Leekfrith Parish Neighbourhood Plan

2019 - 2033

Referendum Version

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1. Introduction & Acknowledgements

1.1 This Neighbourhood Plan sets out policies for the use and development of land in the Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area covering the period from 2019-2033. Once adopted, it will be used by the local planning authorities (alongside other strategic plans) to make decisions about development in the Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area.

1.2 As the responsible body for writing the Neighbourhood Plan Leekfrith Parish Council has involved people who live, work and do business in the Neighbourhood Area at every stage: in developing a vision for their community and in the choices which will help to shape their neighbourhood.

1.3 The Parish Council would like to thank everyone who contributed to the preparation of this Plan.

2. Neighbourhood Plan Area

2.1 The policies in this plan relate to Leekfrith Neighbourhood Area which was designated by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and by Peak District National Park Authority in March 2015. The geographical area is the same as that defined by the boundary of Leekfrith Parish. It is shown with a red dotted boundary on the map in Figure 1 and covers an area of about 3,000 hectares.

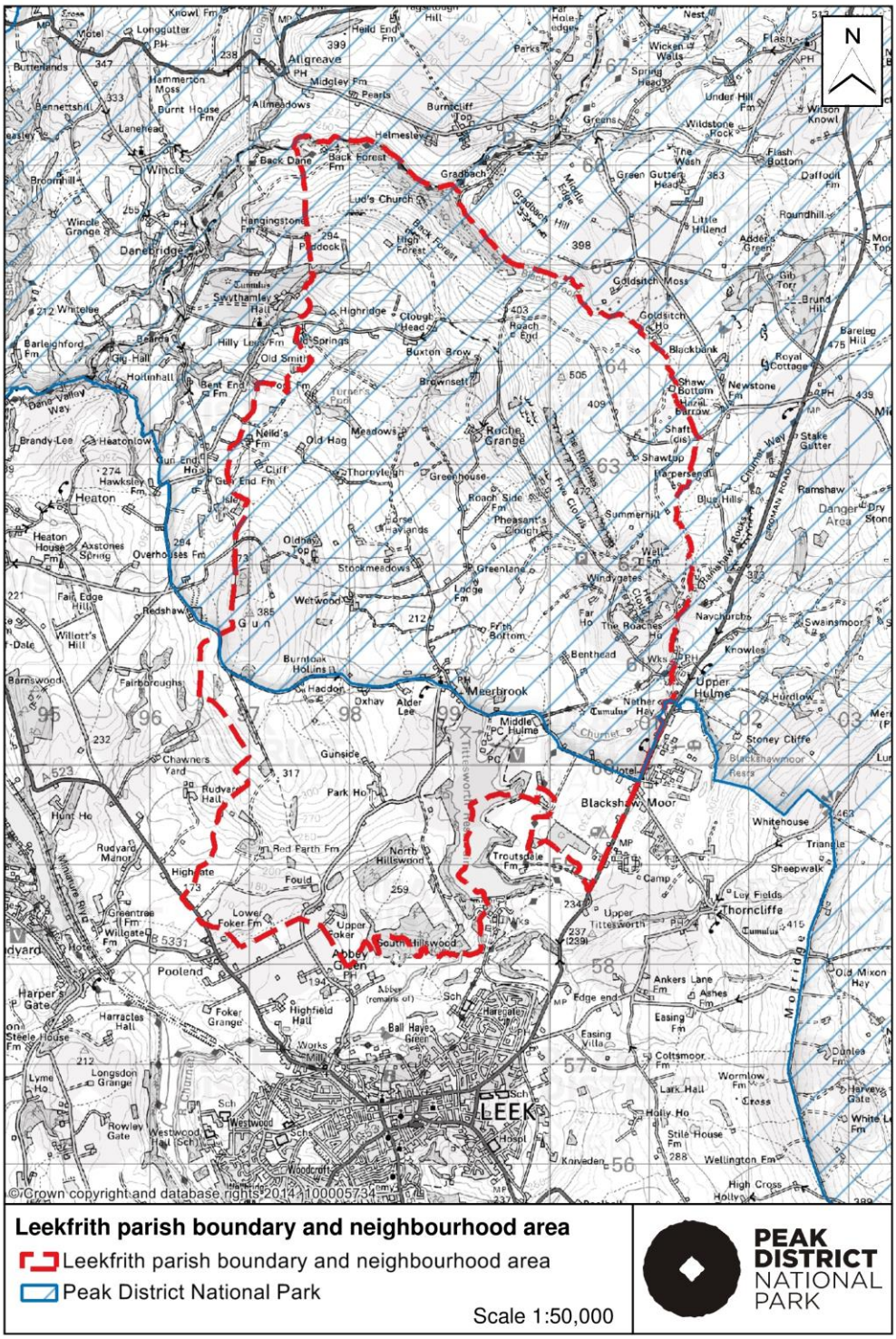

N
LEEK
Upper Hulme
Blackshaw Moor
Thorncliffe
©Crown copyright and database rights 2014 100005734
Leekfrith parish boundary and neighbourhood area
Leekfrith parish boundary and neighbourhood area
Peak District National Park
Scale 1:50,000
PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK

Figure 1

3. Leekfrith Parish … a treasure trove!

Photo by M Mcgriskin

3.1 Leekfrith parish is a beautiful rural area on the south-western edge of the Peak District. It is large in area but sparsely populated. There are 306 people on the electoral role and 150 houses.

3.2 The Parish contains the small village of Meerbrook and the hamlet of Upper Hulme, both are Conservation Areas, together with a few houses and small farms in the surrounding area.

3.3 The northern two-thirds of the Parish are in the Peak District National Park and the southern one third is part of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area. The Roaches and Hen Cloud, outcrops of Millstone Grit, dominate the area. The Roaches rise to 1,658 ft. (505 m.) and is very popular with climbers. Gun, a hill on the west side of the township, rises to 1,263 ft. (385 m.). The valley between the Roaches and Gun is drained by Meer Brook. The brook originally flowed into the River Churnet, but since the mid 19th century it has flowed into Tittesworth Water. The reservoir originally lay mostly in Tittesworth, but it was extended around 1960, involving the flooding of a number of properties and now lies mostly in Leekfrith. The reservoir is operated by Severn Trent Water PLC and dominates the valley floor.

3.4 The Roaches and Tittesworth Water both attract large numbers of tourists, which add to the economics of the area and are most welcome to share in the beauty of our area, but also cause significant issues with car parking.

Photo by M Mcgriskin

3.5 The village of Meerbrook has a an Anglican church, a small Methodist chapel, a public house 'The Lazy Trout', a village green and a village hall, all in close proximity to each other. These are the focal points of the parish and even though we live far apart there is a vibrant community here. It is this spirit of community that is highly valued by the parishioners.

3.6 House prices in the area are very high because of the mainly detached nature of the housing stock and the desirability of the surroundings. This makes it difficult for the younger generation to find suitable housing in the area.

3.7 The population of Leekfrith, in age, tends towards the older end of the spectrum.

3.8 In the hamlet of Upper Hulme there is an old Dyeing Mill built around the turn of the 20th century with additions throughout the early part of the century which has given rise to a hotch-potch of buildings. Many of these buildings are in poor repair: some are let to small businesses. This area is a prime candidate for sympathetic redevelopment.

3.9 Leekfrith has history. In early 2017 several gold 'torcs' (neck bracelets) were found within Leekfrith Parish. They are of national importance and may well be the oldest gold artefacts found in the UK. They date from 400-250 BC. In 2015 a burial urn was found on the top of the Roaches believed to be about 3500 years old.

4. Vision

To develop a Neighbourhood Plan that will help to maintain, enhance and secure the longevity of the community in the Leekfrith Parish.

V1. A community of all ages

As in many rural communities the average age of our population is increasing. The lack of suitable housing makes it difficult for younger people to buy a house in the village. At the other end of the age range, many older people in the past have left the community they love because they cannot down-size to a smaller home within the community. We want to have housing suitable for all ages so that our community can remain flourishing and sustainable.

V2. Where the focal points of our community are valued and protected

All communities need places of focus. In our community the Village Hall, the Church, the Chapel and the pub at present fulfil this role admirably. The school is also important and although it is in Tittesworth parish it is on our border. Where possible our plan should ensure their long-term viability. We also want to look at providing other points of focus which could improve communication and cohesion between all of us in the community, providing benefits to health and well-being.

V3. A community where suitable businesses can thrive and employ

There are many small businesses thriving throughout the parish and this entrepreneurship should be encouraged. We want an environment which encourages people to set up a range of businesses, giving employment opportunities for local people.

V4. Conservation

Our location is beautiful being blessed with both the Roaches and Tittersworth Water. Any improvements we make must enhance the special character here and our quality of life. We welcome the many visitors who want to share this beauty, but the numbers are such that careful management is required so as not to spoil what we have.

These were the Visions we had at the beginning of the Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan project. It transpired that we found there was nothing within the scope of Neighbourhood Planning ie the development and use of land, that would specifically enhance the long term viability of our focal points as laid out in Vision 2, so no policies were developed for Vision 2.

A large proportion of our Parish is in the Peak District National Park so we found that locally there was no appetite to identify areas of land for specific extra conservation measures as protection was already thoroughly in place.

The project concentrated therefore on the issues parishioners were most enthused about which were housing, business and issues arising from tourism.

5. Neighbourhood Plans and the Planning System

5.1 The parish of Leekfrith is partly in the Peak District National Park and partly in the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council area. Neighbourhood Plans must have regard to national policy, be in general conformity with local policies and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.

5.2 To this end the Peak District National Park Authority's Development Plan, (Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 and Development Management Policies 2019) and SMDC's Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan have been considered.

5.3 The Neighbourhood Plan gives local people the power to decide where new housing should go and how the Parish should develop. Without this Neighbourhood Plan, these decisions would be made by either the Peak District National Park Authority for those areas inside the Peak District National Park or by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the rest.

6. Evidence for Policies and Legal Compliance

6.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has emerged from significant research and consultation and this is presented as part of the policy evidence base in Appendices and in the Consultation Statement. The Basic Conditions Statement demonstrates the Neighbourhood Plan's compliance with legislation.

Appendix 1 Our survey to parishioners
Appendix 2 Our survey analysis overview
Appendix 3 Housing needs survey
Appendix 4 Data on illegal car parking on the Roaches

7. The Policies

7.1 REDEVELOPMENT OF UPPER HULME MILL

7.1.1 Our parish is very rural and even the centres of population are no more than a few houses. In line with national policies the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan has an aspiration, based on historical data, that 4-8 “windfall” unplanned dwellings will transpire during the lifetime of this plan within the SMDC part of the parish. There is no requirement for this Neighbourhood Plan to identify specific plots. In the past, local people have been much more creative in their identification of suitable plots than anyone in the political system.

7.1.2 The Peak District National Park has no specific allocation of housing however delivery of dwellings in the National Park counts towards the housing targets set out for constituent local authorities within the Park. So any development in the PDNPA area within the parish will count towards SMDC’s housing allocation.

7.1.3 A housing needs survey in the parish, conducted in October 2014, identified a need for three houses during the next five years. There was also an indication of the desire for older people to ‘downsize’ but stay in the area, and for a mix of housing types to suit young families.

7.1 4 From our vision we would like to build houses for the young and the not so young and initially we considered allocating plots of land in Meerbrook for possible development. After consultation we dropped this idea because the sites were unlikely to become available, they were not particularly efficient sites and there was little support in Meerbrook.

7.1.5 Conversely the industrial site in Upper Hulme offers land for building of houses and industrial units which is supported by the owners, is supported by the parishioners, would enhance the visual amenity of the area and its development is supported in general by the planners of the PDNPA.

7.1.6 After much consultation with PDNPA planning officers and the Upper Hulme Mill owners, it was determined that the site does have the potential to be redeveloped – subject to the owners’ permission. Policy 1 and the associated site plan indicate what may be possible in terms of demolition, house building and new industrial units.

7.1.7 A very small part of the proposed development site lies beyond the Leekfrith Parish boundary (the brook running through the site). It is acknowledged that the LNP has no authority beyond the neighbourhood area boundary. However we would hope that any redevelopment would include the whole site.

7.18 Affordable and open market housing is required. The ratio of affordable to open market housing will depend on the prevailing conditions at the time of application. The number of units will depend on the details of the development and how they are integrated within the site as a whole. There is enough land available to far exceed any conceivable requirements of the parish (possibly 40+), but no limits should be applied as an increase in population will enhance the long term viability of the community.

7.1 8 Parking on the main road through the hamlet of Upper Hulme would cause significant problems as highlighted by parishioners in the area.

Policy 1: Redevelopment of Upper Hulme Mill

A. Redevelopment of the Upper Hulme Mill site broadly in line with the requirements set out below, and as indicated on the site plan (figure 2) is supported:

(i) in the red hatched area, significant enhancement of the site and its surroundings is required by removal of non-traditional structures and buildings and the replacement with new build, traditionally designed dwellings with sufficient vehicle parking to ensure no additional on-road parking results.

(ii) in the blue hatched area all the existing traditional buildings should be retained. Conversion to new dwellings/apartments, holiday accommodation, and B1 business (small craft businesses with ancillary retail) will be supported.

(iii) in the green hatched area, general industrial use is the established use but other acceptable uses include affordable local needs housing and/or B1 light industrial units, subject to proposed uses being compatible with nearby uses.

B. All development proposals must include a detailed site-specific flood risk assessment and demonstrate the suitability of the proposals taking into account any mitigation measures.

C. All development proposals must include sufficient vehicle parking provision to ensure no additional parking on the main road through Upper Hulme results.

D. Any application for development should be supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Habitat Regulations Assessment to determine if proposals would affect the South Pennine Moors Special Area of Conservation and Peak District Moors Special Protection Area.

E. All development proposals must include results of a contamination survey and demonstrate necessary mitigation appropriate to the use proposed.

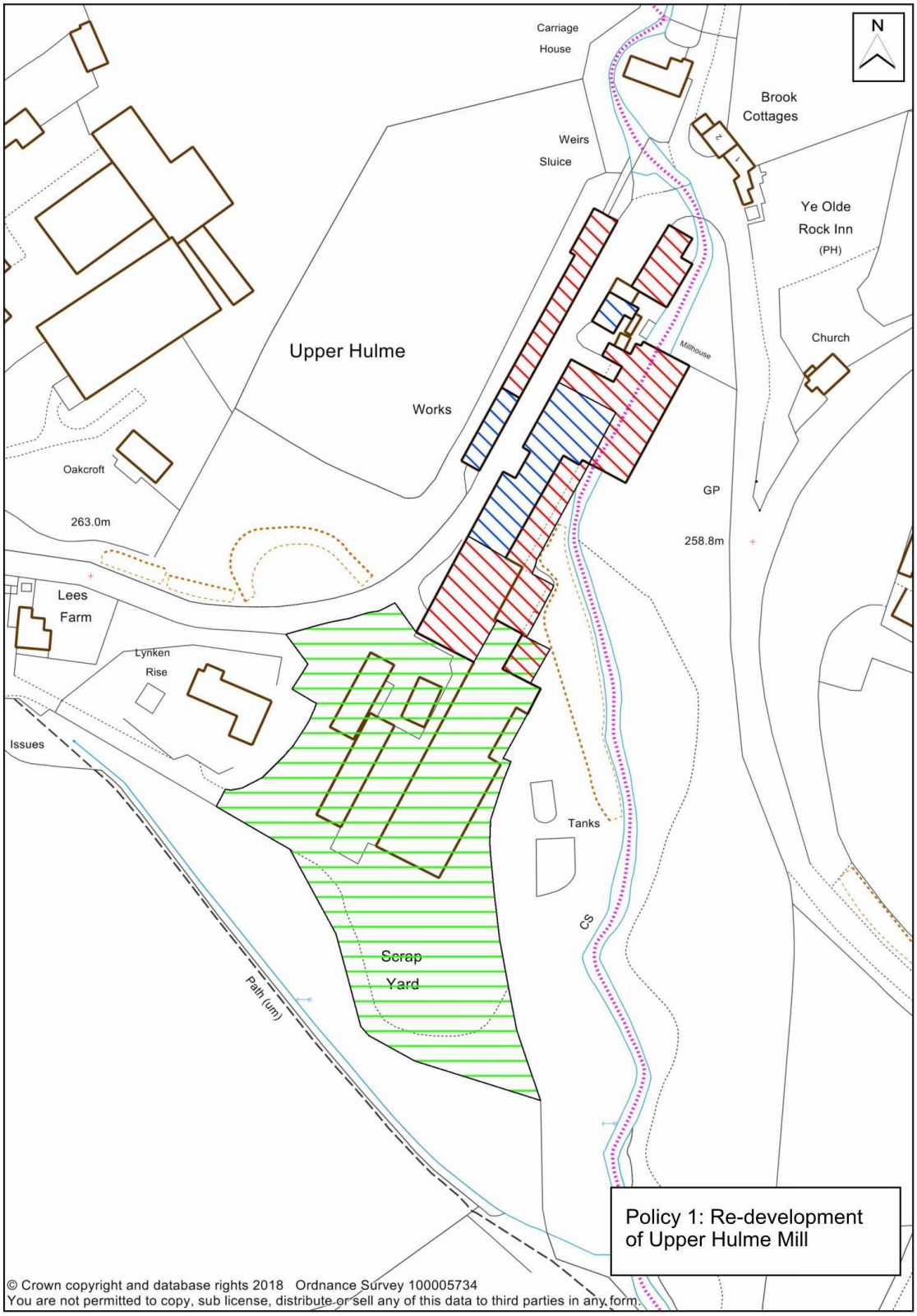

N
Carriage
House
Brook
Cottages
Weirs
Sluice
Ye Olde
Rock Inn
(PH)
Church
Millhouse
Upper Hulme
Works
Oakcroft
263.0m
GP
258.8m
Lees
Farm
Lynken
Rise
Issues
Tanks
CS
Scrap
Yard
Path (um)
Policy 1: Re-development
of Upper Hulme Mill
© Crown copyright and database rights 2018 Ordnance Survey 100005734
You are not permitted to copy, sub license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

Figure 2

7.2. FULL TIME RENTAL OF HOLIDAY COTTAGES

7.2.1 There are several holiday cottages in the parish. These tend to be developed from outbuildings of existing farms, as such they are sparsely distributed within the parish and do not encroach upon the character of the parish.

7.2.2 Some of these holiday cottages suffer from under occupation through lack of demand or the owners no longer being interested or capable of injecting the work required by the high demands of the holiday rental market. This creates a situation where the parish has under-occupied dwellings yet no accommodation for young families, or older residents wishing to downsize. Conversion of holiday cottages for use as long term rental within the PDNP is subject to strict controls. We have worked with the PDNPA and SMDC to facilitate relaxation of these controls in certain circumstances so as to better match the needs of residents and tourists with the dwellings available.

7.2.3 The flexibility outlined in policy respects the tourist nature of the area, whilst offering change of use between two types of residential use (ancillary holiday use and ancillary residential occupation). Depending on the nature of the holiday accommodation, this may provide rented accommodation for people desiring or needing to live in the parish, but for whom purchase of a house is impossible.

7.2.4 The flexibility will be a temporary arrangement subject to review. This policy continues to address National Park and SMDC purposes of conservation and tourism, whilst offering scope for people to stay and enjoy the National Park in line with demand. It also offers the community a way to address some of its concerns over the range of accommodation available to sustain it.

Policy 2: Full time rental of holiday cottages

The renting of ancillary holiday accommodation, on the general rental housing market will be supported provided:

i. either the ancillary holiday accommodation has been made available for holiday use through recognised marketing channels for holiday accommodation for the whole of the two years prior to the application, at a competitive price for the size and standard of the accommodation offered, and such marketing shows a lack of demand that proves that holiday use of the accommodation is unviable; or there is evidence provided that the ancillary holiday accommodation cannot be operated as ancillary holiday accommodation by the current owners for other non-financial reasons such as age or infirmity; and

ii. the ancillary holiday accommodation has adequate indoor and outdoor living space and is not so closely related to adjoining properties that permanent residence would cause unacceptable harm to their amenity; and

iii. the letting of the property for other than ancillary holiday use requires no additional infrastructure; and

iv. the ancillary holiday accommodation remains under the control of the owner of the main house to which the accommodation is ancillary.

Where the above criteria are satisfied, proposals will be supported on a temporary basis for 2 years.

7.3. PARKING ON THE NARROW ROADS THROUGHOUT THE PARISH

7.3.1 Throughout the parish the roads are very narrow and completely unsuitable for car parking. Any car parking that does take place causes unacceptable congestion, safety issues and difficult access for farm and emergency vehicles. Any development that would directly or indirectly lead to car parking on these roads should not be permitted.

Policy 3: Parking on the narrow roads throughout the parish

The majority of roads in the parish are narrow, and have soft verges. Any development proposal must provide a transport statement that considers the parking implications of the proposal. To be supported development proposals must demonstrate that they will not result in additional on-road vehicle parking.

8. Non-policy Community Aspirations

8.1 PARKING AT THE ROACHES

8.1.1 Visitor parking on the Roaches has been a problem for at least 3 decades and a number of attempts have been made to solve the problem without success. On good weather days at the weekend the numbers of cars visiting the Roaches substantially exceeds the capacity of the present car parking. Cars then park on the verges and on bends making access difficult for anyone to get through. Parishioners are sometimes trapped in their homes due to cars parking in their driveway. There are many non-transport accidents on the Roaches as it is a well used climbing location and emergency vehicles often have difficulty gaining access. Farm businesses in the area stop operations outside the farm at weekends because of the difficulty of access. Farms are 24/7 businesses so this is a significant problem.

8.1.2 Even though other parts of the National Park with comparable visitor numbers such as Stanage Edge and Dovedale have adequate car parks the PDNPA has consistently denied an adequate facility at the Roaches.

8.1.3 We have investigated a new approach in conjunction with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) which now manages the Roaches. We are proposing an overspill car park, which will operate on those good weather days when there is not enough space in the lay-byes, by using the 28 day rule for using land or buildings for an alternative use without the need for formal planning consent.

8.1.4 A suitable piece of land has been identified (see figure 3 below). It is envisaged that temporary removable ground protection matting will be required to make this facility accessible throughout the year. Funding will be required for this development to go ahead.

Parking at the Roaches

This plan supports the alternative use of the land specified in Figure 3 for car parking for up to 28 days per calendar year.

Windygates Farm
Hen Cloud
Far House
Proposed
Temporary
Car Park
Entrance via gate
Google Maps
Roaches Tea Rooms
© 2017 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky

Figure 3

Appendix 1

Dear Parishioner,

This letter contains important information, together with a survey that we would ask you to complete and return to us in the s.a.e. provided.

Background (Why we need a Neighbourhood Plan):-

- The government has given local neighbourhoods the chance to have a greater say in how their communities develop over the next few years.
- Whilst local planning authorities have always taken into account the views of the local community when responding to potential planning applications in their area a Neighbourhood Plan is a formal document which adds strength to those views when these applications are considered.
- Leekfrith Parish does not currently have such a plan, but we are preparing one, and we need you help as part of our consultation process.
- Without such a plan we have a much weaker voice in terms of local planning issues
- ……so PLEASE, complete and return the survey in the S.A.E. provided and help us to plan for the future of Leekfrith Parish. You can also scan the completed survey and email to bobfoster4722@gmail.com or just send your answers in an email.

Background (What we have done so far):-

- Drafted a 'Vision' document trying to encapsulate how we would like the Parish to look in 15-20 years' time. This includes such issues as housing, employment, facilities, the environment, and the community.
- Been in contact with Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (SMDC) about the guidelines we should work within.
- Made good progress on identifying some areas which may be developed for the benefit of the community.
- Made some progress in drafting a set of Policy Statements which we think should be at the heart of our Neighbourhood Plan.

What do we ask of you now? :-

 Complete the survey and return it to us! ….. this will help us to shape the 'Vision' statement and the Policy Statements. These might sound a bit bureaucratic, but they are important because they lay down the things that we stand for.

If you would like to be involved in your neighbourhood plan, you'd be very welcome so please get in touch via the telephone or e-mail (details below). We hope we can count on your support.

Yours sincerely,

R. Foster

Robert (Bob) Foster, Neighbourhood Plan Co-ordinator for Leekfrith Parish Council

Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan (LNP) Survey 1

Your name	
Telephone and email	
address	

Question 1

The 'Vision' Statement is shown below. How strongly do you agree with it? (Choose the most appropriate number, and then add any comments you wish). Use separate paper if comment area too small.

Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1

Vision

To develop a Neighbourhood Plan that will help to maintain, enhance and secure the longevity of the community in the Leekfrith Parish.

A community of all ages.
As in many rural communities the average age of our population is increasing. The lack of suitable housing makes it difficult for younger people to buy a house in the village. At the other end of the age range, many older people in the past have left the community they love because they cannot down-size to a smaller home within the community. We want to have housing suitable for all ages so that our community can remain flourishing and sustainable.

Where the focal points of our community are valued and protected
All communities need places of focus. In our community the Village Hall, the Church, the Chapel and the Pub at present fulfil this role admirably. The school is also important and although it is in Tittesworth parish it is on our border. Where possible our plan should ensure their long-term viability. We should also look at providing other points of focus which could improve communication and cohesion between all of us in the community, providing benefits to health and well-being.

A community where suitable businesses can thrive and employ
There are many small businesses thriving throughout the parish and this entrepreneurship should be encouraged. We want an environment which encourages people to set up a range of businesses, giving employment opportunities for local people. However, an essential part of business these days is internet access. There are many parts of the parish where this is very poor and we must take steps to improve this.

Conservation
Our location is beautiful being blessed with both the Roaches and Tittesworth reservoir.

Any improvements we make must enhance the special character here and our quality of life. We welcome the many visitors who want to share this beauty, work with our businesses or even decide to live here, but the numbers are such that careful management is required so as not to spoil what we have.

Question 2

Upper Hulme Mill, a large dilapidated brown field site, may provide a great opportunity to provide many housing units which may fulfil and exceed the needs of the parish and thereby enhance the sustainability of the community by increasing the viability of local services such as the school.

With the help of PDNPA we have made very good progress on this, developing a preliminary plan (appendix one) which conserves the old buildings, allows demolition of the dilapidated buildings and encourages some development which could house young and older residents, as well as some business units. These plans would only progress if the owners are in agreement and a developer(s) can be found. However the plan is a framework for the owners and potential developers to work from.

Do you agree with what we are doing here?

Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Do you have any other ideas that we could do with this site?

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Question 3

In Meerbrook village we have identified, with SMDC and the PDNPA, two potential sites (see appendix two), which could be developed for affordable housing. These sites would only be developed if the owners of the sites want such a development and only if there is a proven local need.

The idea of putting these in the Neighbourhood plan would be that these sites would be the only sites within Meerbrook supported by the local community. These sites were chosen because they were within the existing curtilage of the village, were infill rather than a standalone development and did not interfere significantly with the view of the Roaches. The village needs 'affordable' housing, and this would have to be semi-detached or terrace in order to meet current guidelines of affordability. Do you agree with the sites chosen?

Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Question 4

There are a number of holiday cottages in the parish which may be under-occupied and the owners may wish to let out these properties as full time lets. Allowing full time letting would create housing for local people and attract new people to the parish so enriching our community. We are negotiating with the PDNPA to include this as a local policy in the neighbourhood plan.

Do you agree with this approach?

Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Question 5

Visitor parking on the Roaches has been a problem for at least 3 decades and a number of attempts have been made to solve the problem. In conjunction with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust (SWT), we are proposing an overspill car park which will operate on those good weather days when there is not enough space in the lay-byes. We have made good progress on this, having identified a suitable patch of land on Windygates Farm and a surface which will blend in with the surroundings. The challenge now is to find funding to finance the construction.

Do you support this approach?

Strongly agree 5	4	3	2	Strongly disagree 1

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Question 6

Do you have any other suggestions which could be taken forward in a neighbourhood plan?

Comments. Please use separate paper if comment area too small	

Appendix 2

Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan…. Survey Analysis Overview

The survey questionnaire was sent out to all occupied properties in the parish, 160 properties. 40 questionnaires were returned, the percentage return therefore was 25%. The following points have become evident as the survey was analysed.

1. Support for the vision was very high at an average of 4.5 out of 5.

2. Support for the development of Upper Hulme Mill was again high at 4.2, however there is concern about parking and the suitability of the road to the Mill. Actions… Parking will be addressed in the policies governing development ie a certain number of parking spaces per housing unit would be required. Also moving industrial units away from the main thoroughfare would eliminate the issues we have with loading/unloading. The roadway has been assessed by Staffordshire Highways and their judgement is that the increase in traffic will be marginal as the volumes are relatively high, due to tourism, and there has been significant HGV traffic along that road for many years.

3. There was support for the possible affordable housing sites in Meerbrook at an average of 3.8, but there was strong disagreement from within Meerbrook itself. Actions… On reflection the parish council have decided not to continue with this policy, instead deciding that it will be better to address the issue of affordable housing as and when a request arises. The sites that we identified, although acceptable to the PDNPA and SMDC, are unlikely to become available in the medium or even long term and there is a much greater likelihood of affordable housing being built on the Upper Hulme Mill site.

4. The possibility of a holiday cottage owner being able to choose whether or not to offer full time rent had good support at 4.2. Actions There was some concern that the rents would be too high for local people but according to Whittaker and Biggs estate agents the premium would only be of the order of 10% against a similar property in Leek. The rationale for this policy is that holiday cottages across the Peak Park are occupied for about 25% of the year, which means there is a substantial body of housing stock being under-utilised.

5. The Roaches overspill car park was very well supported at 4.4. Actions.. Finance for this project has proved to be impossible at present so the concept will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan so that it can be pursued when finance can be found.

6. There is great concern about parking within Meerbrook village due to the popularity of the local pub. Actions. Leekfrith parish council is engaging with Severn Trent and the Lazy Trout to see if an extension to the Lazy Trout car park is possible. This is progressing very quickly so will not be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Appendix 3

Leekfrith Parish Housing Needs Survey 2014

Introduction

During May 2014 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council undertook a housing needs survey with the support of Leekfrith Parish Council. Survey forms were posted out to 152 households within the Parish and 2 former resident households identified as 'parish leavers', there was a low 17% response rate. All responses returned up to and including 18th July 2014 were analysed, results are shown in Appendix 1. The aim was to give every household the opportunity to have their housing need assessed and to identify households who are in housing need in the local community.

Key Findings

Local resident views regarding affordable housing provision

The survey gives local residents the opportunity to give their opinions about affordable housing and gauges the level of community support for the provision of affordable homes to meet local need. There can be legitimate concerns about the development of affordable housing and opposition can also be about the development of lower priced or rental properties and the type of person who is likely to live in these properties and whether they may be associated with the local area. 69% households surveyed are in favour of a small development of affordable homes for local people. Comments in relation to affordable housing provision within the Parish are shown in Appendix 1.

Respondents also identified the following sites as potentially suitable for small scale affordable housing development for local people with recognition that development opportunities are informed and restricted according to PDNPA planning authority policy.

- Upper Hulme Village
- Where people could use their own land
- Old MOD/ Army base in Blackshaw Moor and Moss Rose Public House
- Disused yard in Blackshaw Moor
- Centre of Meerbrook - either side of New Road

7 households identified themselves as in housing need. 6 currently live within the Parish and local connections are also gained through close family, previous residence and employment. 2 households are single adults (0-24), 1 single adult (under 55), 3 couples (over 55 or requiring level access accommodation) and 1 a couple with children. Households consider current accommodation unsuitable because of 'health or mobility problems', 'too small', 'too big', 'need single level access or adapted accommodation', 'too expensive' or/ and 'need to live independently'. Accommodation is required now, within 1 to 3 years, and 3 to 5 years. If these households could not live in their first area of choice they would be willing to move between 1-4 miles away. There are multiple reasons (e.g. education, job prospects, social excitement, cultural opportunity, reduced travel needs) other than access to housing that may encourage people to move towards urban areas.

The table below is only based on the survey respondents' self-identified need and stated preferences, which shows preference for 2 and 3 bed properties.

Accommodation & bedroom preferences (without open market and available social housing filter) TOTAL (more than total no. households in need as some respondents made >1

selection)				
	1 bed	2bed	3 bed	4+ bed
House		13	3	1
Flat				
bunglaow			2	

Analysis of need in context of open market

The above results are based only on the survey respondents' self-identified housing need and stated preferences. Preferences may be informed by aspirations towards longer term family formation, adaptations relative to lifetime requirements, additional spare bedrooms as opposed to current household make up and financial circumstances within the local market context.

Further analysis within Appendix 2 and below takes into account:

- Affordability information from www.housingintelligence.co.uk
- Financial information for each household
- Prevailing open-market conditions
- Social housing availability and eligibility

a) 3 households identifying as in housing need could meet their stated preferences by buying on the open market, own a property with no mortgage and do not wish to be considered for affordable home ownership or rented as provided through a housing association and shall be discounted from further housing need consideration. This was determined by using financial information provided and recent sales information shown below.

Area	**Property type**	**Selling/purchase price (£)**	**Date of sale/advertising**
Upper Hulme	3 bed terrace	154,450	advertised 14/07/2014
Upper huulme	3 bed semi	147,000	Sold 14/3/14
Upper Hulme	2 bed detached	150,000	Sold 16/4/14
Swythamley	4 bed detached	807,000	Sold4/6/13

(rightmove website)

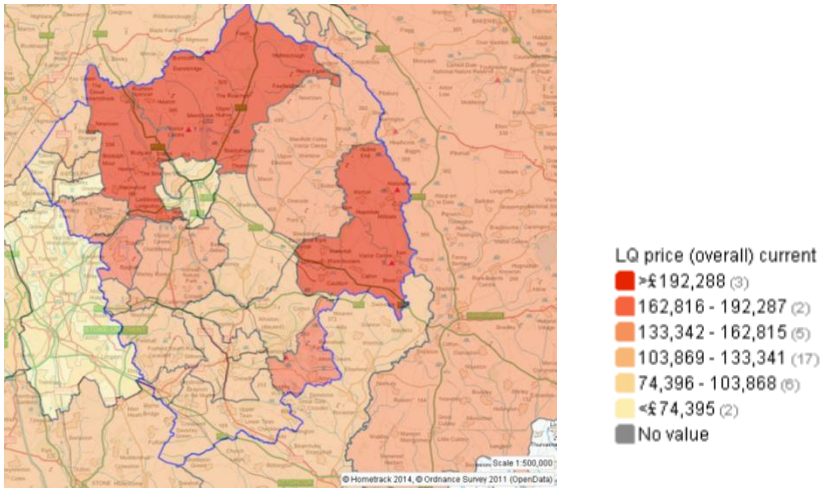
There is a low turnover of properties generally in the Dane Ward, with low availability of market entry level accommodation (flats/ terraced) and higher priced detached properties available more frequently.

	Terraced	**Semi-detached**	**Detached**	**Flat/maisonette**	**total**
2009	Not available	2	2	Not available	4
2010	Not available	2	7	Not available	7
2011	3	Not available	7	Not available	10
2012	Not available	3	10	Not available	13
2013	1	2	6	Not available	9

(home track website)

The average property price in the Dane Ward (based on sales) is £235,000 compared to the District wide average of £170,043. £150,000 represents a lower quartile or entry level property price within the Dane Ward. Analysis of affordability based on the relationship between personal (individual) incomes and house prices shows that ten times an individual income would be required to purchase in the Dane Ward, which can be expressed as a ratio

of 10:1, compared to the District ratio of 5.8:1. Below comparison of the lower quartile house price to income ratios shows the Dane Ward within the top 3 highest wards.



The cost of renting privately per week in the Dane Ward is shown below, however 1 bed accommodation in the parish area is negligible.

	Average (£)	**District average rent comparison**	**30th percentile (£)**	**80% Average (£)**
1 bed	95	87 -9% higher	89	76
2 bed	146	103 - 42% higher	118	117
3 bed	149	130 - 14% higher	132	119

(hometrack website)

b) One of the households identifying as in housing need did not provide sufficient financial information to be able to judge whether their needs could be met by the open market. In these cases affordability data can be used as a proxy for personal financial information.

	% of households priced out of the market	
	Staffordshire Moorlands	Dane Ward
FTB households - flat	38.44	Not available
FTB households - terraced house	47.24	48.87
FTB households - semi-detached house	61.84	48.87
FTB households - detached house	74.09	85.67

Owner occupier household - flat	38.44	Not available
Owner occupier household – terraced house	38.44	40.72
Owner occupier household – semi-detached house	54.98	40.72
Owner occupier household – semi-detached house	68.42	82.5

(hometrack website)

With nearly 50% of first time buyers priced out of the open market and the information provided it can be assumed that this household would not be able to meet their needs on the open market

Availability, eligibility and turnover of social housing stock

The majority of social housing allocations in Staffordshire Moorlands are facilitated through Staffordshire Moorlands Homechoice choice based lettings. Your Moorlands (LSVT) and most registered social landlords use this system and the accompanying website. The eligibility criteria can be used to 'translate' the stated 'property preferences' of households/individuals in need, into 'actual need'. Single adult households would only be eligible for 1 bed housing association properties. They would be considered for 1 bed intermediate (shared ownership/ equity) options and national Help to Buy guidance around affordable home ownership options does suggest that the purchase of a property with an additional bedroom above a households current requirements may be permitted to ensure that growing families can access suitable homes.

Existing social housing in the Leekfrith Parish provides for families with 2x3 bed and 2x2 bed shared ownership properties in Meerbrook.

Other areas of housing need (housing register & parish leavers)

A further indicator of need can be determined from households registered on a Housing Register. There are currently 66 households that have registered on Staffordshire Moorlands Homechoice with an interest in 'Leekfrith' area. None of these households currently reside within the Leekfrith Parish area. Therefore it can be taken that there are no additional households registered on Staffordshire Moorlands Homechoice in need of affordable housing within the Parish area. This does not include;

- Those that have selected 'anywhere' as an area of choice on Moorlands Homechoice.
- Those that may have a local connection to the Leekfrith Parish through means other than residence, people with a local connection to the Parish who have moved away and may wish to return.

Housing need survey respondents identified 2 Parish Leavers, 'former Parish residents that left within the last 10 years because they could not afford to buy/ rent a home in the area'. These Parish Leavers were sent surveys however failed to respond.

Planning context

Planning policies that address housing can be found in PDNPA saved Local Plan policy LH1 and Supplementary Planning Guidance1 (SPG) which supplement the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) policies DS1: Development strategy, HC1: New housing, HC2: Housing for key workers in agriculture, forestry or other rural

enterprises. These policies address important considerations; quantifying affordable housing need, restricting occupancy to those who qualify and the size and type of home that will be acceptable.

Saved Local Plan Policy LH1: Meeting local needs for affordable housing Exceptionally residential development will be permitted either as a newly built dwelling in or on the edge of Settlements (Policy LC2) or as the conversion of an existing building of traditional design and materials in the countryside provided that:

 there is a proven need for the dwelling(s). In the case of proposals for more than one dwelling, this will be judged by reference to an up to date housing needs survey. In the case of individual dwellings, need will be judged by reference to the circumstances of the applicant including his or her present accommodation; and
 the intended occupants meet the requirements of the National Park Authority's local occupancy criteria (policy LH2). In the case of proposals for more than one dwelling, where the intended occupants are not specified, a satisfactory mechanism to ensure compliance with the local occupancy restriction will be required - normally a planning obligation; and
 the dwelling(s) will be affordable by size and type to local people on low or moderate incomes and will remain so in perpetuity; and
 the need cannot be met within the existing housing stock. Individuals may be asked to provide evidence of a search for suitable property which they can afford to purchase within both their own and adjoining parishes; and
 the requirements of Policy LC4 (design, layout and landscaping standards) are complied with.

Key principles established by HC1 and HC2 policies include:

 Encouraging affordable housing, in a range of settlements identified in Core Strategy DS1, but also by enhancement of sites and buildings elsewhere: working in a consultative manner in each settlement as local need for affordable housing arises rather than allocating land in advance for housing.
 Resisting general demand for new open market housing but permitting some in cases where it is needed to bring about conservation and enhancement in named settlements or of valued buildings,
 Providing for essential worker dwellings, care homes and supported dwellings, and holiday accommodation where possible by re-use of existing buildings of historic or vernacular merit.
 Conversion to incorporate affordable housing, where it can be achieved without compromising viability. It also requires a financial contribution towards affordable housing elsewhere, if there is no evidenced need for affordable housing in the parish subject to the proposal for conversion. There must be an intention to provide affordable homes wherever and whenever that is physically possible within the conversion scheme.
 Principle of permitting open market housing only where:1. the site or buildings needs conserving or enhancing, and can accommodate more than one dwelling, in which case the Authority will try and secure the best result for both the site or building and the community by permitting a mix of open market and affordable housing. 2. it is needed to secure conservation or enhancement of a site that can only accommodate one dwelling

Who qualifies as a “local” person for the purposes of justifying the need for new affordable homes is defined within saved local plan policy LH2. The definition of people with a local qualification requires a person to have a well-established connection with the area.

Exceptionally new housing will be permitted for a person with a proven need in accordance with Policy LH1 provided that the dwelling will be occupied by:

a person (and his or her dependants) who has a minimum period of 10 years' permanent residence in the parish or an adjoining parish and is currently living in accommodation which is overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory; or a person (and his or her dependants) who has a minimum period of 10 years permanent residence in the parish or an adjoining parish and is forming a household for the first time; or a person not now resident in the parish but with a proven need and a strong local connection with the parish, including a period of residence of 10 years or more within the last 20 years; or a person who has an essential need to live close to another person who has a minimum of 10 years' residence in the parish, the essential need arising from age or infirmity; or a person who has an essential functional need to live close to his or her work in the parish, or an adjoining parish within the National Park.

DS1 development strategy indicates what types of development are acceptable in principle in the countryside and named settlements such as Flash. In or on the edge of these settlements new build development will be acceptable for affordable housing provided that an assessment of capacity is undertaken to examine settlement character, pattern, and landscape setting.

Conclusions

A total of 3 households present with an affordable housing need. These comprise 2 young single households that require accommodation in the near future, within the next 1-5 years. Another large household requires accommodation now.

It is therefore recommended that 2x1 bed and 1x5 units of affordable housing be provided. A 5 bed affordable property would be unusual and exceptional in terms of affordable housing provision and may not meet with future District housing needs, therefore option to readily convert the accommodation to be considered. Similarly Lifetime Homes standards would ensure accessible and inclusive affordable provision.

Appendix 1: Results

In favour of development	
In favour of small development of affordable homes for local people	69%
of which;	
Identifying as in housing need and in favour of a scheme	27%
Identifying as not in housing need and in favour of a scheme	42%
Identifying as not in housing need and not in favour of a scheme	31%
Identifying as not in housing need and unspecified	0
Total respondents	26

Comments in relation to affordable housing provision in the Parish for local people
'Individual developments more in keeping with Leekfrith scattered community, several individual scattered homes would be more appropriate to the families in the area where people can use their own land...family size and existing affordable housing...build our own...the only way we could afford to live here' 'Unable to afford housing in the area is in short supply resulting in the younger generation having to leave which is a detriment to the community.' 'Lots of derelict Mills in Leek that would make excellent apartments.' 'Every persons needs are different so a variety of housing is needed e.g. suitable for couples or larger properties for families which are vital fro village life and to help rural schools and communities. At the moment there is very little on offer for families with two or more children.' 'When the dam at the reservoir was built 9 properties were flooded...this forced some families out...moved to Macclesfield and Leek...If some of the land either side of the New Road were purchased this would bring new life back into the centre of the village.' 'Much of the housing is widespread because of the farming community but if owners have to leave due to infirmity there is little in the way of appropriate housing in the village to offer them.' 'Accommodation required for retiring people who wish to downsize and pass their larger house and business (i.e. farm) to their children in order to keep families within the community.' 'Families with children wanting to build their own home...a community needs families to support school, village activities...approve barns for holiday but not homes.' 'We believe that local people should be able to stay in the community that they have grown up in whther it be affordable housing provided to be rented, or housing built by that person/s on their own/ families land or land available to purchase. We need young people to stay here.' 'Houses are required on private land for family members (i.e. within the cartilage of existing buildings) who do not want to move.' '...in favour of a small development of barn conversions which would be more in keeping with the planning designations already in place...'

Households identifying themselves as in housing need	
Number of households	7

Household makeup of those identifying as in need	
Single adult (16-24 yrs)	2
Single adult (under 55)	1
Couple (over 55/ requiring older persons accommodation)	3
Couple with children	1
TOTAL	**7**

Local Connection of households identifying as in need (total more than total

household need as some respondents made >1 selection)			
households in need currently residing in parish	6	average length of time in parish (yrs)	26
households in need with previous residence	1	Average length of time pervious parish residence (yrs)	23
households in need with immediate family in parish	3	Average length of time family in parish (yrs)	82
households in need with employment in parish	2	Average length of time employment in parish (yrs)	23

Timescale for housing requirements	
in need now	3
in need within 1 - 3 yrs	1
in need within 3 - 5 yrs	3

How far away would households identifying in need be willing to move?	
0-4 miles	6
No answer	1

Current tenure of households identifying as in need	
Own with a mortgage	1
Own with no mortgage	3
Live in tied accommodation	1
Live with relatives/ friends	2

Why current home unsuitable (total more than total household need as some respondents made >1 selection)	
too small	2
too big	2
too expensive	1
need to be close to family	0
health or mobility problems	3
need to live independently	1
Need single level or adapted accommodation	1

Why wish to live within the Parish? (total more than total household need as some respondents made >1 selection)	
born/ grew up there	3
close family ties	4
currently live	5
employed	1
need to take up employment	0
other	1

Tenure preference of households identifying as in need	
households preferring private rented	
households preferring housing association rented	2
households preferring private home ownership	7
households preferring affordable home ownership	3
TOTAL (more than total no. households in need as some respondents made >1 selection) 12	12

Accommodation & bedroom preferences (without open market and available social housing filter) TOTAL (more than total no. households in need as some respondents made >1 selection)				
	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+bed

House		1	3	1
Flat				
bungalow		3	2	

Appendix 4

Number of Cars Parking illegally on the Roaches

Day	Date	Number of cars out of bays
Thurs	14/04/2016	30
Sat	16/04/2016	21
Sun	17/04/2016	42
Sat	30/04/2016	51
Sat	14/05/2016	12
Sat	28/05/2016	36
Sat	11/06/2016	32
Sat	18/06/2016	29
Sat	25/06/2016	31
Sat	2/07/2016	31
Sat	9/07/2016	43

This is from Roaches Hall track to the turning bay and doesn't include the cars parked opposite the tea rooms

Data provided by Staffordshire Wildlife Ranger service.