



Georgeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2031

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1 Introduction

1.1 Georgeham Parish

- 1.1.1 Georgeham Parish is located within coastal downland to the north-west of Braunton. The parish has a recorded population of 2,568. Its principal settlements are the villages of Croyde and Georgeham, located some 1.5 miles apart in the Crydda valley.
- 1.1.2 The hamlets of Forda and Cross, and the two farms of Hole, lie between the villages. Other hamlets are Pickwell on the high ground to the north, Putsborough on the road to Putsborough beach, North Buckland to the east and Darracott to the south on the old road leading to Braunton ([see map, page 96](#)).

1.2 About Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.2.1 Neighbourhood planning, introduced through the Localism Act 2011, enables communities to play a much stronger role in developing a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shaping the area in which they live and work.
- 1.2.2 Once a Neighbourhood Plan has been approved and agreed by a community referendum, it will become part of the development plan for the area, prepared by the local planning authority. Future decisions on new development proposals and planning applications are made using both the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.3 Process

- 1.3.1 In October 2015, Georgeham Parish Council decided to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') for the parish. The council applied to North Devon Council for permission to progress the Plan. North Devon Council agreed, and Georgeham Parish Council became the registered lead body for the Plan.
- 1.3.2 There have been a number of drafts and subsequent revisions of the Plan and its supporting documents as a result of discussions with various members of the community, the local authority, other stakeholders and external assessment.
- 1.3.3 Many members of the community have given their time and energy to the process, producing maps, photographs and supporting documentation, helping to organise meetings, deliver questionnaires and spread information about the Plan.
- 1.3.4 To avoid confusion about the extent of Georgeham Parish – which includes the village of Croyde as well as Georgeham – it was decided to refer to the parish as The Crydda Community, named after the stream which runs through the parish.



1.4 Consultation

- 1.4.1 A comprehensive communications and consultation programme was implemented to promote the project and engage all stakeholders in the parish community. This included a variety of methods including open meetings, questionnaires, letters to individuals and organisations, and exploiting the possibilities of social media platforms, such as the Facebook pages, *What's on in Georgeham and Croyde*, the Croyde Area Residents' Association and parish websites.

2 Vision and Objectives

2.1 Vision

- 2.1.1** The Georgeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan's vision is to progress as a sustainable community, striking a balance between meeting the needs of the current and future population and maintaining a thriving and diverse local economy, particularly through tourism, without harming the area's beauty and attractiveness.
- 2.1.2** The Plan seeks to apply the three principles of sustainable development ^[1] – social, economic and environmental – to its Strategic Objectives and Policies, which reflect the aspirations of the parish community for its future development and underpin the National Planning Policy Framework and the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted in October 2018.
- 2.1.3** The Plan seeks to maintain as much of the existing natural landscape and do as little harm to the natural landscape and environment as possible. In particular, it endeavours to keep the rising ground, headlands, hills and 'horseshoe' shape of Croyde free from further development.
- 2.1.4** The Plan aims to improve existing amenities. The sewerage system is approaching capacity and increasingly has trouble with large variations in user numbers. In parts of the parish the drains are reaching the end of their useful life due to their pitch fibre construction. Water safety and risk of pollution on the beaches is not considered an immediate concern; however, the increase in tanker traffic removing solids from Croyde Sewage Treatment Works and camp site effluent tanks increases road congestion in the summer months.
- 2.1.5** The Plan strives to encourage tourism, on which much of the economy depends, without numbers overwhelming the community, overloading infrastructure or degrading the area. This requires a sensitive, sustained approach. A pressing concern is to balance the needs of tourism against the need for a resilient resident community. The aim is for sympathetic, sustainable development of a thriving community and amenities which residents and holidaymakers alike can enjoy year round.

2.2 General principles underpinning Plan policies

- 2.2.1** The approach to developing the Neighbourhood Plan is guided by the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 and the North Coast AONB Management Plan 2019-2024.
- 2.2.2** The Plan's proposed policies reflect the three key principles of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental sustainability – and aim to:
- Specify the general criteria that development proposals will be expected to meet, in order to achieve a consistent high standard throughout the area.
 - Ensure that developments are of a scale, use and design appropriate to the area, and are located so as to minimise visual impact and assimilate sensitively and considerately within the landscape or built environment.
 - Respect the qualities of the natural and built environments that provide local character and distinctiveness. The integration of development with its surroundings, in both rural and settlement areas, is a significant factor in limiting its impact on the immediate locality and the wider landscape.

[1] Sustainable development has been defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' In January 2016, the 17 sustainable development goals were adopted by the United Nations Summit meeting (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment). The sustainable development agenda includes three core elements: economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection. These three elements are interconnected, and all are crucial for the well-being of individuals and societies. Each signatory country must develop its own policies, plans and programmes. Investments in sustainable development will help address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. Arising from these 17 goals, the UK developed The National Planning Policy Framework, which in turn lead to the development of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031, which was adopted in 2018. The Localism Act of 2011 created the possibility that parish councils might create their own plans to forward the sustainability agenda for their own unique circumstances. These local plans must be in harmony with the District and National Plans.

2 Vision and Objectives



- Saunton Down, viewed from Ramson Lane.

2.2.3 Proposals will be supported where they meet relevant planning policies contained within this Plan (and overarching national and local planning policies), providing they meet the following development principles:

- The size, scale, design and use of any proposed development (whether new build, extension or conversion) is sensitive to its surroundings. In particular, development should demonstrate that it minimises adverse impacts on neighbouring residences and reflects the Housing and Built Environment policies (Section 4, [page 14](#); Section 5, [pages 18-19](#)).
- There is no significant adverse impact (visual or otherwise) on the area's landscape and natural habitats. Descriptions and photographs of key local landscape views and vistas are at Section 11, [pages 45-59](#) and the Green Spaces Policy NE3 is at Section 6, [page 23](#). Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they have minimised landscape impact on the open countryside and coastline, from both the seaward and landward aspects;
- Where possible, sites are screened by landform and locally appropriate features, such as trees, hedges, Devon banks and stone walls in the traditional manner of the area, and existing banks and hedges are maintained and repaired where they already exist [\[2\]](#);
- On the outer fringes of the built-up settlement areas, all proposals should particularly incorporate appropriate boundary treatments;
- Access to the site is in keeping with the surrounding landscape, with particular attention to the wider rural setting and the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and rural road use;
- Proposals have a positive contribution towards open spaces, respecting the amenity, recreational and wider environment value of existing spaces and contributing to their enhancement;
- Development design in settlement centres is reflective of, or complementary to, the existing structures and amenity spaces of neighbouring properties;
- Development proposals should take account of the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. This includes minimising the impact of noise, protecting tranquil areas prized for their amenity value and limiting the impact of artificial light pollution on local amenities, intrinsically dark landscapes and wildlife.

[2] Devon has over 33,000 miles of hedges, with over three-quarters of hedgebanks thought to be of at least medieval origin (AD 1150 – 1450). The 'Devon bank' typically consists of a large bank, with laid hedge shrubs on top and veteran hedge trees at wider intervals. Adjacent ditches and stone-faced revetting of the bank were also common practices to aid drainage and provide support. Hedges in Devon are an important part of the distinctive character of the county.

References:

www.devon.gov.uk/historicenvironment/land-management/hedges-and-the-historic-environment
www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management
www.devonhedges.org

3 Social and Community



- Georgeham village, looking north towards Oxford Cross and an uninterrupted skyline.

3.1 Demographics

- 3.1.1** Georgeham Parish was once an agriculture-based economy, but farming practices have changed. The remaining farms have diversified and are not major employers. Many agricultural workers have moved away, others have found alternative employment in service industries – mostly tourism.
- 3.1.2** Today, the parish is predominantly a holiday destination. The area is famous for the superb surfing beaches at Croyde and Putsborough. Many thousands of visitors come every year to walk, enjoy the beaches, and appreciate the open spaces and the opportunities for sporting and recreational activities in the area. The residents also appreciate living in the beautiful environment of fields, dunes and historic village centres.
- 3.1.3** According to the latest available Office for National Statistics records, there were 1053 dwellings in the parish in 2011. Of these, 620 (59%) had at least one permanent resident and 433 (41%) did not have any full-time residents. Social rented housing accounted for 30 dwellings.
- 3.1.4** Many retired people now live in the villages. Early retirees have also moved here, supplementing their income from the tourist trade. More recently, younger families have been drawn to the area and its amenities, taking advantage of developments in IT to work mostly from home. Other residents find employment outside the parish in neighbouring towns or further afield.
- 3.1.5** The current resident population is therefore a mix of families who have lived in the parish for generations and relatively recent newcomers. There is a need to keep and attract more young people and families to maintain a permanent, resilient and diverse community.
- 3.1.6** The Covid pandemic is likely to increase demand for holiday accommodation as well as homes for people seeking to relocate to the area, with consequences for the landscape, housing stock, amenities and infrastructure of the parish.

3 Social and Community



- Footpath 1, before it joins the coastal path, overlooking Putsborough Sands.

3.2 Amenities

- 3.2.1 Services and facilities are concentrated in the two main villages. Each has a village hall, a bus service, post office/store and public houses. Croyde is increasingly popular with surfers. It has shops, cafés and restaurants focused mainly on serving holidaymakers. It also has a car dealership.
- 3.2.2 The parish church and school are both in Georgeham. Croyde also has a small church and Baptist chapel. The parish shares recreational facilities: two play parks, beach volleyball courts, a football pitch and a multi-use games area. The main villages are also served by a mobile library service.
- 3.2.3 The community values its local amenities. The post offices, shops, pubs and cafés remain viable because of the resident population who sustain these businesses through the winter months.
- 3.2.4 A network of paths, tracks and bridleways traverse the parish – including Footpath 1 from Georgeham to Putsborough beach and a beautiful section of the South West Coast Path around Baggy Point, which is recognised for its wildlife and geological interest. These rights of way are vitally important to the well-being and economy of the parish (see map, [page 97](#)).
- 3.2.5 Route 27 of the National Cycle network, also known as the Devon Coast to Coast, crosses the parish. Saunton Golf Club, with two championship courses, is just beyond the southern boundary.

3.3 Education

- 3.3.1 Georgeham Primary School is vitally important to the community. It attracts families with young children and creates life-long links through the age groups, but its size and fluctuating numbers can cause problems. The school has submitted its own report (see Section 16, [pages 89-90](#)).

3.4 Broadband

- 3.4.1 Superfast broadband is available in some parts of the parish, but there are areas too far from BT's fibre-enabled boxes where it is not available.



- Georgeham Church of England Primary School.

3 Social and Community

3.5 Roads

- 3.5.1** The roads throughout the parish are mostly single carriageway with passing places at intervals, except for the B3231 south of Croyde which is double track. Most roads have no footpaths and are shared by trucks, cars, farm vehicles, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians, including children, often in push chairs.
- 3.5.2** The main road through the parish – from St Mary’s Road, Croyde, through Cross and Forda to Georgeham – is single carriageway in many places. It can be extremely busy in the summer, carrying holidaymakers as well as local traffic.
- 3.5.3** The road provides the scenic alternative route to the A361 from Braunton to Mullacott Cross. It is an convenient link for commercial deliveries between Croyde, Woolacombe and Ilfracombe, and is the bus route serving Croyde and Georgeham. It is also popular with cyclists. In summer congestion on the road can cause considerable delays.
- 3.5.4** There is a 30mph speed limit in Croyde and a 20mph limit in Georgeham, but elsewhere the road is derestricted. Speeding through and between the two villages is common. This, and the level of traffic at peak times, can be dangerous.



- Georgeham's 20mph speed limit.

3.6 Public transport

- 3.6.1** There is an hourly bus service from Georgeham to Croyde, Saunton, Braunton and Barnstaple. In the summer there is a half-hourly service from Croyde to Barnstaple. The Tarka Line railway runs between Barnstaple and Exeter, linking with London Paddington and London Waterloo services and the Midlands. Tiverton Parkway is also a vital link to the railway system and is used by members of the parish who work further afield.

3.7 Public rights of way and cycle routes

- 3.7.1** There are a number of rights of way comprising footpaths and bridleways used mainly for recreational purposes. The South West Coast Path also crosses the parish. In general, the footpath network is good. However, there are gaps – for instance, between Georgeham and Croyde, and between Georgeham and Putsborough – which involve walking on busy roads (see Aspirational Path Map, [page 98](#)).
- 3.7.2** National Cycle Network routes 27 and 278 pass through the parish on public roads. There are no dedicated cycle ways, although route 278 does connect to Marine Drive at Putsborough.



- Roads in the parish are mostly single carriageway with passing places.

3 Social and Community



- Traffic congestion is a concern for many residents.

3.8 Road safety

3.8.1 Traffic congestion, parking provision and road safety are clearly significant concerns for many residents. The Plan supports measures to enhance road safety for all users, discourage speeding and, where practicable, improve and extend provision for pedestrians and cyclists to encourage these as alternative means of transport to the car.

3.8.2 Although issues such as speed reduction are outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, it supports initiatives with Devon County Council as the local highways authority to develop proposals and ensure that new developments contribute to these aims.

3.8.3 For example, Croyde Area Residents' Association, with Parish Council support, has raised funds to purchase a speed awareness monitor. As well as encouraging drivers to observe speed limits, the device also records data on the volume and speed of traffic, which will be shared with Devon Highways to help inform future planning decisions (see Section 14, [pages 80-81](#)).



- Signage discourages speeding.

3 Social and Community

3.9 Sewerage and surface water drainage

3.9.1 Georgeham and Croyde are connected to a main sewer, although the hamlets are not linked to this system. The treatment plant at Croyde ensures that no sewage contamination reaches the beach ^[1]. Large fluctuations in visitor numbers places increasing pressure on the sewerage system.

3.9.2 However, road tankers are required to remove the effluent solids for treatment elsewhere. According to South West Water figures, more than 3755 tonnes of waste was transported in 195 tanker loads in 2018.

3.9.3 Tanker movements increase during the summer when the larger camp sites' effluent tanks also need more frequent emptying. Consequently, tankers travelling through Croyde can add to traffic congestion at peak holiday times.

3.9.4 In some areas, sewers of pitch fibre construction are vulnerable to collapse with age ^[2].

3.9.5 The parish's key settlements are located in coombes – deep hollows or valleys in the landscape. Surface water from the surrounding hills and springs feeds into streams and land drains, but flooding is not uncommon in older parts of the villages.

3.9.6 New development must mitigate the impact on surface water systems. New roofs, roads and hard standing in one area can affect another. The parish is mindful of the effect of climate change on rainfall patterns and of the devastation caused by flash flooding elsewhere on the South West coastline, for example at Boscastle and Lynmouth.

3.9.7 Recently, a blocked pipe between Ruda Holiday Park and the sewage treatment plant caused a release of effluent onto the beach, although this was quickly addressed by South West Water.



• Croyde Sewage Treatment Works, with Ocean Pitch campsite and the Ruda Holiday Park beyond.

3.10 Objectives

To preserve and enhance the amenities, services and facilities which contribute to the resilience, quality of life and enjoyment of the community and its visitors.

^[1] In response to concerns raised with South West Water about the appearance of slime on the beach, Croyde Area Residents' Association was referred to Environment Agency advice on algal blooms in the sea, at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/marine_algae, which states: "Marine algae include seaweeds and microscopic plants called phytoplankton. A bloom is usually made up of one species and occurs when conditions for growth are ideal, often in the summer ... Some non-toxic blooms can be mistaken for sewage pollution. One of the most common bloom-forming algae in English coastal waters forms a brown, frothy scum. This is often blown onto the shore where it breaks down into an unpleasant brown slime that smells like sewage. This soon breaks down and disappears."

^[2] Pitch fibre sewerage pipes are often found in developments built between 1950s and mid-1970s. The walls of these pipes tend to delaminate over time, losing their shape and strength. The pipes can also be damaged by heavy traffic and roots. Whilst most highways issues are the responsibility of Devon County Council, there are unadopted roads in the parish. Many of these roads now have second homes or holiday homes in them associated with increased traffic. Building new homes involves new links to the sewerage system. South West Water has assumed responsibility for repairing drainage outside the boundary of private properties, but piecemeal repairs to drains can lead to a tapestry of repaired road surfaces which remains the responsibility of the individual property owners of the street. This can fuel resentment of the holiday industry by residents.

3 Social and Community



- Pedestrians and traffic are separated by a wide bank along this stretch of Moor Lane.

3.11 Social and Community policies

SC1: Community facilities [1]

Proposals for the development or change of use of existing community facilities will only be supported where reasonable and sustained attempts have been unable to secure their continued social, economic and/or environmental use, for example, by providing evidence that the site or facility has been placed on the open market at a reasonable price for at least a year.

In considering the acceptability of such proposals, special regard will be given to the desirability of preserving the spaces, buildings or their settings, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

SC2: Education

The Plan recognises the central importance of Georgeham Primary School to the long-term character and viability of the community. Proposals for the development and/or expansion of the school will be supported subject to meeting relevant policies relating to the built environment.

SC3: Walking, cycling and riding

When any new development is proposed, it should provide facilities for walking, cycling and riding, to encourage access between the development and local amenities by non-motorised means, as well as for recreational purposes. Developments which would affect the existing rights of way shown in the map on [page 97](#) should not result in their use being less safe, convenient or attractive. Opportunities to deliver new or enhanced rights of way, identified in the aspirational map on [page 98](#), will be supported.

SC4: Loss of sports and recreation facilities

Development that results in the loss of community facilities and public spaces currently used for sports or recreation (including areas where ownership is not defined), or that results in any harm to their character, setting, safety, accessibility, appearance, general quality and amenity value, will only be permitted if they are replaced by community facilities of equal or higher quality, and can be provided on the same or an equally (or more) suitable and accessible site within the area.

[1] Community facilities encompass a wide range of local facilities and services accessible to members of the community including schools, libraries, shops, healthcare facilities, places of worship, meeting halls, public houses, sports facilities and public open spaces. The Localism Act 2011 introduced provision to help communities safeguard land and buildings serving a community purpose. Assets of Community Value (ACVs) can be nominated if they are of interest socially (such as for sport, culture or recreational uses) or increase the well-being of the community now or in the future. A community group (such as a society, parish council, neighbourhood forum, not-for-profit organisation, or a group of at least 21 individuals) that is locally connected to the area can nominate an asset to the local authority.

4 Housing

4.1 Market forces

- 4.1.1 The number of houses in the villages has been increasing for many years as the population has changed and grown, but the number of permanent residents is falling. The last 15 years, in particular, have seen greater demand for holiday accommodation and for homes for people moving to the area. This is likely to increase as a result of the Covid pandemic.
- 4.1.2 Housing demand, coupled with general house price inflation, has raised property values. Consequently, the local property market commands a premium. Today there is little on the market for sale under £350,000.
- 4.1.3 Local wages are low, and many local people cannot afford to buy or rent in the parish. In Spring 2021, the average salary for the Barnstaple area was £24,000 a year, according to the compensation research organisation PayScale (www.payscale.com).
- 4.1.4 Sites for possible development are rare. New houses are often bought as holiday lets or by those seeking second homes. Many existing houses are sold to the same market.
- 4.1.5 A property survey conducted by Croyde Area Residents' Association in 2017 (see Section 14, [pages 81-82](#), and map, [page 99](#)), indicated that 57% of homes in Croyde did not have a permanent occupant, and there were streets – Watery Lane, for example – with only one resident in the winter. Analysis by the *Guardian* newspaper in 2020 revealed that there were 23 Airbnb listings for every 100 homes in Croyde and Georgeham. ^[1]
- 4.1.6 Few properties in the parish have a holiday occupation condition. Some are located in the Leadengate area of Croyde. However, a number of these chalet properties have acquired permanent residential status in recent years. In Georgeham an estimated 30% of properties are holiday homes.
- 4.1.7 The trend towards holiday home purchase in the area has also led to the redevelopment and enlargement of individual properties, which has reduced the number of smaller homes and exacerbated parking problems in some roads, such as Cloutman's Lane, Croyde.
- 4.1.8 The pressure on the housing market and the desirability of the area mean that developers are constantly seeking new sites and permission to build on them. However, the unlimited provision of houses risks reducing the visual attractiveness of the area (on which the economy largely depends) and putting greater strain on infrastructure and the natural environment.

4.2 Principal residence occupancy

- 4.2.1 The Plan aims to support full-time principal residence housing. Our main communities risk becoming ghost villages without a healthy proportion of permanent residents. This will impact on the sustainability of the whole economy.
- 4.2.2 Some areas of Croyde – and now parts of Georgeham – are increasingly at risk of becoming overpopulated with visitors, as properties are enlarged and reconfigured internally to accommodate more people. These properties are often registered as large family homes of four bedrooms or more, but an internet check reveals that this is not their actual or intended use.
- 4.2.3 Therefore, occupiers of homes with a principal residence condition should be required to keep proof that they are meeting the condition, and to provide this proof should the District Council request it. Proof of principal residence is, for example, being on the local electoral register or registered with a local healthcare practice, or regular payment of utility bills that demonstrate year-round use. Such restrictions already exist, for example, at Penny Hill, Croyde.
- 4.2.4 See [Section 17, pages 91-94](#) for more detail justifying the principal residence occupancy policy.

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/feb/20/revealed-the-areas-in-the-uk-with-one-airbnb-for-every-four-homes>

4 Housing

4.3 Affordable homes

- 4.3.1** To keep a good balance of population principally resident in the area, more smaller housing units and socially rented homes are required. The community has highlighted the lack of suitable housing for young people who have grown up in the area and wish to remain here; for older people who wish to downsize; and for single people employed in the area who perhaps also work unsocial hours.
- 4.3.2** The Parish Council responded to the Local Plan's goal to build more than 50 new houses by 2031, and has agreed on the sites. The Local Plan's housing allocation will provide up to eight homes to help meet identifiable affordable housing need (five in Croyde and three in Georgeham), but as of October 2018 there were 25 applicants on the Housing Needs register, so these numbers may not meet current and future needs.
- 4.3.3** It is important that allocated sites provide sufficient social rented houses and shared ownership houses to meet demand. Accordingly, the Parish Council conducted a Housing Needs Survey to identify the true level of affordable housing need in the parish. This has informed and justified setting up the Georgeham Parish Community Land Trust, a community-led non-profit organisation to develop and steward affordable housing provision, which was incorporated in December 2019.
- 4.3.4** Housing development should be genuinely Plan-led. The parish needs homes to encourage more permanent residents, but there is a risk that most new houses and also older houses will sell as second homes, or for holiday letting. Whilst this is good for tourism, it is feared that pressure to attract it and fulfil its requirements will become too dominant and in time will make the parish less attractive to holidaymakers, who appreciate the friendly communities and the area's beauty.

4.4 Self-catering accommodation

- 4.4.1** There is a growing concern that in the last few years self-catering accommodation is offering increasingly enlarged properties. Small units are bought, converted, and a small family house becomes a large accommodation unit, often for multi-occupation, often with a hot tub and limited parking.
- 4.4.2** This can limit the availability of housing to meet local need, cause noise nuisance to neighbours and increase on-street parking on narrow roads. The Plan aims to support a range of holiday accommodation with adequate facilities to meet the needs of visitors and minimise the effects of the large number of temporary residents on the character of the parish.

4.5 Objectives

The Plan aims to meet the housing needs of local people, to bring greater balance to the local housing market, to create new opportunities for people to live and work in the area, and to strengthen the community and local economy. In doing so, it strives to:

- a) Safeguard the sustainability of the settlements in the parish, whose communities risk being eroded by the number of properties that are not permanently occupied, and to limit the provision of large multi-occupant holiday lets.
- b) Contribute to meeting the local demand for affordable and principal residence housing so that the parish continues to be a place where people of all ages can live and work.
- c) Encourage building development which contributes to the balance of housing stock in terms of type and tenure, and is socially inclusive.
- d) Ensure the proper management of any development following the commitment of all allocated sites, so that any such development makes the maximum possible contribution to redressing the balance between permanent residency and holiday accommodation.

4 Housing

4.6 Housing policies

H1: Principal residence occupancy [1]

The development of new housing within the Plan area will be permitted for principal residence occupancy only, supported by the most effective legally-binding method to ensure principal residence occupancy. New housing includes like-for-like replacement dwellings. Occupiers of homes with a principal residence occupancy condition or obligation are required to keep proof that they are satisfying the condition and produce this to the District Council if required. See Section 17, [pages 91-94](#) for more detail.

H2: Housing developments

Proposals for housing and mixed-use developments within the villages' development boundaries that result in a net increase of six or more dwellings will be subjected to the following criteria:

- a) That affordable housing should be provided on the same site as any open market housing, and
- b) That the affordable dwellings should be occupied by people whose housing need meets the criteria set by the Georgeham Parish Community Land Trust and/or the local authority Housing Register.

H3: Rural exception sites [2]

Development land of one hectare or less will be considered for affordable housing development outside the development boundary subject to the following criteria:

- a) The purpose of the development should be to redress the balance of housing stock in the area available for local residents, in terms of size of units, socially affordable price, and tenure, and
- b) The number, type, size, mix and tenure of dwellings should reflect needs identified by the 2019 Housing Needs Survey, or any future surveys which may update the 2019 survey.

H4: Balancing housing supply

Proposals to change housing use from residential (use class C3) to holiday let (*sui generis*) will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that:

- a) Sufficient parking space can be provided within the curtilage of the proposed holiday let to ensure that no additional on-street parking will be necessary, and
- b) There are no significant impacts on local amenity for nearby residents in terms of noise disturbance or traffic generation, and
- c) Proposals for the provision of new purpose-built holiday accommodation must demonstrate that there is a need which cannot be met by existing provision in the parish.

H5: Housing density

The housing density of all sites, including infill, backland [3] or windfall sites, should result in development which is in character with its immediate surroundings.

[1] A principal residence is the occupants' sole or main residence, where they spend most of their time when not working away from home. The condition requires that the residence is the primary residence of those entitled to occupy it.

[2] Rural exception sites are small sites for affordable homes in perpetuity in areas that would not normally be used for housing. They seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority's discretion, for example, where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

[3] Backland development refers to development of sites attached to existing buildings, such as rear gardens and private open space, usually within predominantly residential areas. Such sites often have no street frontages.

5 The Built Environment



- The Crydda stream flows alongside St Mary's Road, Croyde, towards the sea.

5.1 Built Environment characteristics

- 5.1.1** Within the Parish of Georgeham there are designated conservation areas (in the villages of Croyde and Georgeham, and the hamlet of Putsborough). In these areas the buildings are mostly of cob and stone. There are other areas where old agricultural farmsteads and associated buildings are mainly of stone (for example, Pickwell and North Buckland).
- 5.1.2** In addition to conservation areas, there are distinct character areas in the two main villages of Croyde and Georgeham which have been developed since the Second World War. They have recognisable features, and are largely cul-de-sacs whose roads are unadopted. Character areas are not necessarily distinguished by historical or architectural merit, but form part of the distinctiveness of the villages in the parish. They are recognisable small estates or streets with their own design features – see Croyde Character Area Assessment (Section 13, [pages 64-77](#)) and Georgeham Character Area Assessment (Section 15, [pages 83-88](#)).
- 5.1.3** It is easy for the landscape to be degraded piecemeal – an extra house with a fine view, a series of extensions resulting in a solid wall of buildings, a hedge replaced by a fence, a bank removed to widen an entrance. This can lead to over-urbanisation of rural village streetscapes.
- 5.1.4** Some development is permitted by legislation and is therefore outside the local planning authority's control. Where development requires permission, this Plan emphasises that the overarching objective should be to ensure that it is not detrimental to local distinctiveness, or the valued landscape of the area which is so fundamental to its character within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 5.1.5** It is particularly important therefore that any proposed new structures are assessed for the impact they will have on the wider setting, rather than being viewed in isolation, and consideration is given to the cumulative impact that these structures will have on the built and natural landscape. They should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the AONB.



- Hedge bank removal to create an access.

5 The Built Environment



- Distinctive streetscapes like this one in Georgeham village should be preserved.

5.2 Conservation Area Character Appraisals

5.2.1 North Devon Council has produced Conservation Area Character Appraisals for the villages of Croyde and Georgeham, and the hamlet of Putsborough. Carrying out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is an important method for identifying the qualities and characteristics of an area and summarising them in such a way that development can be controlled through the planning system. In addition, North Devon Council adopted the 'Leadengate Design Guide' in 2020 ^[1].

5.2.2 Whilst these appraisals and design guide deal with specific districts within the parish, the principles which underpin them can be extended to cover those areas which adjoin them. For example, the Ora Stone Park and Penny Hill developments in Croyde have distinctive design elements also and represent the growth and change which has taken place since the 1960s; in Georgeham, developments at Davids Hill, Glebefield and Longland Lane have recognisably distinct building design features too (see Croyde Character Area Assessment, Section 13, [pages 64-77](#); and Georgeham Character Area Assessment, Section 15, [pages 83-88](#)).



- Ora Stone Park in Croyde.

^[1] The conservation area character appraisals and design guide have been reviewed and adopted to supplement the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031. They will therefore underpin the planning policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.

5 The Built Environment

5.2.3 The policies in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011-2031 address the key issues relating to the Built Environment focusing on sustainable construction and buildings (ST04, ST05) and design principles (DM04).

5.2.4 Within the character and conservation areas, the positive contribution of modern design and materials is welcomed provided that the modern elements do not dominate within areas of traditional construction and appearance, and contribute to energy efficiency.

5.2.5 This Neighbourhood Plan aims to emphasise those aspects of the built environment which make Georgeham Parish distinct. There is a risk that new development, or ‘improvements’ to existing property, has an over-urbanising impact which is not in character with a rural village, or which can be disproportionate in scale or in the intensity of use of the property concerned, so does not reflect the local character of the villages and hamlets in the parish.

5.2.6 By recognising the patterns of growth and change which have taken place over time, and by valuing and protecting the ancient and historic elements in the environment, the Plan contributes to maintaining the distinct quality of the parish, ultimately sustaining its environmental, economic and social aspirations.

5.2.7 The parish is a holiday destination for thousands of people each year, who inevitably generate large quantities of waste and bring items to enjoy their holiday which are sometimes discarded here. It is important that adequate facilities for rubbish and recycling are provided to protect the environment. In addition, storage is needed for surfboards, bicycles, pushchairs, deckchairs and other items associated with a day at the seaside.



5 The Built Environment

5.3 Objectives for the Built Environment

5.3.1 The Plan aims to:

- a) Recognise and maintain the quality and distinctive characters of the built environment, and aspire to identify design principles which can be developed into Design guides for the parish.
- b) Ensure that any new housing and/or extensions respect the established vernacular of the locality in terms of the area's history, its building styles and materials; and, where possible, enhance and protect designated listed buildings, in accordance with statutory obligations.
- c) Identify and protect the historic cores of the villages and hamlets, and recognise the importance of individual components of building design which contribute to the distinctive character of different parts of the parish (see Croyde Character Area Assessment, Section 13, [pages 64-77](#); and Georgeham Character Area Assessment, Section 15, [pages 83-88](#)).
- d) Conserve and, where possible, enhance the traditional banks, hedges and boundaries, including streams and run-off gullies, which contribute to the character of the parish, and recognise their importance to the environment; and build new banks and traditional boundaries where opportunities present, observing statutory guidance.
- e) Acknowledge that these boundaries and buildings act also to frame, conserve and enhance open spaces and fields, contributing to the quality of the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- f) Maintain the characteristic qualities of the curtilage patterns which exist in the parish settlements by ensuring that developments have elements of green space such as garden areas, verges and hedges as part of the design.
- g) Reduce waste, encourage reuse and recycling and prevent pollution.
- h) Promote repurposing, retro-fitting and reuse of materials in building projects to minimise waste and impact on the environment, and to enhance energy efficiency.



- Above and below: traditional stone gulleys and walls contribute to the character of the parish.



5.4 Policies for the Built Environment

BE1: New developments

New developments must respect the density, volume, height, street lines and roof lines (excluding chimneys) of the nearby streetscape, and use appropriate materials, in line with Local Plan policy DM04, and complement key features in parish character area appraisals, and the special character of the AONB.

BE2: Replacement buildings

The gross internal area of any replacement building within the designated character areas (see maps, [pages 100-101](#)), will not exceed the size of the existing building.

BE3: Boundary treatments

Any new developments, renovations or extensions to existing properties, should incorporate boundary treatments which reflect the local design features of the nearby streetscapes. Where the streetscape shows an open frontage, this should be maintained. Where possible, banks and hedges

5 The Built Environment

should be repaired, maintained or built to conserve or enhance the landscape. In exceptional circumstances, where development fronts a road, an existing bank should be repositioned to create a suitable access or footpath, in accordance with best practice and professional guidance.

BE4: Listed buildings, Conservation Areas and Character Areas

Where a proposal affects the setting of a listed building or has impact on a Conservation Area or Character Area, it will be expected to demonstrate how it will contribute positively to the quality of the character of the area and that environment.

BE5: Applications outside the development boundaries

Proposals for development outside the development boundaries should demonstrate and justify why it needs to be located there. Rural exception development on the fringes of existing settlements should comply with Policy H3, [page 14](#), and contribute positively to the appearance of the settlement when viewed from the surrounding countryside.

Proposals for all new agricultural buildings outside the development boundaries of the villages should comply with Policy ED2, [page 28](#).

BE6: Extensions to existing properties

- a) Applications for extensions and additions to existing properties will be considered in the context of the housing and built environment objectives. In addition, it will be a requirement that the property has adequate off-street parking, suitable for the number of people who could occupy the property, and
- b) The plans ensure that the extension is built proportionate to the curtilage, retaining green space which contributes to the sustainability of the natural environment and the historic character of the settlement, such as including traditional Devon banks and hedges.

BE7: Other provisions

All proposed residential and commercial developments will be required to demonstrate that they provide:

- a) Refuse and recycling storage within the curtilage which is securely covered to protect from wind, seagulls, foxes, rodents and other pests, and
- b) Facilities for storing garden furniture, tools, bicycles, surfboards and wetsuits, etc.

BE8: Disturbance and pollution

Developments which are likely to generate disturbance by either noise, light, fumes or dust must be capable of mitigation, and be mitigated adequately. Regard should be given to the amenities and privacy of surrounding properties, including the environmental effects of light spillage. The light spill of indoor and outdoor facilities in open areas would be considered detrimental to the environment [\[1\]](#).

BE9: New recreational and sporting facilities

New and ancillary indoor facilities supporting recreational and/or sporting provision should, where practicable, be accommodated in existing buildings that are of a form, bulk and general design in keeping with their surroundings. Where a new building is a functional requirement of the proposal it should be in or adjacent to a settlement or an existing complex [\[2\]](#).

Proposals for stables will be supported provided they are located in or adjacent to an existing business or they utilise existing buildings that are in keeping with their surroundings.

[\[1\]](#) Mitigation of light spillage, for example, could include the use of non-reflective or one-way glass.

[\[2\]](#) Such as a cluster of holiday cottages which may wish to add or extend facilities like a games room or covered swimming pool; or building a sports pavilion at a playing field.

6 The Natural Environment



- Croyde Bay, looking north towards Middleborough Hill from Downend.

6.1 Landscape and environment characteristics

- 6.1.1** Most of the parish lies within the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), cherished by residents and visitors alike. The coastline is part of the Heritage Coast, a Marine Conservation Zone and a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area. There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) between Saunton Down and Baggy Point. The South West Coast Path runs the length of the coastline. The National Trust is also a significant land owner along the coastline.
- 6.1.2** Much of the parish is protected by existing policies designed to protect the land and seascapes, for example those of Devon County Council, North Devon and Torridge district councils, North Devon Coast AONB, the National Trust, the Biosphere Plan and the Shoreline Management Plans of the Marine Management Organisation.
- 6.1.3** During consultations, the community identified public places and spaces that they would like to see retained and protected. These include: the AONB and the existing conservation areas; the churches and the fields either side of the Crydda stream from Croyde village centre to the beach; and the green horseshoe formed by the ridges and slopes surrounding Croyde that extend to the sea at the north and south ends of the bay.
- 6.1.4** The parish has many rights of way, the most notable being the South West Coast Path. They provide an important link to and within the AONB and the great landscape and coastal character, as well as opportunities for recreation, walking, horse riding and cycling. Furthermore, they allow people to move about without always having to use narrow country lanes which frequently do not have pavements and are often congested with traffic.
- 6.1.5** Areas within the parish which are outside the AONB itself also contribute to the special identity of the natural environment in terms of ecological, amenity, recreational or agricultural value. Respondents in consultations felt strongly that views around the parish, which make it such a special place to live, should be protected.
- 6.1.6** Due to the coastal position and farming landscape of the area, there are important panoramas, vistas and views which contribute to the quality and character of the parish coastline, countryside and townscapes. Development should not compromise the special vistas and views, such as those described and pictured in Section 11, [pages 45-59](#), and shown on the map, [page 96](#).

6 The Natural Environment

6.2 Landscape and environment threats

6.2.1 The North Devon Coastal Downs Landscape Character Assessment lists threats to the landscape including the following with examples likely within Georgeham Parish:

- a) Excessive tourism facilities, such as empty second homes, increased holiday park accommodation
- b) Speeding or congested traffic, visible from viewpoints in the landscape
- c) Telecoms masts, including additions to those already in place
- d) Erosion of the dunes and downland footpaths on thin soils
- e) Land abandonment, such as scrubbing up of a large proportion of the slopes of Saunton Down
- f) Intensification of agriculture, involving the removal of hedgerows to form larger fields and construction of conspicuous unsightly large barns
- g) Climate change and coastal erosion
- h) Renewables installations, unlikely to be permitted within an AONB but requiring vigilance
- i) Invasive species, such as ragwort, Japanese knotweed and non-native escapes from gardens into the landscape.

The policies and objectives of the Built and Natural Environment Sections of this Plan are closely related. Indeed, the objectives and policies throughout all sections of this Plan are designed to promote the Sustainability Agenda of the NPPF.

6.3 Objectives for the natural landscape and environment

6.3.1 The Plan aims to:

- a) Safeguard the environmental resources of the coast and countryside in the parish, so that its special character and quality may be available for the enjoyment, appreciation and recreational use of the resident community and visitors for this and future generations.
- b) Protect aspects of the natural environment that provide habitats for local flora and fauna, and ensure that the value of the natural environment is given due weight when applications for development are considered. The Plan aims to achieve biodiversity net gain on all development applications.
- c) Retain and improve open areas within settlements that have amenity, environmental or other value. This includes green fingers, corridors or wedges which enable the countryside to penetrate built-up areas, helping to maintain a rural character and appearance and to provide wildlife corridors which promote sustained biodiversity in addition to resilience to climate change.
- d) Protect and, where practicable, extend the rights of way network for all users, which is particularly important in facilitating access to and appreciation of the countryside, as well as providing links between settlements, green spaces and the coast.
- e) Safeguard trees, woodland, hedgerows and Devon banks which make a significant contribution to the environment and character of the area.
- f) Pursue an agenda for managing the effects of climate change (see the Climate and Wildlife Emergency Group Submission, Section 12, [pages 60-63](#)).
- g) Protect the proposed designated green spaces described in the Green Space Policy Compliance Statement, Section 9, [pages 30-36](#).
- h) Pursue the highest aspirational standards of energy efficient guidelines applicable at the time of submitting the planning application.

6 The Natural Environment



- Putsborough Sands, viewed from Ramson Cliff.

6.4 Policies for the Natural Environment

NE1: Landscape spaces and open spaces

Development proposals will be supported where they present a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Appraisal which demonstrates that there would be no adverse landscape or environment impact; or that:

- The benefits would outweigh any adverse impact and that harm is mitigated; and
- Opportunities have been identified and taken to enhance the landscape spaces, for example, by tree planting, creation of hedgerows and Devon banks; and
- Opportunities have been identified and taken to eliminate noise and light pollution, blend in with local topography and respect the landscape character and key views (identified in Section 11, [pages 45-59](#), and on the map, [page 96](#)), and not interrupt skylines or ridges.

NE2: Flora, fauna and forestation

Proposals which incorporate conservation and/or appropriate habitat enhancement to improve biodiversity and achieve sustained biodiversity net gain will be supported.

Development should retain and, where possible, enhance the setting of existing trees, woodland, hedgerows and Devon banks which make a significant contribution to the character of the landscape, settlements, nature conservation, local amenity or environmental character of their surroundings.



- Above and below: new and old Devon banks.



6 The Natural Environment



- Pickwell Manor Farm, which retains medieval fabric and is Grade II listed, demonstrating the beauty of the unbroken skyline.

NE3: Local Green Spaces

Local Green Spaces (LGS) are defined at: The Rabbit Field, Croyde; Croyde Village Green; Croyde Village Play Park; Georgeham Village Car Park; Georgeham Recreation Ground; Georgeham Glebefield and Green. Policies for managing development with the LGS should be consistent with those for the Green Belt and development should not be approved except in very special circumstances (see the Local Green Space Compliance Policy Compliance Statement, Section 9, [pages 30-36](#)).

NE4: Small scale energy efficiency

New development in the parish, including rebuilds and extensions, should demonstrate how opportunities have been identified and taken to incorporate small-scale renewable energy solutions which suit the needs and respect the character of the building and local landscape, such as solar panels, heat pumps and other conservation measures.

With the exception of wind turbines, proposals by the community or businesses for stand-alone renewable and other low carbon energy schemes will be supported if their impacts are (or can be) made acceptable.



- Heat pumps are one potential small-scale renewable energy solution.

7 Economic Development



- Croyde beach during the high season.

7.1 Tourism

- 7.1.1** Tourism is a dominant driver in the parish economy. Tourism and the community are inextricably dependent on each other. The aim of this Plan is to balance the competing needs and interests of tourism and the resident population.
- 7.1.2** Relatively few residents are totally dependent on tourism, but all benefit. Money generated by the tourist trade allows many people to live here, creates full and part time employment and sustains the school, shops, pubs and businesses throughout the year. Other income derives from holiday accommodation and facilities.
- 7.1.3** Tourism generates money directly for local trades – electricians, plumbers, builders, house and garden maintenance firms – as well as indirectly because these businesses also serve the resident population. It allows farmers to diversify and supplement their income, without which they could struggle. In return visitors are able to enjoy an established, welcoming community.
- 7.1.4** The essential basis of the attraction of the area, for residents and tourists alike, is its beautiful rural setting by the sea, the headlands and the surrounding hills and the attractiveness of the old buildings, to say nothing of the South West Coast Path. The area is peaceful and safe.
- 7.1.5** Many residents enjoy surfing, walking, cycling and other outdoor activities as much as the tourists. They also appreciate the amenities of shops, church, pubs, school and buses. It is important to preserve the natural beauty and tranquility of the parish, which attracts so many visitors, whilst also offering facilities and popular attractions such as the annual Oceanfest and SkyBar events which bring others to the area.
- 7.1.6** The last 20 years have seen a marked change in the needs of both tourists and the resident community. The season used to be short, focused on July and August, with a huge influx of tourists staying for one or two weeks. Walkers, surfers and cyclists have extended the season. Improved wetsuit technology has made surfing a year-round sport.
- 7.1.7** There is also a growing tendency for people to come for long weekends. The internet makes it easy to check weather and surf, book accommodation online and come at short notice.



- The Look-Out field at Downend, Croyde, is a popular party and festival venue.

7 Economic Development



- Seasonal camping and car parking in Croyde.

7.1.8 Amenities dependent on tourism can offer better and more stable employment. Tourism is currently the prime economic driver in the area, but the resulting congestion and strain on infrastructure places pressure on the local community, and in particular the village of Croyde. It is important to strike a balance between social, economic and environmental requirements.

7.1.9 The future of tourism is highly dependent on its basic resource – the landscape, beaches, bathing water quality, wildlife and character of the area – and developments within the industry need to nurture and protect this resource for all.

7.2 Holiday accommodation

7.2.1 Visitors have a good choice of places to stay. There are two main holiday complexes, several camp sites, a wide range of bed and breakfast accommodation and a variety of houses and cottages available as holiday lets. Increasingly, holiday accommodation is promoted through online marketplaces such as Airbnb, as well as through more traditional holiday letting agencies.

7.2.2 The parish values a broad range of holiday accommodation. Accommodation which is available throughout the year attracts a diverse range of visitors and boosts the economy.

7.2.3 The aim is to retain this wide range of provision to attract visitors in all seasons to enjoy all that the parish, and North Devon, has to offer in terms of the coastal environment, and cultural heritage.



- Grade II-listed Bridge Farm, Croyde.

7 Economic Development



- Arable fields at Pickwell.

7.3 Agriculture

- 7.3.1** Although agriculture is no longer central to the local economy, the Plan recognises the contribution that farming and land management make to the economy and landscape value of the community. Agricultural land is fundamental to the sustainable future of the parish, the countryside and the area's attractiveness as a rural holiday destination. Devon's Historic Landscape Characterisation provides detail on how the character of the landscape and the pattern of farms, fields and hedgerows has developed since medieval times.
- 7.3.2** Agriculture is still the major land use in the parish, and farmers continue to shape and maintain the landscape, protect biodiversity and preserve its status within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.3.3** Development pressures from the settlements on agricultural land need to be balanced with the need to protect this non-renewable resource. Supporting its continued productive use is an important part of this balance.
- 7.3.4** The impact of any development on the character of the countryside will be reduced if existing farm buildings are reused but, where new buildings are necessary, they should be closely integrated with those already there and be energy efficient, incorporating renewable energy sources as much as possible and have minimal impact on the environment.

7.4 Local businesses

- 7.4.1** Local businesses are largely focused on supporting and servicing the holiday industry. The Plan wishes to encourage more diverse local businesses within the community in response to feedback from the community.



- Holidaymakers relaxing in Croyde.

7 Economic Development

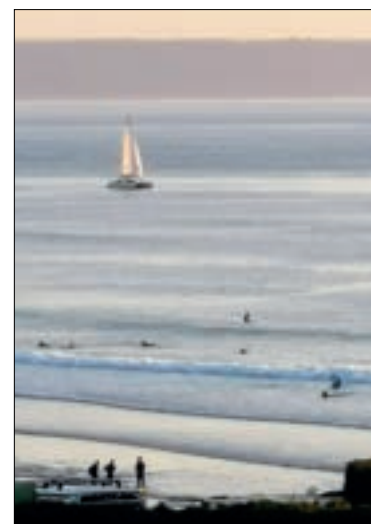


- Many businesses in Croyde depend on supporting and servicing the holiday industry.

- 7.4.2** The absence of fast broadband in the parish needs addressing. People working from home have suggested the creation of a hub in an area with fast broadband, which they can use as necessary.
- 7.4.3** Other trades people who work in the parish have requested a place to store tools. If a suitable location became available, it should be possible to access grants and form a group to progress this. The Plan will support local initiatives to establish and expand the range of small business enterprises.
- 7.4.4** Social, economic and environmental benefits can also be wrought from sustainable rural and coastal enterprises. The coastal waters offer a resource to support a growing surfing economy, which could benefit from improved storage and changing facilities.

7.5 Business development

- 7.5.1** As part of a long-term strategy, the area needs a range of shops and businesses. In order to promote a diverse and resilient local economy, opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses will be supported. Providing space for small and micro-businesses will also contribute to opportunities for higher skilled employment and self-employment in the area. Micro-level businesses (employing fewer than 10 people) will be encouraged.
- 7.5.2** Advances in technologies are increasingly facilitating part-time and full-time residents who work from home but whose business may be located elsewhere. They are making an expanding contribution to the local economy.



- Watersports in Croyde Bay.

7.6 Objectives

- 7.6.1** The Plan aims to:
- Provide support for small businesses that will contribute to a resilient local economy;
 - Encourage a diverse range of businesses that meet the needs of residents and visitors and increase rural employment;
 - Support agriculture within the area, in order to enhance economic diversity, productive capacity and rural employment;
 - Ensure that development related to the tourism industry has economic, social and environmental benefits for the North Devon Coast AONB and surrounding area.

7 Economic Development

7.7 Policies for Economic Development

ED1: Community workspace [1]

Proposals for small community workspace development and employment will be supported both within or adjoining the development boundaries, subject to other Development Plan policies.

ED2: Development on, and development of, agricultural land

Proposals for any development of, or on, agricultural land which is reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit will be supported provided that:

- a) It is sited, where practical, in or adjacent to an existing agricultural complex (the immediate boundary of the existing buildings) and, where practicable, utilises existing buildings and services, such as electricity and water supplies, and
- b) The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and opportunities are taken for sustainable travel, and
- c) They make a continuing contribution to the economic viability of an existing farm unit, and
- d) The plans demonstrate how the access to the new development relates to the existing buildings and services, and to the public highway, and
- e) The proposals would not harm the AONB's special landscape character.

ED3: Rural business development

Proposals which contribute to the variety, growth and expansion of businesses in rural areas through the conversion of existing buildings will be supported, subject to policies contained in other sections of this Plan.

ED4: Camping and caravan sites

Proposals for the development of land, or for existing camping or caravan sites – including extension of opening times – will be supported provided that:

- a) There will not be significant harm to the character of the countryside, and
- b) The layout of such units will be required to avoid a rigid pattern which would not be in keeping with the surroundings, and shall have planting to minimise and assimilate the camping activity into the natural landscape, and
- c) Ancillary facilities to serve visitors staying on the site should seek to blend sympathetically with the landscape and surroundings, whether it is a temporary or permanent facility, and avoid noise or other nuisance to neighbours, and
- d) On camping and caravan sites, a seasonal restriction will be sought to prevent identifiable harm to the character and amenity of the countryside which arises from year-round occupation, and
- e) All camping and caravan sites should have up-to-date and relevant site licences and operate with a pitch density appropriate to the size of the site, positioning pitches in such a way that they do not affect rights of way.

[1] Community workspaces, sometimes known as work hubs, allow small and micro businesses to share space and resources on a flexible basis. They are suitable for the needs of micro and growing businesses, providing business support and a collaborative environment. At their best, open workspaces support economic growth and the regeneration of neighbourhoods, help address disadvantage, and offer a lifeline to the area's creative sector. They are key to maintaining the dynamism and inclusivity of the local economy and cultural life.

8 Implementation and Monitoring



- The view looking east from Ramson Cliff towards Clifton Court, Putsborough and the beach.

8.1 Implementation

- 8.1.1** Implementation will be by submission for examination. If the Neighbourhood Plan passes examination it will go forward to a referendum of the Plan area's residents. This Plan will be the standard applied by the Parish Council when being consulted on planning applications. It forms part of the statutory development plan for the area. Planning application decisions made by the local authority in the parish will be made taking into account the policies set out in this Plan.

8.2 Monitoring

- 8.2.1** The Neighbourhood Plan will be a public document displayed on the Georgeham Parish Council website and North Devon District Council planning portal. As a reference document, it will serve as the justification for all Parish Council planning consultation advice. Recognising that the Plan is a living and evolving document, the Parish Council will review it regularly in the light of changes to the Local Plan.
- 8.2.2** As part of its Annual Review and Report, the Parish Council will monitor its planning application recommendations against District approval decisions, in order to reflect on, and evaluate, how the Neighbourhood Planning Policies are achieving the stated aims and objectives of the Plan (see Planning Decision Monitoring Form, Section 18, [page 95](#)).
- 8.2.3** A review will be conducted to establish whether changes or revisions to the Plan should be made at such time as it becomes recognised that any policies are having unintended consequences which are detrimental to the overall aims and objectives of the Plan, and in any case after five years have passed. Such revisions will follow the process of consultation and inspection as required under the test of meeting the basic conditions for the Plan to be adopted.

9 Green Space Policy Compliance Statement

9.1 Background

- 9.1.1 There are a number of measures in the Localism Act 2011 that provide important opportunities for communities to expand the provision of green spaces in their neighbourhoods and enable local people to play a bigger role in planning, designing, managing and maintaining community green spaces for food growing or recreational and leisure purposes.
- 9.1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework includes new rights for local communities to identify, through their Neighbourhood Plans, local green spaces of particular significance to them, for special protection. This local significance could be because of the green area's beauty, historic importance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. By designating land as local green space, communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances (http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning_system/planningpolicy/planningpolicy_framework/).
- 9.1.3 Through the Community Right to Bid provisions in the 2011 Act, local authorities will be required to maintain a list of land and buildings nominated by local voluntary and community organisations, as well as parish councils, as assets which are of value to the community. When listed assets come up for sale, community interest groups (including parish councils) will be able to trigger a 'six month window of opportunity' – a delay before the owner can dispose of the asset – to prepare a business case and secure funding to bid to buy them on the open market. These facilities could include green spaces from community gardens and parks, or orchards and allotments, and are not restricted to publicly-owned land (<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/21261671.pdf>).

9.2 Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework

- 9.2.1 The Local Green Space Policy NE4 of the Georgeham Parish Neighbourhood Plan complies with the National Planning Policy Framework.

9.3 NPPF (2021) Compliance Statement

- 9.3.1 Paragraph 102 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:
 “The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
 a) In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 b) Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 c) Local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.
- 9.3.2 Paragraph 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:
 “The designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them. Designating land as Local Green Space should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. Local Green Spaces should only be designated when a plan is prepared or updated and be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period”.
- 9.3.3 Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework states:
 “Policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts”.

9.4 Designated green spaces

- 9.4.1 The following five sites are proposed designated green spaces in the parish:



9 Green Space Policy Compliance Statement

1

The Rabbit Field

Site details		
Site name	Grid reference	Description and purpose
The Rabbit Field	SS 438392	Large open area with short maritime turf, crossed by several public rights of way (19, 20, 43) linking to others (41, 42, 44). It forms the gateway to Croyde Beach and Burrows and the SW Coast Path (32).
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
Part of County Wildlife Site. Adjacent to Saunton and Baggy Coast SSSI. Within the following: • North Devon Coast AONB • Heritage Coast • Adopted Coast and Estuary Zone • Adopted Unesco Biosphere Buffer • Braunton Burrows Zone of Influence	Owned by Parkdean Resorts, part of the Ruda Holiday Park land holding.	Outside the village development boundary. Camping rights 14 days per year from the last Saturday in July only. Areas which can be camped on in the rabbit field are restricted by the public rights of way which criss-cross the field.
NPPF criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character and not extensive tract
Close to the holiday park and about 10 minutes' walk from the village centre. In walking distance of many residential areas of the village, its car parks and bus stops. Relied on and used by residents and visitors to play and exercise, picnic, walk dogs (especially when the beach restrictions on dogs are in place from the end of May to the end of September). This is the largest easily accessible open green space area in the village which people have enjoyed for generations.	The area is accessible and much valued and visited by clients of Ruda Holiday Park, residents of the Village, and the general public at all times of year. It is a place that lends itself to and is used by people to meet up. The field provides a natural converging point of the many walking routes around the parish. It is the link to the beach and dunes from the centre of the Crydda valley. The field provides a natural space through which people and wildlife can travel as the landscape transitions from agricultural land to the dunes and beach. The field is therefore one of the key features of the AONB in the Croyde area.	Open green field of about three acres gently sloping down to the north and to the Crydda stream at the centre of the Crydda valley and surrounded by dunes, hedgerows, trees and Devon banks. Bird song is clearly audible. Nature surveys are conducted in this space which is home to a variety of wildlife, for example rabbits, toads, varieties of ladybird, butterflies, moths, damsel flies and beetles. Bats can be viewed at dusk especially closer to the stream and trees. The grassland supports a variety of fungi in the autumn.

9 Green Space Policy Compliance Statement

2

Croyde Village Green

Site details		
Site name	Grid reference	Description and purpose
Croyde Village Green	SS 443391	Triangular level green area running between the Crydda stream and the village hall, adjacent to Jones's Hill on the junction with Hobbs Hill and St Mary's Road. It is the central open space in the historic centre of the village, housing established trees, picnic tables and benches (some memorial) and village notice boards.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
Within North Devon Coast AONB, Heritage Coast and Coast and Estuary Zone.	Inside the Croyde Conservation Area, owned by the Croyde Village Hall Trust.	None.
NPPF criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character and not extensive tract
In the heart of the village. Relied on and used by residents and visitors alike to play games on, picnic and enjoy the green open space it provides.	Small triangular area providing a safe space for people off the busy roads for rest and recreation. It is of economic importance as it hosts a regular craft fairs during the warmer months and Sunday markets in conjunction with the adjacent village hall. It provides a gathering point at festive times such as Christmas when the trees, village hall and neighbouring properties are lit up. The green features a striking monkey puzzle tree.	About 0.2 acre.

9 Green Space Policy Compliance Statement

3

Croyde Village Play Park

Site details		
Site name	Grid reference	Description and purpose
Croyde Village Play Park	SS 443391	Behind the village hall, children's play area with refurbished assault course style equipment, bark surface, two volleyball courts, open space, etc.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
Within North Devon Coast AONB, Heritage Coast and Coast and Estuary Zone.	Just outside Croyde Conservation Area and the village development line. Owned by Georgeham Parish Council.	None
NPPF criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character and not extensive tract
One minute from village centre. Relied on and used by children of residents and visitors alike, to play games, picnic and enjoy the green open space it provides. The village car park is to the east so there is easy access for all.	Much used, safe, part-fenced, part-Devon banked space close to the village stream. There is very little green open space in the village centre. The houses, shops, cafés and pubs are close together. Pavements, where they exist, are insufficient to accommodate many people and traffic is heavy, especially in summer. Accordingly, the play park provides a welcome area of calm away from the bustling centre and traffic.	About 0.75 acre

9 Green Space Policy Compliance Statement

4 Georgeham Recreation Ground

Site details		
Site name	Grid reference	Description and purpose
Georgeham Recreation Ground	SS 468398	Level playing field. Some children's play equipment installed. A refurbished pavilion with changing facilities is being installed.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Just outside the Georgeham Conservation Area. Owned by Georgeham Parish Council.	Pending for alterations to the new pavilion.
NPPF criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character and not extensive tract
A large level space for sports and recreation close to the village centre. Bounded by domestic gardens with high hedges.	There is very little green open space in the village centre. The houses, shops and pubs are close together. Pavements, where they exist, are insufficient to accommodate many people and traffic is heavy, especially in summer. Accordingly, the playing field provides a welcome public area that is much valued and used by Georgeham Primary School, Georgeham and Croyde football Club, other local sports teams, children and the general public throughout the year.	About three acres.

5 Georgeham Glebefield and green

Site details		
Site name	Grid reference	Description and purpose
Georgeham Glebefield and Green	SS 465398	Two green spaces either side of the village car park on the edge of the conservation area.
Checklist		
Statutory designations	Site allocations	Planning permissions
None	Adjacent to the Georgeham Conservation Area. Owned by Georgeham Parish Council.	None.
NPPF criteria		
Close to the community it serves	Demonstrably special	Local in character and not extensive tract
Close to the village centre and village shop. Open and shady areas where villagers can sit or meet. The village notice board is nearby. The Christmas crib is usually situated on the village green and some social gatherings occur there by permission.	The areas are on level open space on the higher ground in the village and with valued views of the historic church. They are bordered to the south by housing and by a strip of linear woodland to the north.	About one acre

10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment

10.1 Introduction

This is a digest of information available from Devon County Council and other sources about the landscape, seascape and biodiversity in Georgeham Parish, compiled by parish councillor Dr Eirene Williams, CEnv, FCIEEM (retired).

10.2 UNESCO Northern Devon Biosphere Reserve

10.2.1 The parish lies completely within the buffer and transition zones of the Biosphere Reserve and as such the parish is an exemplar for sustainable living and is appreciative of the local ecosystem services.

10.2.2 Ecosystem services are the benefits that people freely gain from the natural environment and from properly functioning ecosystems. They are increasingly important in making development or land use change decisions. They include:

- a) Provisioning services such as food, water, timber, energy
- b) Supporting services such as soil formation, nutrient recycling, biodiversity
- c) Regulating services such as flood prevention, pollution control, water purity, carbon sequestration, climate change and sea level rise resilience
- d) Cultural services such as landscape and wildlife beauty, recreational experiences including ecotourism and spiritual welfare.

10.3 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

10.3.1 The landscape of the parish lies within the Exmoor National Character Area. More importantly the parish is central to the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and subject to the AONB Management Plan 2019-24. Only the easternmost part lies outside the NDAONB. This part is within the Devon Landscape Character Area North Devon Downs. However, most of the parish is classified as North Devon Coastal Downs.

10.4 The North Devon Coastal Downs Landscape Character Assessment (2011)

10.4.1 The parish lies within the North Devon Coastal Downs Landscape Character Area (NDCDLCA) and the North Downs Landscape Character Area. Within this, seven smaller scale Landscape Character Types (LCTs) are identified in the parish, namely:

- a) LCT 2C: Steep open slopes, such as the north slope of Saunton Down
- b) LCT 3H: Secluded valleys
- c) LCT 4C: Coastal slopes and combes with settlements, such as the Crydda valley
- d) LCT 4E: Extensive intertidal sands, such as Croyde and Putsborough beaches
- e) LCT 4F: Dunes, such as Croyde Burrows County Wildlife Site
- f) LCT 4H: Cliffs, such as north and south faces of Baggy Point
- g) LCT 5C: Downland, such as the tops of Saunton Down and Baggy.

Each has a description, evaluation and strategy and guidelines which includes protection, management and planning.

10.4.2 Within the Landscape Types there are Landscape Description Units (LDUs), smaller scale again. There are six in the parish. Each has been assessed in detail in terms of its area, its perceptual qualities, its views, land use, habitats, settlements and vernacular architecture. Details of these landscape character attributes can be found on the North Devon AONB website, www.northdevon-aonb.org.uk/our-landscape/landscape-and-seascape.

10.4.3 Distinctive characteristics of the area are headlands, small catchments with spring-fed streams, historic field patterns with hedges (some stone faced), ecological mosaics, active dune systems and traditional buildings. The evaluation uses the words magnificent, tranquil, and dramatic. Mention is made of the two SSSIs in Croyde, the County Wildlife Sites, the Conservation Area, the role of the National Trust and the South West Coast Path.

10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment



- Croyde's active dune system supports a wide variety of wildlife and plant species.

10.5 Threats

10.5.1 Threats envisaged include the following with examples likely within Georgeham Parish:

- Excessive tourism facilities, such as empty second homes, increased holiday park accommodation
- Traffic, such as speeding or congesting vehicle movements visible from viewpoints in the landscape
- Telecoms masts, such as additions to those already visible
- Trampling, such as causing erosion of the dunes and on footpaths on thin soils on the downland
- Abandonment of land, such as scrubbing up of a large proportion of the slopes of Saunton Down
- Intensification of agriculture, such as removal of hedgerows to form larger fields and construction of conspicuous unsightly large barns
- Climate change and coastal erosion
- Renewables installations, unlikely to be permitted within an AONB but requiring vigilance
- Invasive species, such as ragwort, Japanese knotweed and garden escapes into the landscape.

10.5.2 The NDCDLCA recommends:

- Protecting the open character and historic features of the landscape, the seascapes and smooth downland profiles, the lanes and traditional buildings.
- Managing and enhancing the range of coastal habitats, their biodiversity, and their resilience to climate change and visitor pressure, in accordance with the AONB's statutory duties and the guidelines of the Biosphere Reserve.
- Sustaining agricultural use of the land, and features such as hedgerows and hedgebanks.
- Reducing the visual impact of tourist facilities such as caravan parks.

10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment



- The dramatic seascape at Croyde Bay.

10.6 Seascape

- 10.6.1** The seascape is now considered another important aspect of the landscape. The recent assessment discussed below defines Seascape as “an area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea by natural and/or human factors” (Natural England). As with Landscape Assessment the aim is protection, management and planning.

10.7 North Devon and Exmoor Seascape Assessment (2015)

- 10.7.1** Croyde Bay and Baggy Point form one Seascape Character Area assessed (SCA17). A small part of Woolacombe Bay (SCA12) is also relevant to the parish. These are marine areas.

- 10.7.2** Key natural characteristics include the headlands, the geodiversity, flora and fauna both on land – in tidal zones and under the sea – and high wave energy. Cultural features include World War II artefacts, lime kilns, the coastguard pole, tourist developments, recreational use, paths and views.

- 10.7.3** Perceptual and aesthetic aspects include the contrast between the bay and the headlands, the seasonal variation in visitors, seaward views west and north, landward views from the sea, the static caravans and telecommunications masts and windfarms.

- 10.7.4** Most of these are evaluated as sensitive special qualities. Potential threats mirror those mentioned above for the



- The headland at Downend, Croyde.

10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment

landscapes, that is over-development in general with the addition of marine issues such as Marine Conservation Zone designation and fisheries activity, as well as climate change and sea level rise.

- 10.7.5** The assessment also defines Seascape Character Types (SCTs) which are the related terrestrial or intertidal areas. Within the parish there are the same six listed above i.e. LCT 2C, 4C, 4E, 4F, 4H, and 5C, plus:

- a) (LCT 4I), Rocky foreshores all around Downend and Baggy Point
- b) (LCT 4L) Exposed sandy bays, covering the whole western seaward aspect of the parish

10.8 The local Shoreline Management Plan Review SMP2 (2010)

- 10.8.1** The Parish includes six of the policy units listed under this plan, namely LC 32-37. For most of these the recommendation is:

“Allow natural coastal evolution to continue through no active Intervention” because “the objective of the Plan here is to continue to allow the natural evolution of this undefended section of coast, which is designated for its environmental features”.

- 10.8.2** For Middlesborough Hill and Putsborough/Vention:

“Continue to allow existing localised defences to be maintained or replaced if alternative funding is available to reduce the risk of erosion. If alternative funds are not available, then allow natural coastal evolution to continue through No Active Intervention (NAL)” because “the objectives of the Plan here are to allow the natural evolution of this section of coast while managing flood and erosion risk to people and property. The policy for localised areas of Hold The Line (HTL), if funding is available will only have localised impacts on coastal processes so long as defence continues to be in the existing form, especially when much of this unit has a policy of NAI”.

10.9 Dark skies and tranquillity

- 10.9.1** Dark skies and tranquillity indices are also available and are considerations of importance to the NDAONB, to the CPRE and in determining planning decisions.

10.10 Distinctive hedges

- 10.10.1** Devon County Council also recognises distinctive hedges. In the parish the following are noted:

- a) Type 1: Banks with patches of gorse and windswept trees.
- b) Type 10: Mixed species hedges with wildflower-rich banks.



• Windswept trees over a Croyde hedgerow.

10.11 Bathing waters

- 10.11.1** Most of the parish apart from the land on Baggy Point is considered a Bathing Waters Zone of Influence Catchment.

10.12 Notable geological features

- 10.12.1** The coast between Saunton and Croyde is one of the most important localities for showing the key features of the coastal geomorphological and Pleistocene stratigraphy of South West England. The area contains three Geological Conservation Review sites. It is particularly noted for a series of shore platforms, large erratic boulders and a succession of raised beach, blown sand and head deposits. Together, these features provide one of the most comprehensive records in SW England of the evidence for former changes in sea level and fluctuations in climate. This is part of the reason, alongside the related botanical and lichenological features, for its designation as an SSSI in 1986. In addition Putsborough Sands is a County Geological Site.

10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment

10.13 Biodiversity

- 10.13.1** The 148 hectares of the Saunton to Baggy Point SSSI are almost all with the parish. The SSSI citation notes the cliff flora. Much of Baggy Point is covered with dense low-growing gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) but in places this gives way to communities of maritime heath. Growing on the cliff ledges and crevices are rock samphire (*Crithmum maritimum*) and sea beet (*Beta vulgaris* ssp. *maritima*), while sea kale (*Crambe maritima*) and sea stock (*Matthiola sinuata*) are found along the shore.



• Hedges and dunes in Croyde Burrows.

- 10.13.2** The rocks and mineral-rich soils support important lichen communities. On areas of compacted earth, *Pannaria microphylla* and *Pannaria nebulosa* occur; both species have declined markedly in Britain and are not known elsewhere in Devon.
- 10.13.3** This is the only recorded North Devon site for *Squamarina crassa* and the extremely rare *Lecania ralfsii*. On the coastal rocks themselves, *Verrucaria* communities are well developed and species rich; this is one of the best sites for such species in the county.

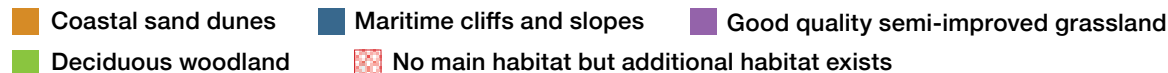
10.14 2010 Parish Biodiversity Audit

- 10.14.1** Devon County Council commissioned a Georgeham Parish Biodiversity Audit in 2010 which was carried using data from the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre and site visits in March 2010. The report includes the following information:
- 10.14.2** The bank of the lane leading to Croydehoe Farm supported a number of maritime plants, including Devon notables. A total of 128 vascular plants were recorded here during the 2008 survey. The Devon notable plants that have been recorded include hairy bird's foot-trefoil, autumn squill, Portland spurge (these also being nationally scarce), tree mallow and sand sedge. Wall brown and small heath butterflies, and otter have been recorded nearby.
- 10.14.3** In the Croyde Field County Wildlife Site which can be seen from the nearby public footpath there are ponds and reed beds with some small areas of species-rich damp plant communities that included southern marsh orchid, brookweed (a Devon notable), carnation sedge, square-stalked St John's wort, greater bird's-foot trefoil and ragged robin.
- 10.14.4** Other areas of grassland included sweet vernal grass, Yorkshire fog, selfheal, cat's-ear, ribwort plantain, silverweed, common knapweed and common fleabane. There were also some areas of improved species-poor grassland.
- 10.14.5** The site is important for amphibians, being a migration route and breeding location for over 1000 common toads. It is also a good habitat for butterflies, dragonflies and birds. Clouded yellow, small skipper, large skipper, ringlet, speckled wood, common blue and meadow brown butterflies, together with bluetailed damselfly, emperor dragonfly, and broad-bodied chaser were seen during the 2006 survey. Birds recorded here included mallard, linnet, sedge warbler and reed bunting.

10.15 Georgeham Parish Priority Habitat Inventory

- 10.15.1** This is a spatial dataset that describes the geographic extent and location of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) (Section 41) habitats of principal importance. It replaces Natural England's previous separate Biodiversity Action Plan habitat inventories. There are 56 habitats recognised as of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England.

10.15.3 Designated SSSIs and their assessed condition



10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment

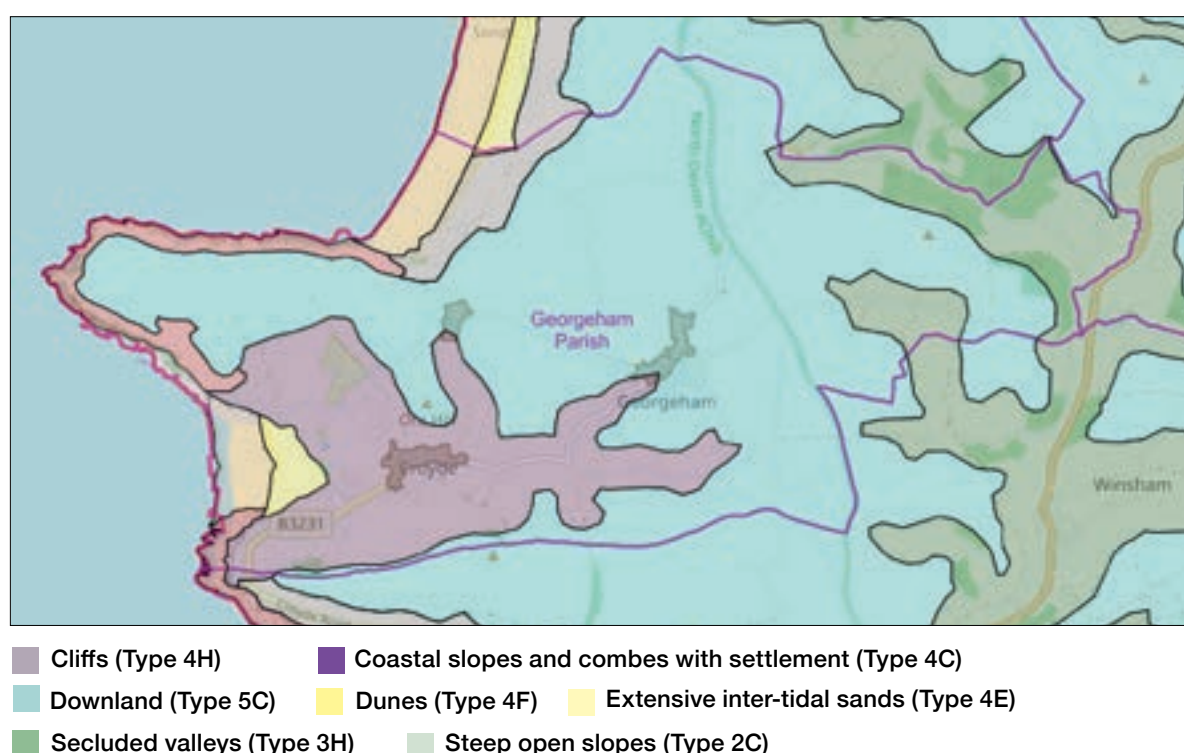
10.16 Georgeham Parish designations

The entire parish lies within the Transition Zone of the UNESCO North Devon Biosphere and more than half of it is within the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In the following maps the parish boundary is shown as a pink line.

10.16.1 The extent of the North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

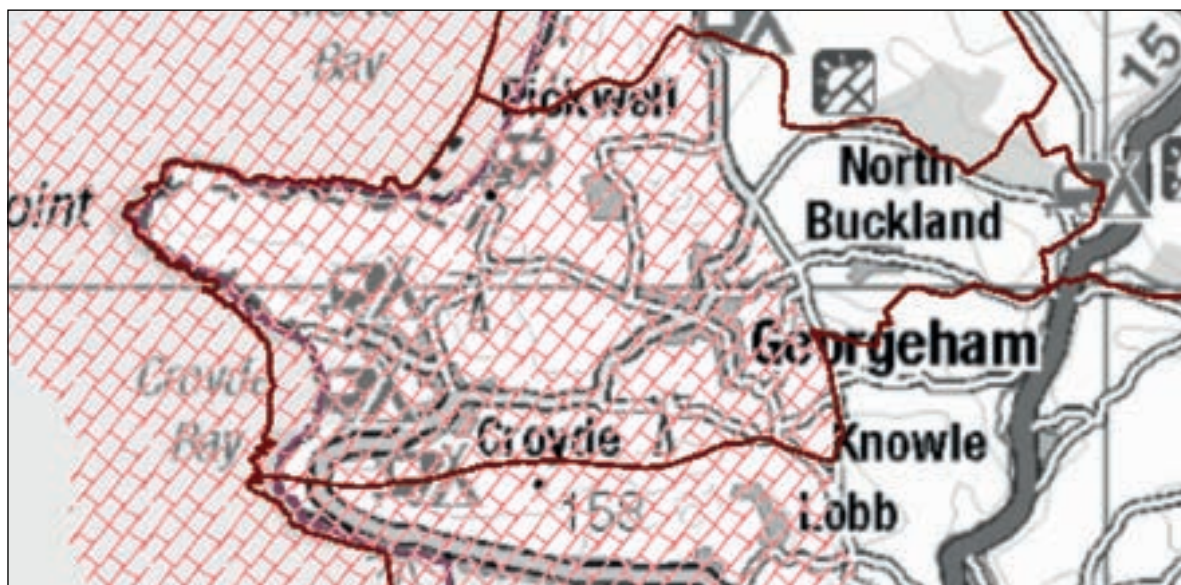


10.16.2 Landscape character types identified within the parish which lies within the Devon Landscape Character Area North Devon Downs



10 Landscape, Seascape and Biodiversity Assessment

10.16.3 The extent of the Heritage Coast within the parish



 Heritage Coasts (England)

11 Key Views and Vistas

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 Georgeham Parish has a characterful and distinctive landscape. The natural attributes of the area provide multiple benefits for people, the economy and nature.

11.1.2 The valued ecosystems, views and vistas, make it a special place to live, work and visit. This also attracts investment. Parishioners and visitors alike have a responsibility to hold this place in trust for future generations. Ecosystems and places of beauty are vulnerable if change is not planned with care.

11.1.3 Elements of the landscape that contribute to the views include the patchwork of small fields, delineated by hedgerows, stone walls and Devon banks, and interspersed with areas of woodland and scrub. Other essential characteristics of the parish include unbroken ridge lines, secluded valleys and combes, historic villages, hamlets and farmsteads, the expanse of undeveloped downland slopes and traditional enclosed strip fields. The coastline is notable for its rare and fragile dunes system, spectacular beaches, sheer cliffs and unspoilt sea views. There are many remarkable, dramatic and far-reaching views from vantage points throughout the parish. The following pages document and describe the special features that make ten of the most cherished vistas worthy of protection. The viewpoints are also pinpointed in the A3 parish map on [page 96](#).

V1: Ora Hill		
View from: Ora Hill Mast	Grid reference: SS 446395	Direction: 360°
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Branton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Branton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Branton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 5C Downland SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/ essential qualities?	Croyde village is seen in the combe to the south. Baggy Point, Hartland Point and Lundy Island and the endless ocean are seen to the west. Putsborough and Woolacombe are seen to the north. Georgeham, Pickwell and Exmoor are seen to the east.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Three heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	Most of the parish can be seen from here. The settlements are seen as being in the bottoms of the valleys. This is of historic relevance as they are positioned for amenities such as water and for defence. The slopes are largely free of development. The views out to sea with Lundy Island in the distance are easily recognisable and iconic.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Development further up the slopes. Development of properties with designs and sizes not in keeping with the local vernacular. Development of camping and caravan sites with longer opening seasons.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Limited planting of trees to screen the mast and existing developments.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	

11 Key Views and Vistas

V1: Ora Hill



- This camp site is full in summer as shown in this picture, but reverts to agricultural use.
- Croyde old village centre to the south.
- The valued green 'horseshoe' space behind the dunes and between the two more modern extensions of the village.



- Looking north towards Woolacombe town.



- The view west, showing Ruda Holiday Camp with permanent static caravans lying under Middlesborough Hill and Baggy Point.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V2: Croyde Bay from Saunton Down		
View from: Alf's seat	Grid reference: SS 445384	Direction: North and east
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 5C Downland LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	The beach, dunes and horseshoe shaped village are distinctive and form an integrated whole in the valley. The seasonal ephemera due to the tourism facilities and farming activities as well as the state of the tide and surf provide varied temporal interest to walkers using Footpath 17.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Three heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	Most of the parish can be seen from here. The settlements are seen as being in the bottoms of the valleys. This is of historic relevance as they are positioned for amenities such as water and for defence. The slopes are largely free of development. The views out to sea with Lundy Island in the distance are easily recognisable and iconic.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Development further up the slopes. Development of properties with designs and sizes not in keeping with the local vernacular. Scrubbing up of the slopes and downs. Development of camping and caravan sites with longer opening seasons.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Limited planting of trees to screen the mast and existing developments on the north side of the valley.	
Other comments or implications:	The main feature is the south side of Baggy Point delimiting the beach. This view is recognisable from many historic photographs and postcards.	



11 Key Views and Vistas

V2: Croyde Bay from Saunton Down



- Baggy Point.
- The valued green 'horseshoe' space behind the dunes and between the two more modern extensions of the village.



- Looking east, the hamlet of Forda and the village of Georgeham lie in the combe.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V3: Putsborough and the north face of Baggy Point		
View from: Pickwell Barton Footpath 1	Grid reference: SS 456411	Direction: South
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 5C Downland LCT 4H Cliffs LCT 4F Dunes SCA 12 Woolacombe Bay	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	Dramatic north facing cliffs as a backdrop to golden sands and interesting rock formations. Distant view of Lundy Island. Almost no buildings visible and one seasonal caravan park.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Listed building Pickwell Manor visible. World War II training site visible.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	The bird's eye view of Putsborough beach with the sheer cliffs are seen from a well-known viewpoint and occasional venue for a wedding marquee.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Any building on the farmland south of the viewpoint or on the top of Baggy Point headland. Any permanent structure in the caravan park.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Not needed at present as ablution blocks and beach café are well screened.	
Other comments or implications:	The whole of the area visible lies within the North Devon Coast AONB and the Heritage Coast designations.	



- The view west towards Baggy Point from Pickwell Down.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V4: North Ridge		
View from: Junction of footpaths 22 and 26 at south end of Broadway Lane and on the ridge of Baggy above Cherry Tree Farm.	Grid reference: SS 439404	Direction: South and west
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 5C Downland LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements SCA 17 Croyde Bay and Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	Croyde village is seen nestling in the combe to the south. Baggy Point, Hartland Point, Lundy Island and the ocean are seen to the west.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Three heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	Most of the parish can be seen from here. The settlements are seen as being in the bottoms of the valleys. This is of historic relevance as they are positioned for amenities such as water and for defence. The slopes are largely free of development. The views out to sea with Lundy Island in the distance are easily recognisable and iconic.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Development further up the slopes. Development of properties with designs and sizes not in keeping with the local vernacular.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Limited planting of trees to screen the telecoms masts and existing out-of-keeping developments.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	



- The view south across Croyde Bay towards Downend, with Hartland Point on the horizon.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V5: Beach Path		
View from: Near the eastern end of Footpath 19	Grid reference: SS 442392	Direction: East and west
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 4F Dunes LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/ essential qualities?	This is on the main pedestrian access to the beach from Croyde village centre. The path runs between tranquil grazed fields and provides views of the village to the north and south, and also a sense of anticipation as the dunes come into view and the sea is heard.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	As the main pedestrian access route for residents and tourists to the beach this route engenders, and has engendered for decades, many pleasant memories for its users. It is a distinctive, well maintained yet rural footpath which can be used by wheelchairs.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Building development closer to the path within the green spaces. Light spillage from recently permitted buildings with large plate glass windows at height. Use by motorised vehicles.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Careful pruning of hedgerow trees alongside the path to ensure the views can be seen. Planting of appropriate wild flowers alongside the path. Control of design of visible buildings.	
Other comments or implications:	Although the views from this point are less panoramic than from many other viewpoints in the parish, they are nevertheless significant as the slopes and downs around the bay are visible, emphasising the rural position of the village. The historic and continued use of this footpath and the associated memories make it a key feature of the parish.	



• Footpath 19 heading towards Croyde village.



• Footpath 19 looking towards Croyde beach.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V6: Middlesborough Hill		
View from: The top of Middlesborough Hill	Grid reference: SS 431399	Direction: South and east
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 4C Coastal slopes and combes with settlement LCT 4E Extensive inter-tidal sands LCT 4F Dunes LCT 4H Cliffs LCT 5C Downland SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	This is a very popular viewpoint, usually accessed from the National Trust car park at Baggy, giving a panoramic view of Croyde Bay and beyond to Down End, Hartland Point and Lundy Island.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Historic Baggy Farm, modernistic Baggy House and the acreage of Baggy Point under National Trust ownership can be seen from here.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	A classic North Devon seascape view, seen on many postcards and publicity material for the area. The historic strip fields on both the north and south sides of Croyde village can be seen in the photographs below.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Insensitive redevelopment of existing properties below this vantage point, plus potential new structures. Light pollution from nearby properties.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Strict adherence to established North Devon development policies and those of the AONB.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	



- As the sun goes down in the west, Croyde Bay's golden sandy beach and slatey rocks are seen to advantage from Middlesborough Hill.

- Further to the east the village of Croyde is seen bounded to the south by the slopes of Saunton Down.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V7: Croyde Dunes		
View from: The high point of the current mobile dune system	Grid reference: SS 437392	Direction: 360°
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 4E Extensive inter-tidal sands LCT 4F Dunes SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/ essential qualities?	The views of Croyde beach at all stages of the tide and during all variations in the weather, and of the encircling headlands, define the character of this popular coastal area. Views of people surfing, swimming, sunbathing, building sandcastles, walking dogs etc form landscape ephemera which are also a key part of the attraction of this view.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Some remaining World War II artefacts are of historic interest.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	These dunes are the backdrop to many a seaside holiday, and recognisable from the childhood memories of many of the British population. It is in the nature of dunes to move and change, and this is of interest in itself. However the essential nature of the fine yellow sand and structural marram grass plus salt-tolerant flora remain the same on a more intimate scale than the expanses at Braunton Burrows SSSI nearby.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Erosion by humans trampling on sensitive marram grass, leading to blow-outs. Litter, flotsam and jetsam. Fires set off from barbecues. Climate change and storms.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Patrol and management by the owners Parkdean Holidays. Summertime attempts to limit human ingress into the dune systems physically and by education. Wintertime attempts to control excessive erosion by storms.	
Other comments or implications:	The dunes are underlain by an interesting diagonally dipping stratum, the Pilton Beds, slate and sandstone, which becomes visible from time to time and sometimes fossils emerge. There is also a clay deposit which can also be seen periodically near the stream and is evidence of the existence of a pre-historic swamp at that point caused when the dunes blocked the outflow of the stream.	



- Whatever the season or the direction, the view from Croyde dunes is always memorable. Here the vista is towards the north.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V7: Croyde Dunes



- Above, the view from the dunes to the east, and below, a wintry scene to the south.



11 Key Views and Vistas

V8: South Hole Combe		
View from: Saunton Down where footpaths 6, 15, 18 and 46 meet	Grid reference: SS 458385	Direction: North
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements LCT 5C Downland	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	The view down into the South Hole combe and across the hamlet of Forda to the North Hole combe is typical of the eastern part of the parish. As the word Hole implies these are fairly steep narrow combes enclosing farmsteads and small settlements. Vegetation comprises pasture for livestock, and an attractive mosaic of small wooded and wetland areas.	
Setting for heritage assets:	The listed farmstead at South Hole contains elements that date back to the 15th and 16th century. The earliest building is a free-standing probable stable block of late 15th or early 16th century date, with a relatively well-preserved roof structure of jointed and true raised crucks. Various shippens probably date to the late 17th century. There is a well-built threshing barn of late 16th century with a 19th century horse engine house attached to the southern side. Until recently these buildings formed part of a working farmstead. Now planning permission has been granted to convert these into dwellings but preserving external and early internal features.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	Both the farmsteads themselves and the topography and vegetation comprise a characteristic and distinctive vista when viewed from the top of the combe which is much appreciated by the increasing numbers of walkers on the upper footpaths, if less so by beach goers.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Unsympathetic redevelopment of properties within the combes. New buildings within the landscape. Over-intensive agriculture.	
Opportunities to enhance:	As this combe is within the AONB anything which affects the appearance of the listed farmstead and its setting within the combe should be closely scrutinised and developments monitored actively.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	



- South Hole Farm buildings in the foreground, with the former Forda Hill Farm in the middle distance and North Hole Farm beyond.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V8: South Hole Combe



- Even in winter the intimate view down onto the farmsteads of South and North Hole and the hamlet of Forda and the distant view of Georgeham is characteristic of this part of North Devon. On a clear day the coast of Wales can be seen.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V9: Pickwell		
View from: The high point where footpath 1 meets the Pickwell Road.	Grid reference: SS 459402	Direction: 360°
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 5C Downland LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements SCA 17 Croyde Bay & Baggy Point	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/essential qualities?	This is one of the higher viewpoints in the parish and possibly the best for seeing the setting of Georgeham village to the east which is reputed to be sited so that it cannot be seen from the sea by potential raiders. However the spectacular sea view of the top and cliffs of Baggy Point and Lundy Island beyond draw the eye westward and then northward to the hamlet of Pickwell with its crenellated manor.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Three heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views. Listed Pickwell Manor is visible.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	The hamlet of Pickwell is visible for miles around. Pickwell Manor is very distinctive with its tower and small coniferous woodland shelter belt. It is a unique feature of the parish landscape. The rolling farmland in this area is flatter and also often under arable crops which are less common in the landscape of the parish.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Erection of structures on the skylines. Over development of tourist facilities in the landscape. Development of excessive woodland.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Screening of less attractive features by appropriate planting on a small scale. Diversity of livestock and crop agriculture to add interest to the wide open landscape.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	



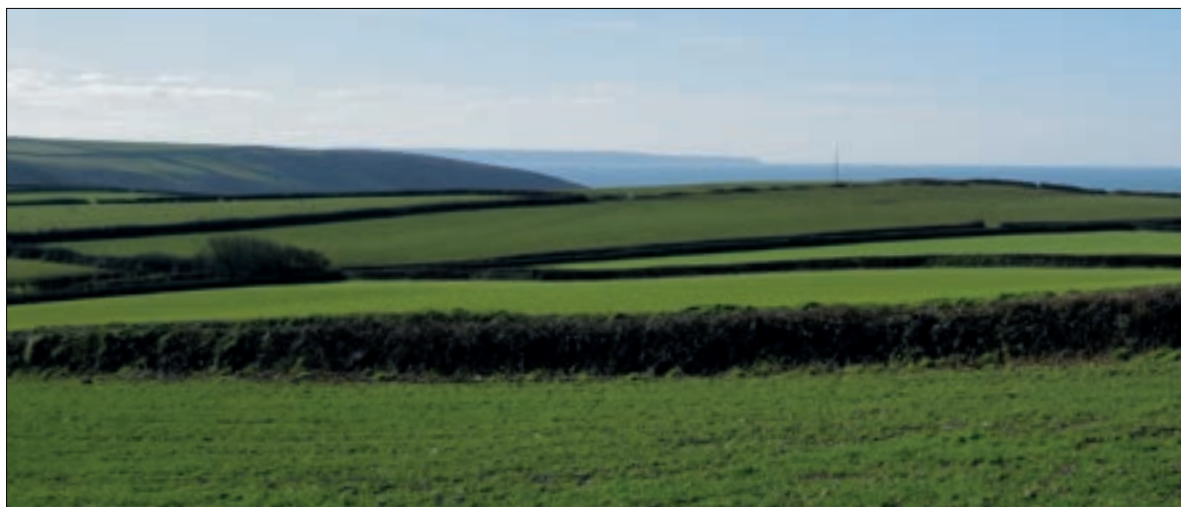
- Georgeham village can be seen to the south, invisible from the sea and so protected from raiders.

11 Key Views and Vistas

V9: Pickwell



- To the north the hamlet of Pickwell with its distinctive crenellated manor can be seen.



- To the west the flat top of Baggy Point can be seen along with a distant view of Lundy Island.

11 Key Views and Vistas

10: Central Croyde		
View from: Junction of Moor Lane and Jones Hill	Grid reference: SS 444394	Direction: South
Parish: Georgeham	Adjoining parishes: Braunton, West Down, Mortehoe	
Ward: Braunton West & Georgeham	Adjoining wards: Mortehoe, Braunton East, Heanton Punchardon, Instow	
Landscape/seascape character type(s):	LCT 4C Coastal Slopes and Combes with settlements LCT 5C Downland	
Key characteristics: What are its distinctive/ essential qualities?	Looking back down into the historic centre of Croyde village to appreciate its setting under Saunton Down to the south.	
Setting for heritage assets:	Heritage conservation areas can be seen within the views.	
Justification for being a key view/vista: • What makes it distinctive or easily recognisable? • What is its cultural or historic significance?	As a main vehicular and pedestrian access route for residents and visitors to the north side of Croyde beach, and also to and from Putsborough beach, this viewpoint is the classic view of Croyde village centre, known and appreciated by generations.	
Threats to key characteristics:	Building development of a non-vernacular style and/or sited up the green slopes towards Saunton Down or in Myrtle Meadow. Control of excessive vegetation obscuring the view.	
Opportunities to enhance:	Careful pruning of hedgerow trees alongside the path to ensure the views can be seen. Planting of appropriate wild flowers etc alongside the path. Control of design of visible buildings.	
Other comments or implications:	The vista is within the North Devon Coast AONB, has Heritage Coast designation and includes geological and biodiversity SSSIs.	



- The long ridges of Saunton Down form the backdrop to the settlement of Croyde in the valley below, with Myrtle Meadow – a valued green space – in the foreground.

12 Climate and Wildlife Emergency Group Submission

12.1 Introduction

- 12.1.1 The following recommendations and policy proposals were submitted by Croyde and Georgeham Climate and Wildlife Emergency Group in response to the Neighbourhood Plan consultation.
- 12.1.2 There needs to be a general statement about the need to respond to the climate and wildlife emergency and for policies to be developed in response.
- 12.1.3 Policies in the Neighbourhood Plan should be consistent with the parish achieving zero carbon by 2030. This will entail progressive implementation of policies affecting the built environment, farming and land use, and to infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging provision and the electrical power supply system.
- 12.1.4 New building should be to the highest efficiency and aimed at meeting zero carbon standards. All buildings should be sited wherever possible to have suitable south or east-west facing roofs suitable for solar photovoltaic (PV) systems. Domestic properties should be equipped with 4kW of solar PV from new. Commercial buildings should have renewable provision suited to their usage. All new buildings should have non-fossil fuelled heating and hot water systems.
- 12.1.5 There will need to be a programme of retrofitting the existing building stock to improve energy efficiency. All new buildings should be connected to a three-phase electrical supply to enable the transition to electrically powered vehicles and heating systems.
- 12.1.6 A future revision of the plan should include land for renewable electricity generation including solar PV and onshore wind turbines once suitable sites have been identified.
- 12.1.7 Domestic properties should have sufficient garden space to allow for growing vegetables. As yet unspecified changes will be needed to farming practices with a transition from meat to vegetable production and land set aside for re-wilding. The neighbourhood plan will need to reflect this in due course.
- 12.1.8 The following proposals are adapted from the Centre for Sustainable Energy document:

12.2 Renewable Energy

12.2.1 Why build local renewable energy?

- a) Potential for local ownership: revenues can be re-invested to benefit local community
- b) Potential for reduced bills: new mechanisms may allow reduced tariffs in locality
- c) Sustainability: reducing reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves
- d) Climate change mitigation: decarbonising energy supply
- e) Resilience: balancing local supply with local demand

12.2.2 Policy proposal

Proposals for individual and community scale energy from on-shore wind turbines, solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digesters, and wood fuel products will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- a) The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape; and
- b) The proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and
- c) The proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance; and
- d) The proposed development should seek to enhance biodiversity as far as practicable, for example through the creation of species rich grassland.

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12.2.3 Recommended Neighbourhood Plan actions

- a) Carry out an audit of domestic and commercial renewable energy installations including Solar PV, heat pumps, and electric vehicles, and develop a 10-year plan for the deployment of renewable energy in the parish.
- b) Set up a local energy group to develop projects within the parish. This could include a solar club to encourage groups of neighbours to instal rooftop solar PV thereby achieving bulk discounts. This could be coupled with battery storage and domestic EV charge points.
- c) Develop a community-owned renewable energy project in partnership with 361 Community Energy.
- d) Work with Western Power Distribution to reduce or move peak electricity demand in the parish once the the substantial rollout of smart meters has happened.

12.3 Energy Efficiency

12.3.1 Why energy efficient buildings?

- a) Sustainability: reducing reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves
- b) Warmer homes: improved comfort and better health
- c) Lower energy bills: reducing fuel poverty and limiting flows of money out of the local economy
- d) Climate change mitigation: decarbonising energy supply
- e) Resilience: reducing reliance on imported oil and gas

12.3.2 Policy proposal: Provision of well-designed energy efficient buildings and places

The design and standard of any new development should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions. This includes:

- a) Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.
- b) The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials.
- c) Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.
- d) Non-residential developments should aim to meet the Buildings Research Establishment BREEAM building standard 'excellent'.
- e) Any new development to incorporate on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as solar panels.
- f) The retrofit of heritage properties/assets is encouraged to reduce energy demand and to generate renewable energy where appropriate, providing it safeguards historic characteristics and development is done with engagement and permissions of relevant organisations.
- g) Alterations to existing buildings must be designed with energy reduction in mind and comply with sustainable design and construction standards.

12.3.3 Recommended Neighbourhood Plan actions

- a) Organise regular open homes events to encourage take up of energy efficiency measures
- b) Provide a programme of energy advice
- c) Roll out an area-wide retrofit programme

12.4 Sustainable transport

12.4.1 Why sustainable transport?

- a) Reduced reliance on imported oil
- b) Lower carbon emissions

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- c) More choice of travel modes
- d) Improved air quality and reduced traffic noise
- e) Improved access to services and employment
- f) More popular public spaces and improved community cohesion
- g) Improved health and quality of life
- h) Reduced congestion

12.4.2 Recommended Neighbourhood Plan actions

- a) Promote car sharing, park & ride for visitors and improved bus services aimed at reducing number of vehicles.
- b) Promote the use of electric vehicles and address the need for public charge points to meet the needs of residents who park on-street and visitors.

12.5 Flooding and extreme weather events

12.5.1 Vulnerability

Parts of Croyde and Georgeham that are adjacent to the Crydda stream are at high risk of flooding. An extreme flood event is more likely with global heating and action will need to be taken to protect properties. Vulnerable properties should be identified and discussions held with the Environment Agency and other bodies regarding flood prevention measures. Action will also be needed to attenuate the impact of heavy rain events.

12.5.2 Policy proposal: Sustainable Drainage

Development proposals will be supported provided they are able to demonstrate that they include one or more of the following sustainable drainage design features to manage the risk of surface water flooding within their boundary and elsewhere in the parish:

- a) Permeable driveways and parking areas;
- b) Water harvesting and storage features;
- c) Green roofs and/or soakaways.

12.5.3 Recommended Neighbourhood Plan actions

- a) Promote tree planting to increase water infiltration levels.
- b) Appoint and train a community flood warden.
- c) Encourage residents to register with the government's flood warning service
- d) In high risk areas, develop a community flood plan that you can put into action in the event of a flood.
- e) Work with landowners and statutory bodies to promote the management of upland areas in your catchment to slow down the flow of flood waters before they reach vulnerable communities.

12.6 Green infrastructure and biodiversity

12.6.1 Importance

Green infrastructure is vital to health and wellbeing. At the same time, it is a crucial element of adapting to climate change as well as protecting and improving biodiversity. The key understanding behind the concept of green infrastructure is that green spaces can (and should) perform multiple functions which contribute to both climate change mitigation and adaptation, providing:

- a) Provision of wildlife habitat.
- b) Routes for walking and cycling.

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- c) Space for food growing.
- d) Increased flood water retention and infiltration, and reduced surface water runoff (which then requires expensive and space hungry, hard-engineering solutions).

12.6.2 Recommended Neighbourhood Plan actions

- a) Identify opportunities for new tree and woodland planting in the parish
- b) Encourage the management of mature and growing woodlands in the area for timber, recreational access and nature conservation and support proposals for small-scale development associated with woodland management, local timber processing, the use of wood for heating and the use of woodland for small-scale recreation, leisure and tourism purposes.
- c) Create a community wood or orchard.
- d) Encourage wild flower planting along road verges
- e) Identify opportunities for new hedge planting
- f) Work with local farmers and landowners to diversify habitats on their land.
- g) Work with RUDA, Natural England and others to develop a long-term recovery plan for Croyde Burrows.

13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

13.1 What is a Character Area Assessment?

- 13.1.1** North Devon Council has produced Conservation Area Character Assessments for the villages of Croyde and Georgeham, and the hamlet of Putsborough which define the special historic character and appearance of the designated conservation areas. The special character of the Leadengate estate is set out in the Leadengate Design Guide supplementary planning document [1].
- 13.1.2** The principles which underpin Conservation Area Character Assessments can also be used to describe the character and appearance of streets outside of the conservation areas. This type of appraisal, called a Character Area Assessment, has been prepared for the village of Croyde, with the help and input of members of Croyde Area Residents' Association.
- 13.1.3** The Croyde Character Area Assessment describes areas outside the conservation zone and aims to identify and explain the key characteristics which typify the village, in terms of their scale and mix, density, volume and street lines. The map on [page 100](#) shows where Croyde's Character Areas are located.
- 13.1.4** The holiday estates of Croyde Bay Hotel and The Ruda Holiday Park have not been considered as part of this study since they are non-residential. Croyde has been the focus of the Character Area study because the village is closest to the sea and dunes, and development pressures are greatest in this part of the parish, creating a tension between the needs of the residential population and the needs of the transient holiday population.
- 13.1.5** In describing these streets, it is not intended to comment on their architectural merit, but rather to describe their key characteristics and to record the way the village has expanded and changed over the years since the 1930s, through the development of individual small estates which are recognisably distinct within the village and contribute to the overall character of the area, and to its appeal to people as a place to both live and visit on holiday.
- 13.1.6** It is intended that these descriptions will complement the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and help to ensure that new development can be progressed through sensitively-designed proposals reflecting the elements which make Croyde special.

13.2 Development background

- 13.2.1** It is notable that there are many bungalows or single storey buildings in the village. There are also two-storey buildings, but few three-storey ones. The large properties are mainly found along the main roads of Croyde (Croyde Road and Moor Lane). The large (and high) properties are (with rare exceptions) of a domestic scale; there are no large hotels.
- 13.2.2** More recently, redevelopment of buildings has seen a trend towards building three-storey properties in Moor Lane. This part of the village is extremely busy particularly in summer when the holiday parks are full. Traffic has nowhere to go; what drives in, must drive out. Again, this part of the village is separated from the centre by 'green fingers' of land which are precious reminders of the rural nature of the area. The picture is one of the three fields off Moor Lane.
- 13.2.3** The old farming villages expanded after the First World War to provide holiday places for the travelling public. Caravan parks appeared.



• Sheep grazing in pasture at Moor Lane, Croyde.

[1] A copy of the Leadengate Design Guide can be downloaded from the Supplementary Planning Documents at <https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/>.

13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

- 13.2.4** In the 1930s, following the pattern of other trade unions, NALGO (National Association of Local Government Officers) purchased the site of the present Croyde Bay Hotel to build holiday chalets for its members. The site, as well as other sites in the area, were commandeered in the Second World War to station troops preparing for D-Day. These sites returned to holiday use after the war, and one by one the fields were sold off for housing development.
- 13.2.5** The developments of the 1960s, 1970s and the decades which have followed, have seen small distinct estates growing up to accommodate new populations who have come to work and retire here; and more recently to provide for people who are able to work here, and places for people to enjoy 'home-from-home' holiday accommodation.
- 13.2.6** The pattern of small-scale development reflects that of much earlier development. The old farming villages hunkered down under thatched roofs, and in modern design terms, seem 'one-and-a-half storeys' high. These old properties lie in the coombes, sheltered against prevailing westerly winds. The new developments, built on the caravan sites behind the sand dunes, were also low lying, mostly bungalows.
- 13.2.7** The newer estates after the 1970s fitted in the contours of the hills surrounding Croyde Bay, or on the fringe contours of Georgeham. Many of these small estates are cul-de-sacs, and still have private roads, unadopted by the Highways Authority. There are a few large individual houses in prominent positions on the hillsides at Down End and towards Baggy Point, but these are very much the exception.
- 13.2.8** The following areas are shown on the map on [page 100](#), and photographs were mostly taken in 2019. The descriptions begin at the Croyde Road side of the bay.

13.3 Area 1: West Croyde and Bonnicott Lane



- 13.3.1** The residential cul-de-sac called West Croyde is formed mainly of detached bungalows. At the southern end of the road, nearest the main road there are five two-storey detached double fronted houses, two of which front the main road and three are situated in a small spur off the main cul-de-sac. They are of brick and render construction with tiled roofs and sit on generous garden plots; with boundaries of either rendered low walls with hedges above, or fences. The pitched roofs have dormer extensions to the bedrooms at the front; the original design was for one gabled and one flat-roofed bedroom window.
- 13.3.2** The main street slopes towards the sand dunes and leads the eye to a view of Middlesborough Hill on the north side of Croyde Bay. This main part of the road consists of approximately 21 two and three-bedroomed bungalows, several of which on the south side of the street have been extended into the roofs by the addition of flat dormers which are not seen from the road frontage. Some

13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

have rooms in the roof but do not have dormer extensions. The properties are detached, built originally with attached garages which are too small to accommodate modern-sized cars, and so they have been incorporated into the main dwelling as living accommodation. They have open-fronted small gardens, and access to garden space at the back, from either side of the property.

- 13.3.3** Most have off-road parking for two cars, with the remainder of the front garden space laid either to grass or shrubs. The roofs are shallow, pitched front-to-back, with a gabled roof over a front projecting extension; in the angle between the extension and the main frontage there is usually a small porch and the front door. The construction is of brick and render. The development was built in the 1960s. The street is unadopted by the Highway Authority.

- 13.3.4** Bonnicott Lane runs parallel to West Croyde on the east side. The two roads are separated by fences and shrubs either side of a stream carrying surface water from the hills of Saunton Down.

- 13.3.5** The lane comprises a mix of bungalows and two-storey houses built of similar materials to West Croyde, with small gardens. The road is unadopted and has an unmetalled surface.



13.4 Area 2: Leadengate Close and Leadengate Fields

- 13.4.1** See the Leadengate Design Guide [1]

13.5 Area 3: Ora Stone Park and Langsfield

- 13.5.1** Ora Stone Park is a cul-de-sac of 21 houses on the rising ground of Saunton Down to the south side of Croyde Road. It was built in the 1990s on the site of the Ora Stone camp site and consists of two-storey houses of different sizes; some are link-detached via garages; others are semi-detached. They are of brick construction with painted render. Some have porches.

- 13.5.2** The smaller two-bedroomed houses are closer to Croyde Road. The houses are bigger at the top of the cul-de-sac, where there are three four-bedroomed detached houses.



- 13.5.3** Windows are dark wood. Roofs are pitched front to back, tiled; some having dormer extensions to the bedrooms with ridged rooflines; the roof spaces are not developed. All properties have open plan front garden space and off-road parking for at least one car. Some cars are parked on the road. This is an unadopted road and is surfaced in brick pavers. The properties have small rear gardens, fenced mainly, but those adjoining the field to the west are bordered by a hedged bank.

[1] A copy of the Leadengate Design Guide can be downloaded from the Supplementary Planning Documents at <https://consult.torridge.gov.uk/portal/planning/localplan/adoption/>.

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13.5.4 Langsfield is a mixed development of two-storey houses and bungalows. The larger properties are closer to the main road; most are detached. The frontage of some properties is close to the pavement as in the picture, but others have substantial front gardens. All have garages, some of which have been converted to living space.

13.5.5 All the properties have rear gardens. Boundaries consist of low walls or fences. The roofs have shallow pitches with gables over front-facing extensions on the bungalows. Exterior materials are painted render and brick.



13.6 Area 4: Bay View Close

13.6.1 Bay View Close is situated on the south side of Croyde Road west of Bay View Campsite. It is the newest of the estates built in the parish in 2016/7. It consists of a group of 11 link-detached two-storey houses, and a terrace of five two-storey houses.

13.6.2 The close is shaped like a back-to-front letter Q, with the terrace forming the tail of the Q and bordering the main road, separated from it by high hedges.

13.6.3 The remaining properties are placed in the circle of the Q with an island of green space in the centre which relieves the density of the terrace effect of the housing and creates an amenity space; it links the developed space to the open hillside beyond. It is highly distinctive in design being of stark white render and cement boarding in shades of light and dark grey; the frontage of each property is flat with the all main doors placed in the solid wall (no windows).

13.6.4 The steeply pitched, grey slate roofs have front facing gables. Each property has some garden and garage space, with off-road parking to each property. The boundary facing Croyde Road is of hedge and fencing; to the south side there is hedging. When viewed from the Moor Lane side of the bay, these roofs are seen to be higher than immediate properties, though not dominant.



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13.7 Area 5: Cott Lane

13.7.1 Cott Lane is a narrow road, with awkward access to the south off Hobbs Hill. The houses are all large detached, distinctive properties. They are set back from the lane; mainly two storeys, though some are dormer bungalows; the gable ends generally face front.

13.7.2 Some roofs are tiled; some are of slate. Most have a painted render finish. Some properties have timber windows and doors. The building styles vary from traditional cottage style, to modern cubist with large picture or galleried windows.

13.7.3 All have garages either adjacent or detached to the side, with parking on drives. Each property is set in its own large plot surrounded by garden space; boundaries are of Devon Banks; hedged walls and some fencing.



13.8 Area 6: Sandy Way



13.8.1 Sandy Way is a loop off Sandy Lane and consists mostly of detached chalet bungalows. The 1960s estate was originally just bungalows and many people bought off-plan when it was first built. Gradually over the years the bungalows have been sold and modernised; extended into the roof space. The bedrooms which have been created sometimes have flat dormer windows, and sometimes small gabled windows.

13.8.2 On the west side of the loop, the roofs are shallow, and it is not possible to create a bedroom in the space. Some have been extended to create additional living space with vaulted roofs, and many have converted the garage into extra living space.

13.8.3 The properties were designed with both front and rear gardens, and adjacent garages. Exterior materials follow the local pattern of painted render, with brick plinths; some properties are of brick or Bradstock stone. There are boarded elements, for example in the apex of the gable end.

13.8.4 Most gables project forward to provide a stepped front line to the building. Many properties have been modernised in recent years but despite the additions of conservatories or extensions, they retain the garden space at both front and rear. Boundary treatments vary and include low stone walls, open fronts with shrubs, fences and hedges. The road is unadopted.

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13.9 Area 7: St Helens Close

13.9.1 St Helens Close is set back from the main Croyde Road. The Close is an unmetalled lane which runs parallel to the main road, separated from it by shrubs and a sloping grass verge.

13.9.2 Originally the detached properties were all small bungalows, with gardens which looked over the green fields of the bay behind the pubs and shops. More recently the trend is towards demolition of the old-style bungalows, with large imposing houses being built in their place.



13.9.3 These new houses are following the pattern of higher roof lines, and greater internal area of some of the other large properties along the main road. The new large properties have adopted the New England style of half-boarding and painted render, with pitched and gabled roof shapes. Some have slate roofs, others in the Close have tiles.

13.10 Area 8: Cloutmans Lane and Watery Lane

13.10.1 The picture right shows Watery Lane leading from Cloutmans Lane towards St Marys Road, and the old part of the village.

13.10.2 The two properties either side of Cloutmans Lane facing Hobbs Hill, are part of the Conservation Character Area; one is thatched, the other is roofed in slate.

13.10.3 Welcome Cottage, pictured below right, has a steeply pitched roof and distinctive gables over the bedroom windows, and the steep roof design is echoed in houses behind it and along Watery Lane.

13.10.4 There are a variety of properties in this area, with different roof heights and designs, all set back from the lanes, which are narrow. There are bungalows, some with dormer windows. Construction materials include brick and render and wooden or cement board cladding. Older buildings are of cob and thatch. The boundary to the lanes is hedged, but there are also stone walls, some of which are in poor repair.



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13.11 Area 9: Orchard Grove

- 13.11.1** Leading off Cloutmans Lane is Orchard Grove which consists of 21 detached properties, set back from the road frontage; each has a garden front and rear. The tiled roofs are pitched front to back with front facing gabled extensions. External materials are generally rough painted render. Originally most had attached garages, but these have mostly been converted to extra living space. The boundaries are of low wall construction to the front, with established shrubs forming hedges inside the boundary wall.
- 13.11.2** The roof pitches are shallow but most spaces have been converted with the addition of dormer extensions. All have garages with pitched roofs; some are detached but most are now integral to the main building. There is space for two cars to park off the road in most cases. The houses are of brick and painted render. All the properties have chimneys. Some of the properties have porches with small gabled roofs. The road is adopted.

13.12 Area 10: Home Farm Close



- 13.12.1** Home Farm Close is a development of 12 detached two-storey houses set back from the road, having open front gardens laid to grass or shrubs. They each have private rear gardens with fencing forming the boundaries. The roof spaces have not been converted; the roof pitches are shallow. Some houses have porches; construction materials are of brick and painted render. Most garages are now integral, and form part of the living space. Two properties have adjacent garages. The garages have sloping or pitched roofs. All properties have space to park two cars on the drive.

13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

13.12.2 Nevertheless, parking is an issue in this area (including Cloutmans Lane and Orchard Grove), with regular problems for the recycling truck and emergency vehicles being unable to get through. The road is adopted and has double yellow lines which are frequently ignored.

13.13 Area 11: Myrtle Farm View



13.13.1 Myrtle Farm View is a cul-de-sac to the east, off Jones Hill, two minutes from the centre of Croyde. It is a small estate of two-storey houses, mostly detached, but with some semi-detached properties. The estate is distinctive. There is limited space between the fronts of the properties and the road, which is unadopted, and paved. Each property has garage space attached to the side and set back, creating parking space in front. The construction is of brick and cream render, with dark wooden windows and boarding in places. A feature of the estate is the cantilevered window extensions at ground and first floor level. The roofs are tiled and are hipped. Gables project to the front and side over the windows and porches.

13.14 Area 12: Ora Close and Stentaway Lane

13.14.1 Properties in Ora Close and along the west side of Stentaway Lane are predominantly chalet bungalows. The properties are detached, and since their position is on rising ground, many have terraces or balconies facing west towards the sea. All the properties have garages. Garage space is in some cases under the terrace and front access is via steps.

13.14.2 External materials follow the vernacular pattern of painted render with some timber cladding, and stone facing. The boundaries are characteristically low walls. The properties are set back from the road, and all have gardens. Roofs are pitched front to back, with gable ends to the side.



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13.15 Area 13: Broad Park Close

13.15.1 Broad Park Close is a short cul-de-sac off Moor Lane, running north to south. Typical of the village vernacular, its built form is that of chalet bungalows, most of which have been extended in recent years. They have hipped roofs, and the original design included gabled windows in the roof space. Later alterations have included flat roof dormers.



13.15.2 Exteriors are of brick and render finish; roofs are tiled or slate. The bungalows sit centrally on their plots, with garden space front and rear and to the side. The properties had garages which have been incorporated into the living space, but wide driveways accommodate parking. Boundary treatments are typically low walls with established shrubs within the garden wall. The road is typically narrow and unadopted.

13.16 Area 14: Lanehead Close and Toms Field

13.16.1 Lanehead Close was once a cluster of small bungalows, typical of post-war developments in the village. Recently some have been replaced with larger buildings, noticeably at the corner with Moor Lane and further up on the east side of the close.



13.16.2 In the centre of the estate is a small green with a couple of windswept trees on it, which punctuates the density of the development; it creates a sense of space and a reminder that this development sits in a rural landscape. In this area original form and design elements remain. The roofs are shallow, pitched front to back; they have not been converted into dormer bedrooms. The front line of the buildings is broken by extending gables.

13.16.3 There are adjacent garages, some converted to living space. The properties are set back from the road, with open front gardens and driveways. Exterior materials are painted render and brick; roofs are tiled. Boundaries are a mixture of open lawn and shrubs, fences and hedges. There is a large farmhouse on the east side of the Close, set back from the development with a large plot of ground in front of it. This is privately owned and affords the house good views of the bay.

13.16.4 Leading off Lanehead Close is a small modern development called Toms Field, which is similar in design to the neighbouring Penny Hill. The two-storey houses are in the New England style with half boarding, painted render and windows in the gable ends, or in dormers projecting from the roof space. The private road is block paved.



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13.17: Area 15: Pathfields and Penny Hill

13.17.1 Pathfields is a road leading to a large house in its own grounds (built pre-war) on the north side of Moor Lane, and to a small estate called Penny Hill. There is a large development of what is now a group of flats, based on what used to be the Old Coastguard Cottages.

13.17.2 Turning into Pathfields from Moor Lane, on the left side of the street is a row of detached bungalows, one of which has had a roof conversion and shows a Velux-style window.

13.17.3 These bungalows following the built vernacular style of the village being of painted render, with some boarding to the gable ends of the front facing projections. They are set back from the road with gardens front and rear, and driveways.

13.17.4 The garages have been converted to additional living space. The roofs are shallow and pitched. Boundaries are low stone walls to the front, separated from each other to the side by fences.

13.17.5 The first photograph shows the turning into Pathfields from Moor Lane where two large Edwardian houses which have been redeveloped as flats, and second shows the view looking towards Moor Lane with one of the bungalows visible on the left. The large houses are examples of the exceptional designs in this area of the village mentioned in the introduction. They are atypical of buildings in the parish. The road is adopted and unusually for the village has pavements on both sides. The road narrows after bollards and there is a right turn at the top of Pathfields leading to Penny Hill.

13.17.6 Penny Hill is a mixed modern development which echoes aspects of the built vernacular of the village. It is a cul-de-sac consisting of eight two-storey large detached houses and two blocks of flats. There are a range of sizes which have a consistent design theme.

13.17.7 Exteriors are painted render with cement boarding. Windows are set in the gables. The fronts to the properties are laid to grass and shrubs; some have shared driveways.

13.17.8 The larger properties have double garages; some are attached or integral to the side, others detached. There are designated parking spaces associated with the flats, which although privately owned make up the largest number of social housing units in Croyde. The private road is block-paved. All the houses have small private gardens at the back or side which are fenced.



13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

13.18 Area 16: Moor Park Close



- 13.18.1** Moor Park Close is a cul-de-sac which runs north to south off Moor Lane, towards the centre fields of the bay. It was built in the 1960s, and the development is one row following a narrow unadopted lane. The boundary facing the row of bungalows is fenced and hedged with grass verges. The bungalows are all detached and have gardens front and rear, with side access also. Access to the beach and the village centre is via Moor Lane.
- 13.18.2** The properties all have driveways with space to park two cars; the garages have mostly been converted to additional living space, having been designed for cars smaller than the models of today. The low roofs have a shallow pitch front to back, but all have the characteristic projecting front gables. Some of the roof spaces have been converted with flat-roofed dormers at the rear.
- 13.18.3** One property at the end of the lane closest to the fields has been greatly extended into a large modern design but follows the design features of pitched roof; painted render and boarded gables. The properties have low stone rendered walls and hedging to the front and fencing between them.

13.19 Area 17: Millers Brook

- 13.19.1** Millers Brook is a small cul-de-sac on the eastern edge of the Conservation Character area. It consists of nine detached properties. These substantial houses are large dormer bungalows which echo design elements from elsewhere in the village.

- 13.19.2** The wavy roof lines over the bedroom windows of the dormers in some of the houses reflect the roof lines of Welcome Cottage on the corner of Cloutmans Lane. The flat dormers are a common feature elsewhere in the village.



- 13.19.3** Roofs are tiled; external materials are brick and render. The roofs are higher than in other areas of the village, but the scale of the development fits the surrounding topography. The roofs are pitched front to back with small side hips. The boundaries are a mix of rendered and painted walls, and fences. Each property is surrounded by garden with space to park several vehicles.

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13.20 Area 18: Moor Lane

13.20.1 The building developments in Moor Lane on the north side of the bay illustrate the pattern of change which has occurred in recent years.

13.20.2 The photograph above shows a bungalow fronting the Lane which reflects the early post-war type of home, whilst next to it there are two large two-storey houses which are also set back from the road on the rising ground.

13.20.3 More recently there are pressures to utilise these small pieces of land between the development line and the road, which is changing its previous character and altering the traditional pattern of building density.

13.20.4 The properties are designed to take advantage of the rising ground to afford views over the bay and the green fields. They have pitched tiled or slate roofs, balconies and large windows. Bedrooms are built in the gables to the front or the side. External materials include painted render, timber cladding and glass-walled balconies.

13.20.5 On the south side of Moor Lane, there is a trend towards demolishing older properties to make maximum use of the plot and to raise the roof heights to incorporate a third storey.

13.20.6 There is little land available outside the Development Boundary, and the attractiveness of the area commands a premium, fuelling development. These larger, grander properties represent a change in the character of the village.

13.20.7 Broad Park Close at the east end of Moor Lane has already been described. The chalet bungalows are visible from the road. As one moves along the road the properties gradually become bigger. Some older properties have been demolished and replaced by larger, taller buildings.



13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

13.21 Area 19: Croyde Road



- 13.21.1** The properties on the south side of Croyde Road before the turnings to the small estates, after the Downend car park, are substantial imposing houses. They are mostly two storeys high, although one has utilised a lower basement area and the roof space to create flats on three levels, which maintains the same level of roof height as the other properties on this side of the road. All the properties are set back from the road, with space for garden area and drive. Most have integral garages, but some have garages in the garden space to the side.
- 13.21.2** Most of the houses have pitched roofs, although some are hipped. The roofs are mostly tiled, but some are slated. The pitch of the roofs is steep, with low gables over the bedroom windows or in the case of the three-storey conversion to flats, the bedrooms are set back into the roof space and a balcony has been created instead of a dormer. There are differences between the properties which have been built or modernised at different times. Some have bay windows. All are detached with large gardens to the rear. The external walls are painted render.
- 13.21.3** The houses' individuality is part of their character, but what makes the road harmonious is the pattern of roof heights, being set back from the road with a consistent development line, and the positioning as detached properties on generous curtilages. Each property gives the visual impression of being in proportion to its neighbour.

13 Croyde Character Area Assessment

13.22 Summary

- 13.22.1** There are recognisable elements of building design throughout the village such as painted render; chalet bungalows with dormers or gabled windows and generous curtilage with buildings set back from the road.
- 13.22.2** The buildings by and large remain in character with the older Conservation Character Area characteristics, being of modest height and scale, in proportion within the contours of the hills surrounding the bay. The properties almost always have gardens front and rear; there are many hedges separating them, providing wildlife corridors for animals and insects.
- 13.22.3** There are green fields surrounding the village, and green spaces leading up from the central fields of the bay, which emphasise the historic farming nature of the area, and protect the older part of the village from becoming swamped by an urban style of development.
- 13.22.4** The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and this assessment of the Built Environment of Croyde support the aims of the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2011 – 2031 to preserve this unique environment whilst also recognising that change and development can contribute to meeting the needs of the present residents and visitors and those of the future.



- Croyde, looking north, showing the surrounding fields and green spaces between Moor Lane and the Crydda.

14 Croyde Area Residents' Association (CARA) Submission

14.1 Overview

- 14.1.1 Croyde is a traditional small Devon seaside village surrounded by beautiful countryside and open farmland. It boasts one of the most famous surfing beaches in the country, and is extremely popular with families.
- 14.1.2 It is located in a conservation area and has a mixture of traditional Devon thatched cottages together with small developments built in the 1960s and 1990s, as well as recent modern housing. The housing stock has changed in recent years; properties have been extended and a number of individually-designed properties have been built, to take advantage of the spectacular views.
- 14.1.3 Croyde is popular with surfers, walkers and for family camping. It is accessed by country lanes which run through the centre of the village. Croyde has good communication access and some parts have high speed fibre optic broadband.

14.2 History

- 14.2.1 Croyde had a strong farming community with second and third generation families working the land, although there are only four working farms left. Croyde became popular through the rise of family holidays after the Second World War and has a large holiday camp for families near the beach and three large sites for caravans and camping.
- 14.2.2 Over the last 30 years Croyde has become increasingly popular. The change in holiday trends has seen the holiday season extend throughout the year. The population in the summer expands from under 1000 to over 10,000 causing congestion on the roads and strain on Croyde's utilities.

14.3 Demographics

- 14.3.1 Croyde has many long-established families running to two or more generations. People from all over the UK have also settled in Croyde and the population therefore represents a mixed demographic group. However, second homes and holiday homes now account for over 50% of the housing stock (see CARA property survey, [pages 81-82](#), and map, [page 99](#)).
- 14.3.2 The ages of residents range from the very young through to the very old. Many families live in Croyde, but earn their living outside the area. Employment is mainly through the tourism industry.

14.4 Concerns

- 14.4.1 Although Croyde is part of the Parish of Georgeham, some residents believe it has a number of unique problems which bring with them a need to look for specific solutions. CARA asked for their views in a questionnaire and the survey results were consistent (see summary, [page 80](#)).
- 14.4.2 They asked, in so far as it is possible, that the Parish Council and local planning authority address the following issues:
 - a) Preserve and protect the beach
 - b) Preserve and protect the surrounding countryside
 - c) Preserve our mix of cafes, shops, pubs and restaurants, by, for example, interrogating any change of use applications that may arise
 - d) Maintain coastal paths and walks
 - e) Protect surrounding fields and farms by restricting further housing development
 - f) Protect the village centre by allowing only sympathetic materials and proportionate changes to existing buildings
 - g) Maintain and grow the community by providing housing opportunities for young families through a mixture of houses for rent and affordable co-ownership housing.
 - h) Take account of traffic movement during the holiday periods when considering any application for further development in the village.

14 CARA Submission



- Preserving the character of the beach and surrounding countryside is an important issue for Croyde residents.

14.6 Objectives

14.6.1 The survey found that residents have the following ambitions for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan for the whole parish:

- Provide more permanent housing, especially for rent; there are presently only 12 houses available for long-term rent
- Restrict future development to permanent affordable homes for locals and young families
- Restrict the size of new-build properties to three bedrooms.
- Refuse over-development of individual properties where there is inadequate parking for occupants
- Apply a 20mph speed restriction through the village
- Keep Croyde's village status
- Provide more public parking.

14 CARA Submission

14.7 Summary of responses to CARA questionnaire

- Q1:** What do you appreciate about living in Croyde?
A1: Beach, friendly community, unspoilt green pastures, coast walks, great views.
- Q2:** What makes Croyde thrive as a holiday destination?
A2: Beaches, surf, water sports, countryside, cafes, shops, pubs, restaurants, friendly village life.
- Q3:** Why are permanent residents important to the village?
A3: Create community, keep Croyde alive all year round.
- Q4:** Should we aim to encourage more permanent residents. How?
A4: Yes, limit/restrict second homes.
- Q5:** What are your views on housing growth in the village?
A5: Restrict house size, build only for permanent residents.
- Q6:** How can we best preserve the character and beauty of Croyde?
A6: Ensure developments are in keeping.
- Q7:** What special areas should be protected?
A7: Fields, village, beach
- Q8:** How can the Neighbourhood Plan support businesses?
A8: Enough free/cheap parking, more permanent residents.
- Q9:** How do temporary pop-up businesses contribute to village life?
A9: They take business but pay no rates and create litter.
- Q10:** What services and amenities are important to you as a resident?
A10: Need a general store, more frequent buses, current shops and pubs are good.
- Q11:** What can be done to help local businesses thrive?
A11: Keep a balance, keep Croyde as a village.
- Q12:** What are your views on roads, parking and pavements?
A12: Establish a 20 mph limit, add/improve pavements, need a parking warden, address problem with holiday homes and parking.
- Q13:** Could visitor numbers increase?
A13: No, not in summer, could increase at other times.
- Q14:** What could be done to address the effects of possible climate change?
A14: Dredge stream regularly, clean drains.
- Q15:** What would improve your quality of life as a resident?
A15: Have general store and chemist, build smaller houses, restrict festivals.

14.8 Traffic speed monitoring system

- 14.8.1** In 2017, given rising concerns about the increasing volume of traffic through the village, the residents' association organised a traffic count. The survey was conducted from 8am until 6pm on Friday and Saturday of the Bank Holiday weekend. The weather was wet and windy. The initial analysis of the results showed a total of 5067 vehicles entering Croyde. This was both surprising and concerning.
- 14.8.2** Subsequent negotiations between CARA and the Parish Council resulted in the purchase of a speed monitoring system in December 2018. The monitor records speed, traffic volume and other data, and has been used in nine locations around the parish.
- 14.8.3** The following diagram shows the speed monitor data recorded:

14 CARA Submission

Speed monitor locations and recorded traffic data							
Location and direction of traffic recorded	Survey dates at location	Speed limit (mph)	Total days at location	Vehicle numbers recorded	Average daily volume	Maximum vehicle speed recorded (mph)	Average speed (mph)
Croyde Road at Unison, towards village centre	21/03/19 - 23/04/19	30	34	57,249	1,684	53 (several at > 35)	< 30
Moor Lane, Croyde, towards beach	23/04/19 - 04/06/19	30	42	55,629	1,324	54 (several at > 34)	< 30
Georgeham village hall, towards Mullacott	04/06/19 - 15/07/19	20	43	37,848	923	52 (several at > 30)	> 25
Croyde Road, Downend, towards village centre	15/07/19 - 17/08/19	30	33	57,342	1,738	55 (several at > 35)	<30
School Road, Georgeham, towards church *	20/09/19 - 05/11/19	20	46	8,929	194	33 (several at 20-25)	< 20
Bay View Close, Croyde, towards Downend	23/11/19 - 25/01/20	30	63	57,244	909	53 (several at > 40)	< 30
Bay View Close, Croyde, towards village centre	26/01/20 - 05/03/20	30	38	43,054	1,133	50 (several at >35)	< 30
Croyde Road at Unison, towards village centre	27/07/20 - 03/08/20	30	7	21,659	3,094	52 (several at > 30)	< 30
Croyde Road at Unison, towards village centre	04/09/20 - 27/09/20	30	23	57,323	2,492	60 (several at > 35)	< 30
* No data recorded for 20 - 26 September 2019 due to blocked monitor.							

- 14.8.4** A simple comparison between the 2017 survey and data taken from the speed monitor over two days in August 2019 showed a 26% increase of in traffic volume:

2017: 5067 vehicles
2019: 6400 vehicles.

- 14.8.5** Traffic problems are exacerbated by visitors who use satellite navigation systems which direct traffic into the parish via the shortest route. This can mean that cars, campervans and caravans are enter the parish through Braunton, past the fire station and along single track lanes en route to Croyde or Georgeham. The road between Croyde and Georgeham is itself narrow in places and is also the bus route to Georgeham. In summer traffic can be at a standstill for up to 30 minutes or more, while vehicles reverse, pull into passing places and inch past each other.

14.9 CARA 2017 property survey

- 14.9.1** CARA was regenerated in late 2016 principally because many residents were becoming concerned about the increase in the number of holiday homes being built or developed in Croyde. It was felt that the character of the village was under threat, and the community dwindling as more residents sold up and moved out, either to escape the summer influx or to capitalise on rising property prices, caused partly by second-home or holiday-home owners. The number of people registered as residing in Croyde has dropped by 25% in the past eight years, from 800 to 600.
- 14.9.2** Our survey was to collect information to ascertain the ratio of holiday homes and holiday lets to permanent residences. Over the last few months the data has been collated and verified (by cross checking with Google Earth, the electoral register and also local knowledge, and we are reasonably confident that the results present a true reflection of numbers that it is reliable and can be substantiated.

14 CARA Submission

- 14.9.3 The survey covers the Croyde area from Downend to Baggy Point and up to Cross, and for ease of counting and cross-checking, was divided into zones.
- 14.9.4 The results show that the ratio of holiday homes to permanent residences in Croyde is 57.4 to 42.6, in other words, 354 holiday homes out of 617 properties overall. This is a conservative figure as, where a property is lived in but also partially let as holiday accommodation, it has only been counted as a residence. In addition, these figures do not include hotels, guest houses, bed and breakfast rooms, etc.
- 14.9.5 To show the true picture of Croyde in the summer we also need to add in the two main holiday centres, Ruda and Unison Croyde Bay. It is interesting to note that Ruda already has a total of 596 letting units, not including the camping pitches (three fields) at Surfers Paradise, which would mean in the busy summer period when Ruda is almost fully booked, it is larger than the total of all properties in Croyde put together.
- 14.9.6 Including just these two sites makes the ratio of holiday accommodation to permanent homes 80.4 to 19.6. In addition there are another nine campsites of varying sizes in and around Croyde which are all busy during the peak periods. However, it is also worth noting that holiday units and holiday lets are increasingly being promoted for year-round occupation so this is no longer just of significance for a few weeks in the summer.
- 14.9.7 The map on [page 99](#) shows a breakdown of the survey results by street. Further information is available on the CARA website at cara-northdevon.co.uk.

15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment

15.1 Background

- 15.1.1** Georgeham is situated to the east of Croyde, about a mile inland from Croyde and Putsborough. Georgeham with its ancient church, lends its name to the parish. In the thirteenth century, the settlement of Hamme became known as Hamme St George, after the favoured saint of the Crusaders. The parish boundaries were established at this time.
- 15.1.2** The local nursery and junior school are located in the village, and there is a local shop which houses a post office. There is a small car park for public use, but parking space is at a premium. The roads are characteristically narrow country lanes, and the more modern developments are cul-de-sacs with access roads without pavements. Modern living has seen an increase in car ownership, so it is not uncommon for households to own more than one car, and visitors generally arrive by car. Garages are often too small to house a modern car, and many have been converted to extra residential space, therefore parking space is at a premium within Georgeham.
- 15.1.3** North Devon Council has produced a Conservation Area Character Assessment for the old centre of Georgeham village, and as with Croyde, a Character Area Assessment has been prepared for those streets outside the historic centre of the village. The aim is to describe the key characteristics which typify the buildings in terms of their mix, density, volume and street lines. The map on [page 101](#) shows where these streets are situated.
- 15.1.4** Although Georgeham and Croyde are the most populated villages in the parish, Georgeham does not experience the same pressures as Croyde for holiday accommodation. Nevertheless it has seen more properties let for holiday purposes in recent years. There have been an increased number of applications to convert garages or outbuildings for residential use, which are designed as short-term holiday lets.
- 15.1.5** The hamlet of Darracott is close to Georgeham, separated by fields, but closely associated with it by housing bordering the main lane which leads to Braunton. There is a mixture of styles, and age, of property in this area, but the area is outside the development boundary designated in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan 2018.
- 15.1.6** The following areas are shown in the map on [page 101](#). The photographs were mainly taken in 2020:

15.2 Area 20: Williamson Close

- 15.2.1** Williamson Close comprises a group of eight three-bedroomed houses built to a similar design in the early 2000s. Two are detached, four are semi-detached, and two are terraced. The site slopes steeply towards a small stream. The access road has no footpaths, but each property has a drive or parking space allocated in front of the garage associated with the property. Three of the properties have adjacent garages and parking spaces; there is a separate block of garages at the end of the cul-de-sac. The village car park is opposite the Close.

- 15.2.2** The grey tiled roofs are sloped front to back from the ridge, and the neat front porches have roof lines which echo the slope of the roofs. Each property has a chimney stack at one gable end; the windows are dark stained wood; the walls are painted render. Each property has an open-plan front garden, generally laid to grass with some shrubs; most have small rear gardens.



15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment



15.3 Area 21: Putsborough Close

- 15.3.1** Putsborough Close is set back from Putsborough Road, and comprises a line of houses with a bungalow and chalet bungalow at one end. The Close is separated from the road by a stretch of grassed open space with two or three small trees. The Close is lower than the road, following the contours of the land. There is a pavement running the length of the Close on the side next to the houses. The road is just wide enough for cars to park outside the houses. All the properties have garages and driveways which slope steeply towards each house.
- 15.3.2** Five houses have shallow pitched roofs, with the ridge line running front to back; the roof line is asymmetrical with one side extended over the porch and adjoining garage. These properties also have side flat-roofed dormer windows. Four of the houses have steeply sloping roofs, with bedroom extensions in them. All have a painted render finish, the four with steep roofs have a brick and render finish. There is one bungalow at the end of the Close which has a shallow roof, with no dormer extensions. This has a painted render finish. All the properties have small open-plan front gardens and rear gardens overlooking fields.
- 15.3.3** These family houses, built in the late 1960s have an urban style to them, different from those older cottages in the conservation area which they adjoin, but they do not dominate given their position in the landscape, and they represent the growth of the village to accommodate a growing population.

15.4 Area 22: Putsborough Road

- 15.4.1** Opposite Putsborough Close, from the school to the turning to Pickwell, are 11 large detached properties, with differing designs, set back from the road on an elevated position.
- 15.4.2** They share one dominant characteristic, in that each property has a traditional Devon hedge bank fronting the road, of the stone-faced style with shrubs and plants embedded in the face or on the top. These properties have steep driveways leading to the property and gardens front and rear.



15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment

15.5 Area 23: Glebefield



- 15.5.1** The Glebefield development (built about 2000) consists of a branched cul-de-sac. One of the branches leads to seven large detached properties, six houses and one bungalow. They have tiled roofs, pitched front to back, with the roofline broken by front gables extending the living space at the ground floor and the main bedroom.
- 15.5.2** The double-fronted houses have a smaller front dormer with a pitched roof. Most have attached double garages which have pitched roofs. The roofline over the garages is lower than the main roofs, which adds visual interest. Two properties have detached garages. The external materials used are a combination of stone facing and painted render; with white UPVC window frames and doors. They all have front and rear gardens, with boundaries consisting of low stone walls, bushes and hedges. There are private driveways leading directly from the road.
- 15.5.3** A second branch of the cul-de-sac leads to three bungalows; here the road does have a pavement between the properties and the road. There is parking space either in front or to the side of the property for one car. They have tiled grey roofs. They have a central front door set back under the eaves to create a porch, with windows to either side, but the front and roof line is broken by an extending front gable. The roofs are pitched front to back. They each have an open-plan front garden, with a small private rear garden. They have a painted render exterior finish.

15.6 Area 24: Glebefield Terrace

- 15.6.1** At the entrance to the development opposite the village car park, is a terrace of three double-fronted houses which are elevated above the road and accessed by a path from the turning to the bungalows.
- 15.6.2** Each property is fronted by black painted railings and has a small garden border. The central front doors have a porch with a small pitched roof. The main roofs are pitched front to back. The finish is painted render. Each property has a small fenced rear garden.
- 15.6.3** Parking for these properties is in an allocated space at the rear, adjacent to the three bungalows. The development overlooks open green space, the older part of the village and the church.



15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment

15.7 Area 25: Davids Hill



- 15.7.1** Davids Hill comprises 48 properties built in the 1990s. Numbers 1 to 33 are two-bedroomed bungalows; numbers 34 to 48 are two-storey houses, mostly with three bedrooms.
- 15.7.2** All have their own garages and off-street parking. The access road is wide enough for cars to pass one another, and pavements exist on either side of the road, however the side roads are narrower which creates problems for on-street parking. The houses are built on rising ground, but the remainder are built on more level ground. The front garden spaces are open, mainly laid to grass or shrubs. The properties have enclosed rear gardens and many are surrounded by woodland.
- 15.7.3** There is a garage workshop at the entrance to the David's Hill development. Opposite this is open green space with a picnic table and views into the older part of the village. There are public toilets near the turning circle for the bus.



15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment

15.8 Area 26: Newberry Road

15.8.1 Opposite the entrance to the Georgeham Playing Field is a lane giving access to two individual detached properties which sit in an elevated position above the road and are fronted by shrubs and small trees. They have painted render exteriors, with red tiled roofs sloping front to back. There are dormers in the roof line with small pitched roofs facing forwards. The main doors have porches with tiled pitched roofs. These properties are hidden from the road by a high Devon bank.

15.8.2 On the other side of the lane there is a terrace of houses. These properties have steep roofs and a regular symmetrical appearance. Each property has a central door flanked on either side by windows at ground and first floor. The door has a porch with a tiled pitched roof. The properties have gardens front and rear. The exterior finish is the familiar painted render, with composite tiled roofs. Access to the rear is via the narrow lane.



15.8.3 Further along the road towards the village, opposite the rectory, and separated from the other houses by another lane (adopted by Devon County Council) are three pairs of semi-detached cottages. These follow a similar design pattern to the other houses on Newberry Road, in that they have painted render finishes on the exterior; the roof pitches are similar but in these properties the roofs are hipped. They have a front door, with a window to the side and two windows above. They are situated on rising ground set back from the road by front gardens on level plots. They also have rear gardens.

15.8.4 The front gardens are supported by a stone retaining wall, set back from the road to create a dedicated parking layby. Above the wall the garden boundary is marked by concrete posts and chain link fencing.

15.9 Area 27: Longland Lane

15.9.1 There are 26 properties along Longland Lane which runs east of, and parallel to, the playing fields. On the western side the road lies directly along the boundaries of the properties. The boundaries of the gardens are mostly stone or rendered block finish with shrubs and plants. The road consists of a mixed development of houses and bungalows.

15.9.2 On the east side of the road the properties are generally larger; they are set back from the road with front gardens and private driveways, so have generous space for parking two or three cars.

15.9.3 On the other side of the road there is a pavement separating the front gardens of the bungalows from the road, which have low walls.

15.9.4 Properties on the west side of the street are on slightly



15 Georgeham Character Area Assessment

higher ground so although the properties opposite are generally bigger with higher elevations, there is an overall balance in the heights of the buildings in the road.

- 15.9.5 The west side properties are generally smaller and have relatively shallow pitched roofs though some have been extended into the roof space, having dormer windows. Each of the bungalows has a garage and off-street parking in front of the garage.
- 15.9.6 The properties on the west side of the street have smaller front gardens but they also have rear gardens looking onto fields. The roofs are mainly tiled and ridged front to back, though there is individual variation. Some properties have timber cladding, as well as the usual painted render finish to the exterior.

15.10 Area 28: Rock Hill

- 15.10.1 Rock Hill lies at the end of Longland Lane. Half of it is within the conservation character area of the village. Within the development boundary the properties are a mixture of ages; some were probably built pre-war and others in the decades following.
- 15.10.2 Rock Hill is a gently sloping narrow lane which has no pavements and few places to park vehicles on the road. There is a mixture of terraced cottages, bungalows and houses; most have gardens front and rear.
- 15.10.3 There are five semi-detached bungalows, two houses; a block of garages set back from the road allowing some space in front for off-street parking. One large detached property has a drive and garage to the side. Two houses linked-detached by the garages which are set back from the road allowing off-street parking also. The roof heights vary; some are tiled; some slated.
- 15.10.4 The ground here is not level, so not only does the lane slope towards the village, but it rises somewhat to the north. The buildings old, or new, do somehow blend in together and into the topography. Despite the mixture of styles no one building dominates the others.
- 15.10.5 Overall this feels like part of the old country village. Devon banks predominate in the area, following the pattern of stone-facing and embedded shrubs. There are some picket-style fences, but the impression is of cottage gardens with shrubs well-established, and several mature trees in the vicinity.



16 Georgeham Primary School Submission

16.1 Background

- 16.1.1** Georgeham Primary School is an Ofsted 'Good' primary school of about 105 pupils located on the Putsborough Road close to the centre of Georgeham. Its catchment includes Georgeham, Croyde and outlying hamlets.
- 16.1.2** It accepts children from age 5 to 11 and comprises Reception and Years 1 to 6 in four classes. There is also an Early Years Unit, *Stepping Stones*, within the school grounds but this is currently a separate entity. The majority of pupils live within the parish.
- 16.1.3** The school is valued by the parish and is normally first choice for parents sending their children to primary school. Without it the parish would be a much less attractive place for families with young children to live.
- 16.1.4** The long-term viability of the school is therefore of great importance and significance to the character and life of the community as a whole.

16.2 School numbers and viability

- 16.2.1** School numbers is an ongoing challenge with two important but conflicting factors to balance:
- i)** The school has a Planned Admission Number (PAN) of 15, meaning it can accept an intake of up to 15 children into any one year group and up to 105 total for the seven year groups. With basically two-year groups per class, this means nominal class sizes of 30 which the school regards as the maximum desirable number in order to continue to provide an outstanding educational experience to pupils and manage staff workloads.
In practice numbers of pupils inevitably fluctuate. When demand for places has exceeded 15, the school has sometimes taken the difficult decision not to accept applications in order to keep class sizes below 30, which has lead to the school sometimes being seen as over-subscribed. (This can happen even if total numbers in the school are less than 105 due to other classes being less than 30). This was particularly evident in 2015, when Devon County Council considered holding a consultation exercise to reduce the school catchment.
 - ii)** On the other hand, the school budget is directly related to numbers of pupils on a given census day in October, so it is important to have sufficient numbers to keep the school budget in balance and viable.
The school has always been able to produce a balanced budget, but a drop in new pupils starting this year to 12 (three below the PAN of 15) has made this more of a challenge. Consequently it is facing difficult decisions about budgets and class sizes.
Looking to the future, income in real terms is falling, making it more difficult to produce a balanced budget and even more important to maintain pupil numbers. The school strongly resisted the approach by Devon County Council to reduce the school catchment. That threat has for now gone away, but in response to the situation, the school has carried out a feasibility study into building a new classroom on the grassed area next to the school house and has a fully costed scheme that has the pre-application support of North Devon Planning Department.

16.3 Neighbourhood Plan

- 16.3.1** The above shows how important it is for the parish as a whole to be family friendly – a place where families choose to live because of the environment and facilities it offers, and where they can afford to live. The following issues are also relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan:
- a) The school site**
The draft Local Plan currently refers to the school under paragraph 13.547 'Community Facilities', which acknowledges the importance of the school and supports the provision of

16 Georgeham Primary School Submission

additional capacity or improved pedestrian links. The school would like to see this paragraph strengthened and, if possible, made into a policy that protects the school's future and options to expand.

b) Road infrastructure

Regarding pedestrian links, the school plans to carry out a review of the School Travel Plan which was formulated in May 2008.

Central to the Travel Plan are ways of encouraging non-motorised methods of accessing the school which include both walking and cycling.

The school would ask the steering group to consider how the parish can be made more non-motorised-user friendly, especially for vulnerable road users such as children and the elderly, with particular emphasis on the centre of Georgeham, the road past the school, and the road between Croyde and Georgeham.

c) Housing

The school would ask the steering group to carefully investigate, and if possible formulate, policies that will require at least a proportion of new homes to be for people who plan to live in them as their main residence; and that will require a significant proportion of new homes to be genuinely affordable in relation to an appropriate locally assessed level of income.

d) Other issues

More broadly, the school would welcome policies that support the wider community facilities that make the parish an attractive place to live, for example, the post offices and village shops in Georgeham and Croyde.

Consideration is being given to renaming the school 'Georgeham and Croyde Primary School' to emphasise that it is for the whole parish. As Croyde is better known than Georgeham this might make the school more appealing to people outside the parish.

The same reasoning could be applied to the parish as a whole. The school would ask the steering group to consider such a name change in the interest of enhancing community unity and making it a more attractive place for people to live as well as visit.

17 Principal Residence Occupancy

17.1 Housing policy H1: Principal residence occupancy

- 17.1.1** This section provides justification for housing policy H1 ([see page 14](#)), the principal residence occupancy condition for new build housing inside the Plan area.
- 17.1.2** Due to the impact upon the community and local housing market of the continued uncontrolled growth of holiday accommodation (defined here as dwellings that are used for second home and/or holiday lets), new housing will only be supported where there is a restriction to ensure its occupancy as a principal residence. New unrestricted accommodation will not be supported at any time.
- 17.1.3** The principal residence occupancy condition will be guaranteed by the use of whichever is the more legally effective (from time-to-time) of a planning condition or other form of obligation. The condition or obligation on new homes will require that they are occupied only as the primary (principal) residence of those persons entitled to occupy them.
- 17.1.4** Occupiers of homes with a principal residence occupancy condition or obligation will be required to keep proof that they are satisfying the requirements of the policy and will be obliged to provide this proof if/when North Devon District Council requests this information. Proof of principal residence occupancy is via verifiable evidence which could include (but is not limited to) residents being registered on the local electoral register with the residence being their main home and being registered for and attending local services such as healthcare, schools and so on.
- 17.1.5** The effect of the policy on the community and local housing market will be monitored regularly and reviewed if appropriate.

17.2 Definition of principal residence occupancy

- 17.2.1** A principal residence is defined as a residence occupied as the resident's sole or main residence, where the residents spend the majority of their time when not working away from home. This allows for flexibility in the enforcement of a condition.
- 17.2.2** The policy applies to all new open market housing. If the original dwelling is replaced by two dwellings (whether in a single structure or not), then those two dwellings would both be new buildings for the purpose of policy H1 and be subject to the principal residence occupancy condition.

17.3 Justification for the principal residence occupancy condition

- 17.3.1** The principal residence occupancy condition will help to stem the adverse impact of increasing numbers of properties becoming holiday accommodation or second homes, and homes being rebuilt designed for the holiday market. It will benefit:

a) The future sustainability of the community, its local services and access to them and other provisions

Principal home residents create the core of community of the parish. People whose principal residence is in the parish reliably contribute to local societies, places of worship, local interest groups and village life activities all year round. This makes the parish attractive to residents, tourists and other visitors. Principal home residents support local services and businesses all year round and pay council tax. They use the parish primary school, the local post offices and village shops, bus services, local medical practices and hospital all year round. Owners of holiday accommodation often pay the currently less expensive small business rates rather than council tax. Business rates do not go directly to the local authority. They do not directly support local services provisions to the same extent as council tax, that tends to be paid by principal home residents;

17 Principal Residence Occupancy

b) New housing stock

The shift in buying power demand for housing for holiday accommodation and second homes has had the following impacts on the local housing stock that is available in the local community:

- i) Demand for houses within the parish for holiday accommodation has increased house prices in the Parish to a level way beyond the means of many people who live and work here. The average wage in North Devon (Barnstaple) as of Spring 2021 is £24,000 per annum. As of May 2021 there was advertised for tender a two-bedroom semi-detached bungalow in Croyde with a guide price of £325,000. The next cheapest property advertised for sale was a new three-bedroom apartment for offers in excess of £925,000. There was nothing currently for sale in the village of Georgeham. House prices have increased significantly beyond the means of most people living and working in the area;
- ii) The commercial holiday let market has led to existing housing stock being altered and/or extended to maximise the number of bedrooms for holiday rental;
- iii) Many existing principal home residents who own their homes are unable to afford to move to larger properties as their family expands resulting in their extending into roof and loft spaces or adding extensions to their existing homes for new bedrooms and space to accommodate their expanding family;
- iv) The above has resulted in a shortage of one-, two- and three-bedroom homes within the parish. Permanent residents, for example young adults living with their parents who want to enter the housing market or older residents who want to downsize, find it difficult to do so due to the lack of stock of smaller dwellings. There is also the issue of affordability. This often results in their moving away from the parish which adversely impacts the core community;
- v) New housing is currently being purchased for the most part for holiday accommodation and this type of market has different preferred housing characteristics to those desired for a principal occupancy home. Planning applications for new houses in recent years have produced a new housing stock more suited for use as holiday accommodation rather than for permanent residence, with an increase in the ratio of bedrooms to shower rooms, easily maintained modest gardens, reduced requirement for storage and comprehensive parking solutions. This has resulted in a significant reduction in garden and green areas in the AONB, with light spill, noise and other impacts into sensitive areas and habitats, and in some instances impacting neighbouring properties.

17.4 Benefits to the local community, economy and natural environment

17.4.1 The principal residence occupancy condition will ensure that new housing:

- a) Brings a greater balance and mix to local housing stocks and creates new opportunities for people to live and work here to strengthen our community and the local economy;
- b) Has a more balanced relationship with the natural environment of the North Devon Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its sensitive ecosystems and more easily accommodates net biodiversity gain.

17.4.2 This will be new housing which has to be used as the principal residence of the household living in it but does not have the price controls that affordable housing does, or any local connection requirement. This ensures that people from outside the area can move here on a permanent basis and contribute to the local community and use and provide support to its local and community services in a more reliable and sustained way.

17.5 Justification in terms of Human Rights

17.5.1 Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 requires that the restrictions be justified in terms of

17 Principal Residence Occupancy

necessity and proportionality. In the case of Georgeham Parish, there is evidence of the harm that excessive levels of holiday accommodation has on the social fabric of the community.

17.5.2 It is considered that this harm will continue unabated if no such restriction is imposed to prevent the use and occupancy of new homes by the second home and holiday market and that it is therefore contrary to sustainable development.

17.5.3 This policy is considered by the parish community to be a necessary and proportionate response to a particular local issue of significance to those living in the parish. Longer term, if left unchecked, it could result in adverse impacts for the parishioners and ultimately its visitors.

17.6 Sources of evidence

17.6.1 The 2001 and 2011 censuses in relation to Georgeham Parish

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04003091>

As at the 2011 census there were 1053 household spaces in the parish. Of these 620 (58.9%) had at least one usual resident and 433 (41.1) had no usual residents. Whilst there may be other reasons for no usual resident, a substantial proportion of these are likely to be second homes and holiday homes.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000043>

This link provides equivalent figures for North Devon district as a whole. Household spaces with no usual residents across NDC = 10.2%.

17.6.2 Georgeham Parish and Morthoe are the settlements with the highest proportion of second homes and holiday lets in North Devon

Research by *The Guardian* newspaper in February 2020 found that Georgeham, Croyde and Woolacombe had one of the highest ratios of Airbnb properties to the number of dwellings in the UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/feb/20/revealed-the-areas-in-the-uk-with-one-airbnb-for-every-four-homes>

17.6.3 Evidence of reduction and/or limitations to community facilities, decline in school numbers, seasonal closure of facilities – from local knowledge and consultation

Exeter University is carrying out research into the contribution that second homes make to the economy and the cost of second homes.

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/centreforsportandtourism/pdf/profiles/Jenny_Barnett.pdf

https://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/centreforsportandtourism/pdf/londonshowcase/Jenny_Barnett.pdf

17.6.4 CARA 2017 property survey (see page 81)

17.6.5 Georgeham Parish Housing Needs Survey conducted in 2019

<https://www.georgehamparishcouncil.gov.uk/notices/housing-needs-survey-results/>

17.6.6 Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) report

The CPRE countryside charity recently produced a report on the impact of housing for tourism on the nation's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The negative impacts on the AONBs in the South West and South East are highlighted in particular. An extract from the report is reproduced below:

“ This report from CPRE, the countryside charity, highlights the extent of the threat facing England's 34 AONBs as a result of unsuitable housing developments. The main findings are:

- *The threat to AONBs from development is increasing with pressure targeted on the south east and south west of England. Since 2017/18, an average of 1,670 housing units have been approved on an average of 119 hectares of greenfield land within AONBs each year. This is an average increase of 27% and 129% from the five years leading to 2017, respectively.*
- *The majority of planning applications on greenfield AONB land are allowed, and are being built at low densities; they are also not providing the affordable homes that rural communities need. On average, 80% of planning applications on greenfield AONB land are given permission. The density of housing on greenfield AONB land is on average just 16 dwellings per hectare, the*

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focus of which is largely on building 'executive' houses with only 16% of all homes built being considered as affordable by the government's definition.

- *High housing pressure is also being translated to land around AONBs, with houses built in the setting of AONBs increasing by 135% since 2012/13* 📈

Report "CPRE Beauty Still Betrayed. The State of our AONBs 2021", published April 2021.

17.6.7 Average earnings in Devon and Barnstaple, the closest business centre to Georgeham Parish

<https://www.payscale.com/research/UK/Location=Barnstaple-England%3A-Devon/Salary>

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/equality/performance-and-monitoring/equality-information/income-and-employment>

17.6.8 Property prices

Average house price in England – HMRC data to Feb 2021 – under £250,000

<https://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/browse?from=2020-02-01&location=http%3A%2F%2Flandregistry.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fregion%2FUnited-kingdom&to=2021-02-01&lang=en>

The Zoopla property website showed the average house price paid in North Devon as at April 2021 was £282,575 and average value of houses was £274,526.

<https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/north-devon/>

The same information for Croyde on the Zoopla site at this time showed the average house price paid was £682,455 and the average value of houses was £511,614.

<https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/browse/croyde/?q=Croyde%20Devon>

For Georgeham the information on this date was £460,167 for average price paid and £443,528 for the average value of houses.

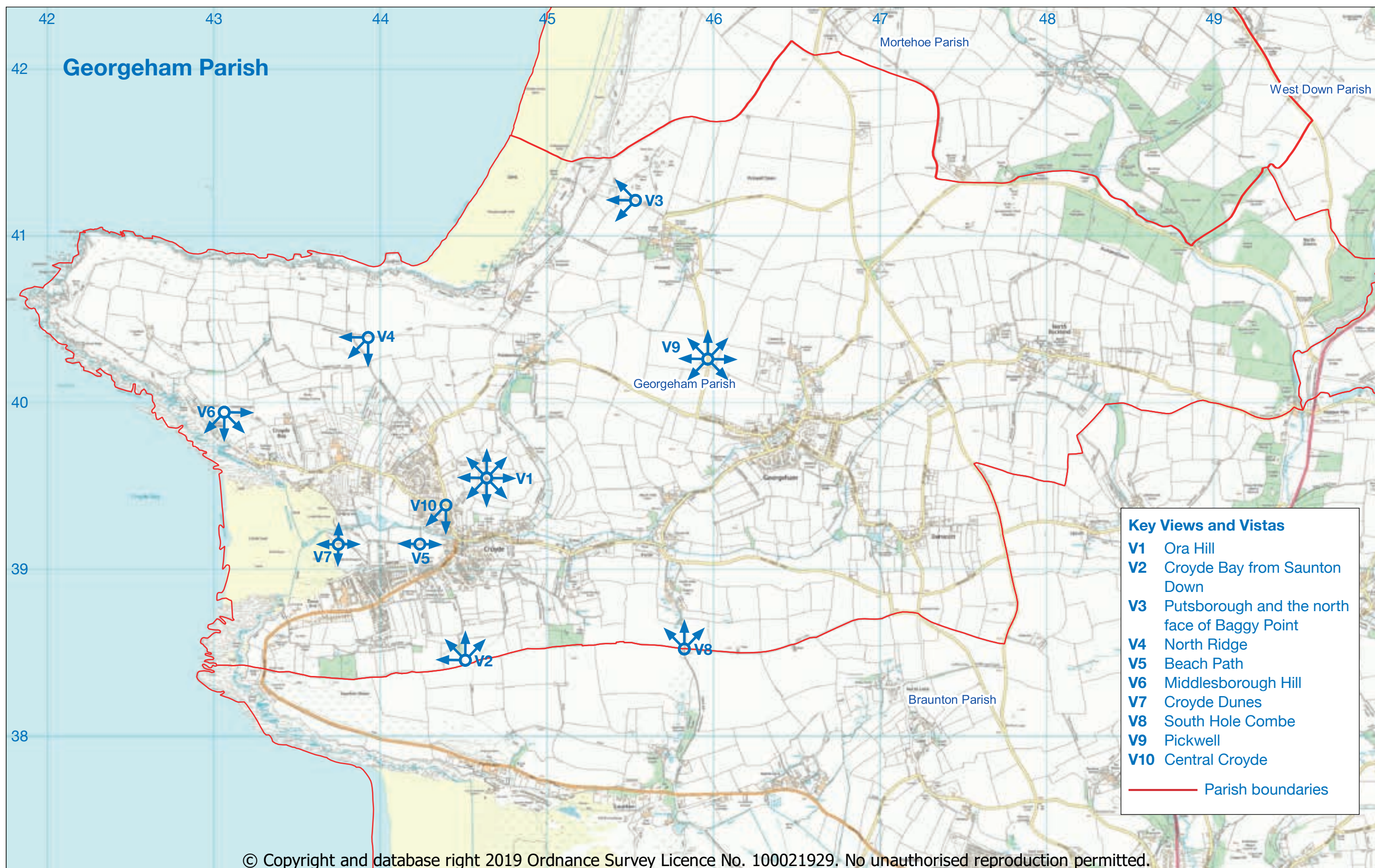
<https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/browse/georgeham/?q=Georgeham%20Devon>

18 Planning Decision Monitoring Form

18.1 Purpose

The aim of the form, shown below as it might look with sample applications completed, is to provide a record of planning activity, which will be reviewed annually and will contribute to a five-yearly review of Neighbourhood Plan policy.

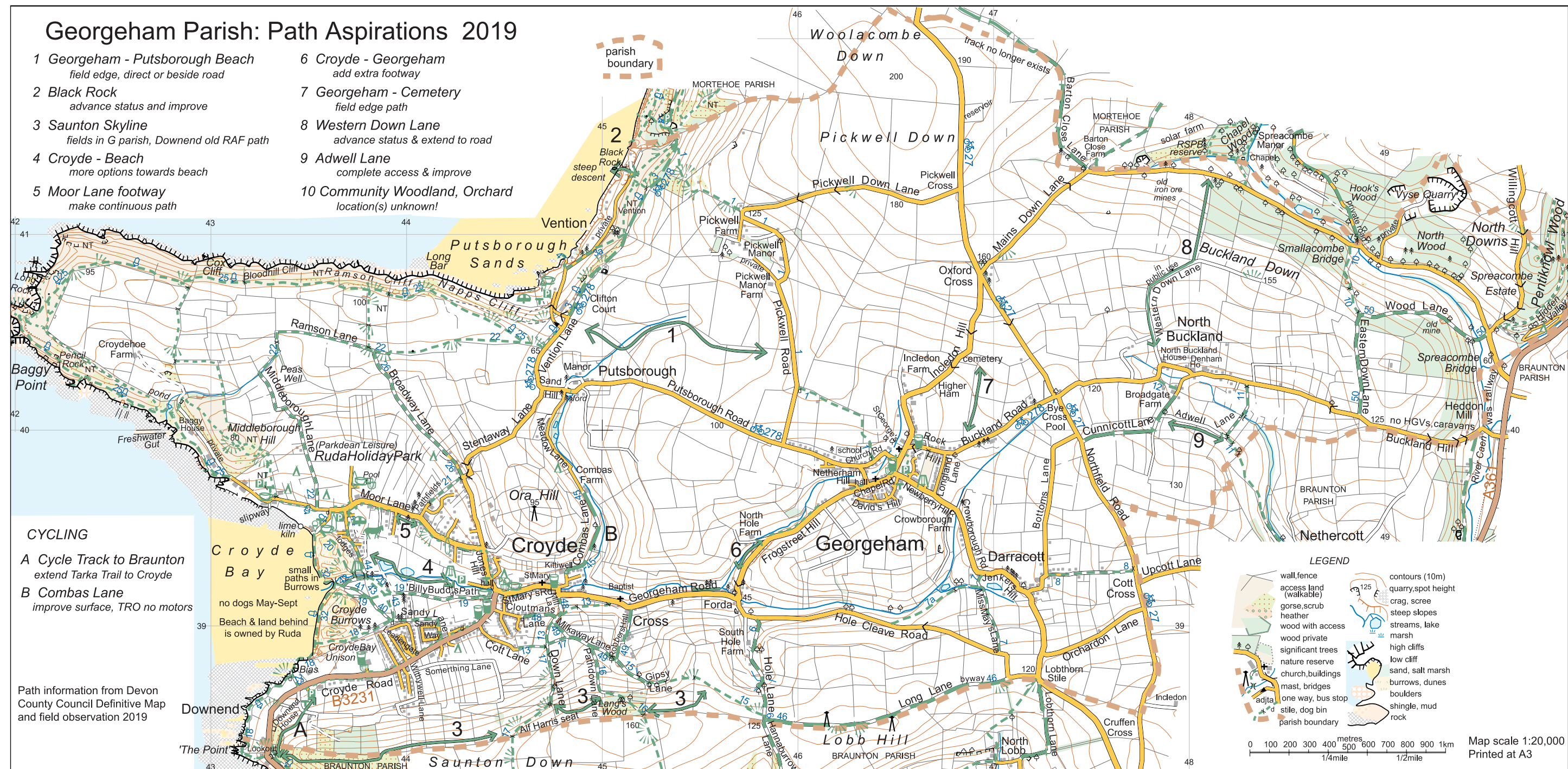
Georgeham Parish Council Planning Decision Monitoring Form																																								
Planning application number	Date	Georgeham Parish Council response	Date of Parish Council response	North Devon Council decision	Date of North Devon Council decision	Delegated/ Committee/ Appeal	Concur? Yes/no	Neighbourhood Plan policies																																Total
								Social and Community				Housing					Built Environment									Natural Environment						Economic Development								
								SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5	BE1	BE2	BE3	BE4	BE5	BE6	BE7	BE8	BE9	NE1	NE2	NE3	NE4	NE5	NE6	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4					
88888	12/2/22	Approval	25/2/22	Approval	31/3/22	D	Yes	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y		Y	Y	Y				Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	18						
88889	15/2/22	Refusal	30/2/22	Approval	25/5/22	D	No		Y					Y			Y	Y					Y				Y				Y			7						
88901	22/1/4/22	Refusal	25/5/22	Refusal	19/7/22	C	Yes			Y					Y				Y				Y						Y	Y	Y	Y	8							
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Total: 3	Approval:	1		Approval:	2		Yes:	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	2	2	3	2						
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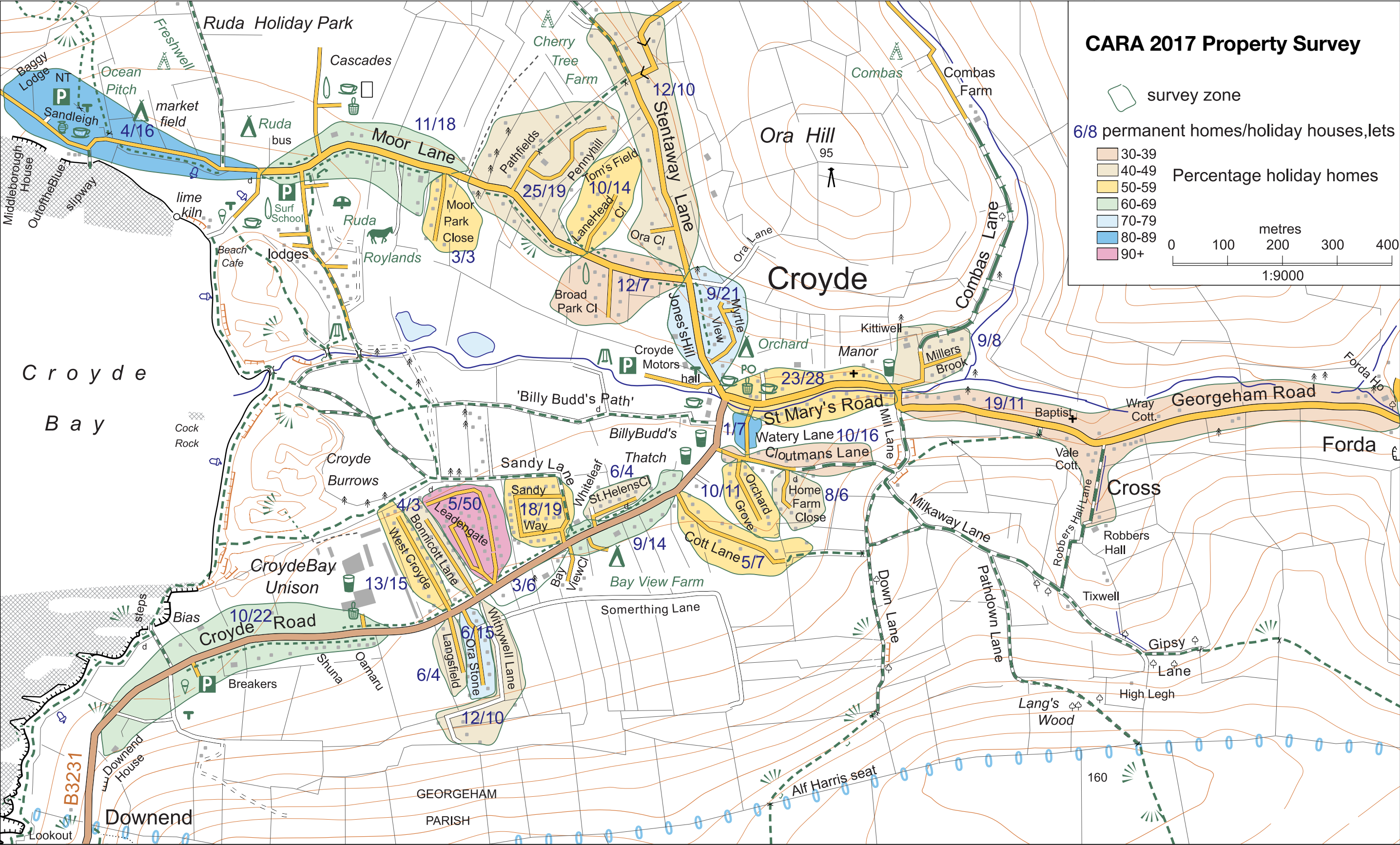




Georgeham Parish: Path Aspirations 2019

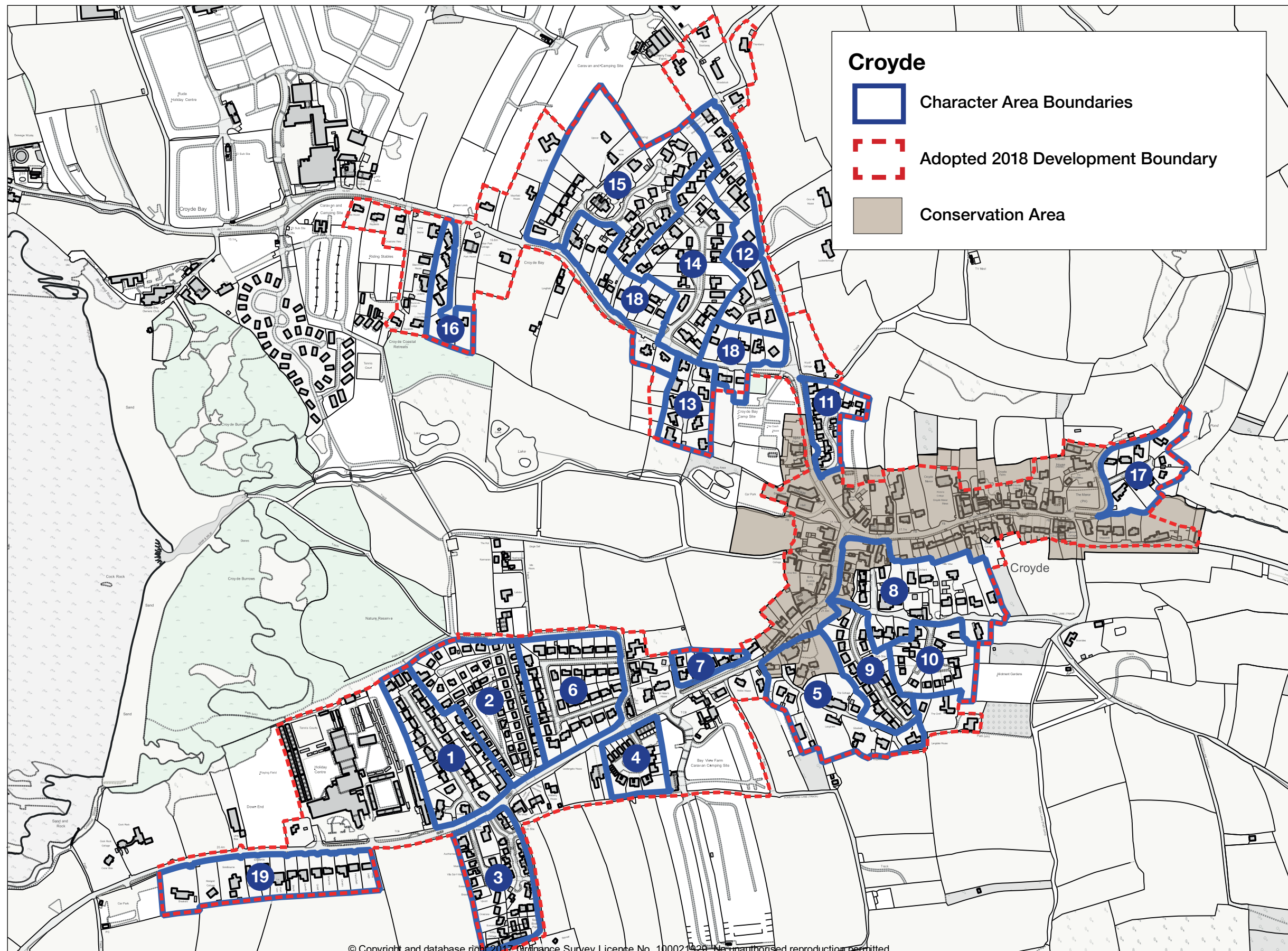
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Georgeham - Putsborough Beach
<i>field edge, direct or beside road</i> | 6 Croyde - Georgeham
<i>add extra footway</i> |
| 2 Black Rock
<i>advance status and improve</i> | 7 Georgeham - Cemetery
<i>field edge path</i> |
| 3 Saunton Skyline
<i>fields in G parish, Downend old RAF path</i> | 8 Western Down Lane
<i>advance status & extend to road</i> |
| 4 Croyde - Beach
<i>more options towards beach</i> | 9 Adwell Lane
<i>complete access & improve</i> |
| 5 Moor Lane footway
<i>make continuous path</i> | 10 Community Woodland, Orchard
<i>location(s) unknown!</i> |





Character areas

- 1 West Croyde and Bonnicott Lane
- 2 Leadengate Close and Leadengate Fields
- 3 Ora Stone Park and Langsfield
- 4 Bay View Close
- 5 Cott Lane
- 6 Sandy Way
- 7 St Helens Close
- 8 Cloutmans Lane and Watery Lane
- 9 Orchard Grove
- 10 Home Farm Close
- 11 Myrtle Farm View
- 12 Ora Close and Stentaway Lane
- 13 Broad Park Close
- 14 Lanehead Close and Toms Field
- 15 Pathfields and Penny Hill
- 16 Moor Park Close
- 17 Millers Brook
- 18 Moor Lane
- 19 Croyde Road



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