protect the existing network of footpaths and the canal towpath, and take any opportunities to enhance, connect, improve or add to the existing provision.
- 7.9 This policy seeks to deliver the NPPF's planning aims of conserving and enhancing the natural environment, and also of promoting healthy communities. The NPPF highlights that policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and that opportunities should be sought to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing public rights of way.
- 7.10 Trees and Hedgerows

POLICY ENV2 - TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Hedgerows and trees which make a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity and landscape character of the surrounding area must be preserved, and development which would adversely impact upon them will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, where the benefits of development are considered to outweigh the benefit of preserving trees and hedgerows, development will be permitted subject to appropriate mitigation. The retention of trees and hedgerows in situ will always be preferable.

New developments will, where appropriate, be required to include suitable plantings of trees and hedgerows.

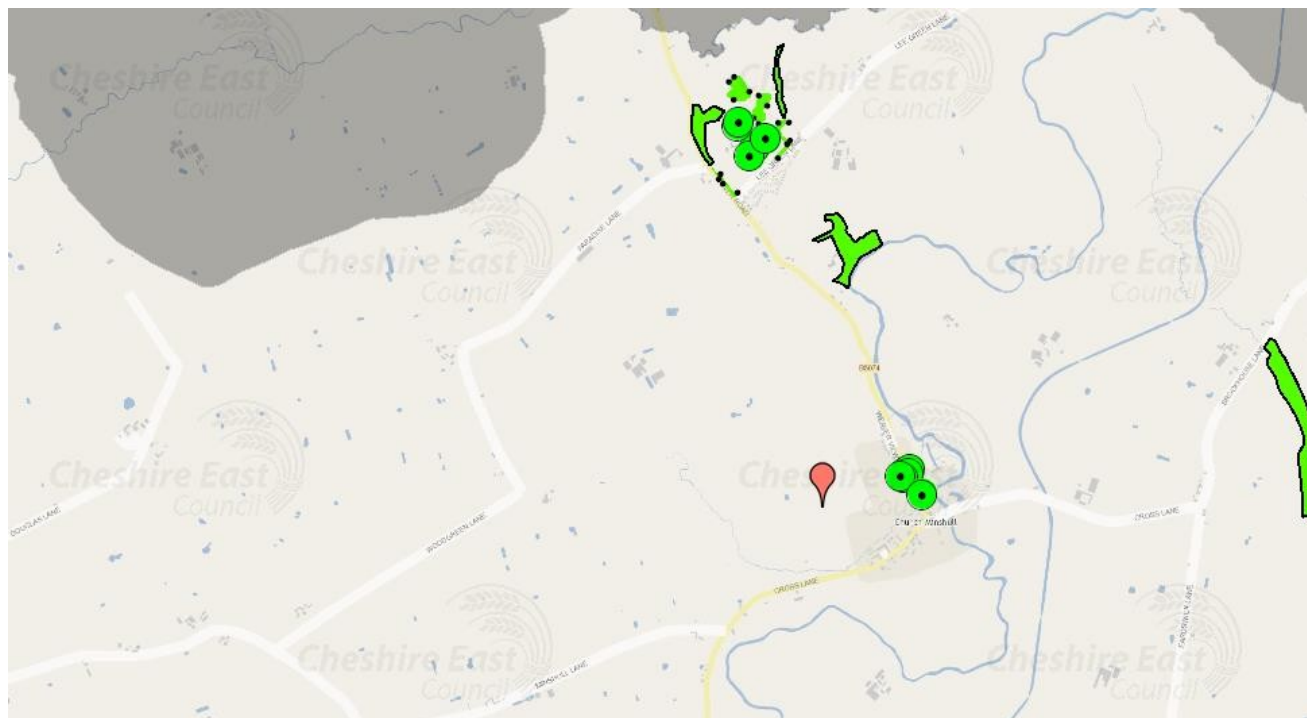
Verges trees and hedgerows along country lanes should be retained.

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- 7.11 Evidence and justification
- 7.12 The Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment 2008 classifies the parish of Church Minshull as lying partly within the East Lowland Plain and partly within the River Valleys classification. Key characteristics include high levels of woodland along the river and tributary valleys, of which a significant proportion is ancient woodland, along with hawthorn hedgerows and hedgerow trees, and some mixed species hedgerows.
- 7.13 The Church Minshull Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) described how Church Minshull is characterised by strongly wooded areas occurring at strategic locations within or on the edge of the settlement, and there is a sense of descent into a wooded river valley from all directions, and from the north and east in particular where a vital role is played by mature roadside tree planting. The softening effect of the roadside trees helps to create a gradual transition from the countryside into the built fabric. The surrounding countryside is typified by substantial native tree cover set in large copses.
- 7.14 Tree cover close to the village has the added benefit of serving to filter out much of the newer development which allows the more substantial buildings in the village together with the central roofscape of the older core to remain pre-eminent.
- 7.15 The original designation of Church Minshull as a conservation area in 1969 noted that in many cases, gaps between buildings in the village have been filled with trees which serve to link the buildings together, adding to the charm of the area.
- 7.16 A number of trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders (see Figure F, below) where permission needs to be sought from Cheshire East Council prior to any proposed works. Within the Conservation Area there is also a need to give Cheshire East Council notice of any intention to top, lop or fell trees, in order that full consideration can be given to the impact of such works on the need to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 7.17 Hedges and hedgerows make an important contribution as boundary elements, with their softening role contrasting with the hard boundary walls on which they mostly stand.
- 7.18 Trees and hedgerows therefore make a real contribution to the character of Church Minshull, giving the village a real 'sense of place'. This policy seeks to ensure that valued trees and hedgerows are protected, and further appropriate coverage forthcoming. The policy helps to deliver one of the aims of the NPPF of conserving and enhancing the natural environment. The NPPF highlights that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

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7.19 FIGURE F - MAP OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS IN CHURCH MINSHULL



8 ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY POLICIES

- 8.1 The Church Minshull Neighbourhood Development Plan has the following aim: -
To encourage a thriving and prosperous community that delivers a high quality of life for all its residents and supports a distinctive and a flourishing local economy.

8.2 Employment

POLICY ECON1 - ECONOMY

Subject to respecting Church Minshull's built and landscape character, and environmental, highway and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, the following will be supported -

- a) The development of new small businesses and the expansion of existing thriving businesses, provided that there is no detrimental impact to the character of the area and can be sustained for future prosperity
- b) Proposals that promote or provide facilities for home working, and businesses operating from home
- c) The sympathetic conversion of existing buildings for business and enterprise
- d) The diversification of farms and rural businesses.

8.3 Evidence and justification

- 8.4 Church Minshull has a significantly higher than average proportion of people aged 16-74 who work from home (11.2% compared to the average in England of 3.5%); and/or who are self-employed (15.4% compared to the England average of 9.8%) (2011 Census). Only 2.1% of working residents use public transport to get to work. The rural economy and existing small businesses are a vital part of village life, and any opportunities to develop either existing businesses, or that would enable the start-up of new small businesses appropriate to the rural area would be supported.
- 8.5 100% of respondents to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire agreed that local businesses and community facilities should be retained and supported. 90% of respondents agreed that proposals for new business activity within the Parish, both from home and stand alone, to provide local employment should be encouraged.
- 8.6 Current local businesses include the Aqueduct Marina, Distinctive Flowers, Fierce Blooms and Janet Halligan Ceramics.
- 8.7 It is hoped that the above policy will help to ensure that Church Minshull's rural economy can grow sustainability over the Plan period and beyond, and that support can be given for both existing businesses and for new businesses and

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enterprises within the parish.

- 8.8 One of the aims of the NPPF is to support a prosperous rural economy. Planning policies should support sustainable growth in rural areas. The Designated Neighbourhood Area includes a number of farms and the NPPF supports the conversion of existing rural buildings, and promotes the development and diversification of agricultural and other land based rural businesses.



8.9 Tourism

POLICY ECON2 - TOURISM

Subject to respecting Church Minshull's built and landscape character, and environmental, highway and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, improvements to services and facilities associated with tourist attractions will be supported, particularly those centred around the Shropshire Union Canal.

Development Proposals should be appropriate in scale, character and location for the development.

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- 8.10 Evidence and Justification
- 8.11 Church Minshull is attractive to both residents and tourists. The Shropshire Union Canal provides for a number of outdoor activities such as walking, cycling, fishing, boating, and bird watching. Tourism and visitor spend can help to sustain local businesses and facilities. Tourism is mainly centred around the Canal and the Aqueduct Marina. The Marina won UK Inland Marina of the Year award 2017, and includes a caravan park, restaurant, chandlery, workshops and brokerage. There is also holiday accommodation elsewhere in the village, with providers for bed and breakfast at Primrose Cottage, Higher Elms Farm and Ashbrook Towers Farm together with the Badger Inn, located in the centre of the village.
- 8.12 The neighbourhood plan questionnaire asked whether respondents agreed that encouragement should be given for future development that will enhance or at least not be detrimental to tourism within the Parish - 93% of respondents agreed.
- 8.13 This policy helps to deliver one of the NPPF aims for supporting a prosperous rural economy. The NPPF highlights that in order to promote a strong rural economy, neighbourhood plans should support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside.
- 8.14 Community Facilities

POLICY ECON3 - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Subject to respecting Church Minshull's built and landscape character, and environmental, highway and residential amenity impacts being acceptable, the provision of new community facilities and services will be supported.

The loss of community facilities will not be supported, unless the facility is to be replaced at another suitable location in the Parish or it has been demonstrated that an appropriate marketing exercise has been made to secure its continued use over a period of at least twelve months.

Proposals for new residential properties will be expected to address any impacts and benefits it will have on community infrastructure and facilities. To the extent that this evaluation indicates improvements to the existing infrastructure, the proposal shall either incorporate the necessary improvements or include a contribution as designated by Cheshire East Council towards such improvement.

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- 8.15 Evidence and Justification
- 8.16 Church Minshull does not have many community facilities, other than the church, pub, and village hall. There are no play areas, no school, no shop and no health facilities. One of the comments from the neighbourhood plan questionnaire was the lack of facilities on the Parish. 100% of respondents agreed with the aim of supporting community facilities. 97% agreed that the loss of community facilities will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that strenuous efforts have been made to secure their continued use. 98% of respondents agreed that new developments must assess any likely negative impact on local facilities and demonstrate how this would be positively addressed.
- 8.17 The NPPF highlights that Neighbourhood Plans should guard against the loss of valued local facilities and services and plan positively for community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, open spaces, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.



The Badger Inn and St Bartholomew's Church

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The Village Hall

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APPENDIX 1 - POLICY PG6 FROM THE CHESHIRE EAST LOCAL PLAN STRATEGY - PART ONE

Policy PG 6

Open Countryside

1. The Open Countryside is defined as the area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary⁽³⁴⁾.
2. Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.
3. Exceptions may be made:
 - i. where there is the opportunity for limited infilling in villages; the infill of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage elsewhere; affordable housing, in accordance with the criteria contained in Policy SC 6 'Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs' or where the dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable development terms;
 - ii. for the re-use of existing rural buildings where the building is permanent, substantial and would not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension
 - iii. for the replacement of existing buildings (including dwellings) by new buildings not materially larger than the buildings they replace;
 - iv. for extensions to existing dwellings where the extension is not disproportionate to the original dwelling;
 - v. for development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business;
 - vi. For development that is essential for the conservation and enhancement of a heritage asset.
4. The retention of gaps between settlements is important, in order to maintain the definition and separation of existing communities and the individual characters of such settlements.
5. The acceptability of such development will be subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to design and landscape character so the appearance and distinctiveness of the Cheshire East countryside is preserved and enhanced.