

# CAPEL ST MARY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018-2037



**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023**  
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**Foreword**

THIS PAGE IS RESERVED FOR THE FOREWORD BY THE CHAIR FOLLOWING THE LOCAL PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION.

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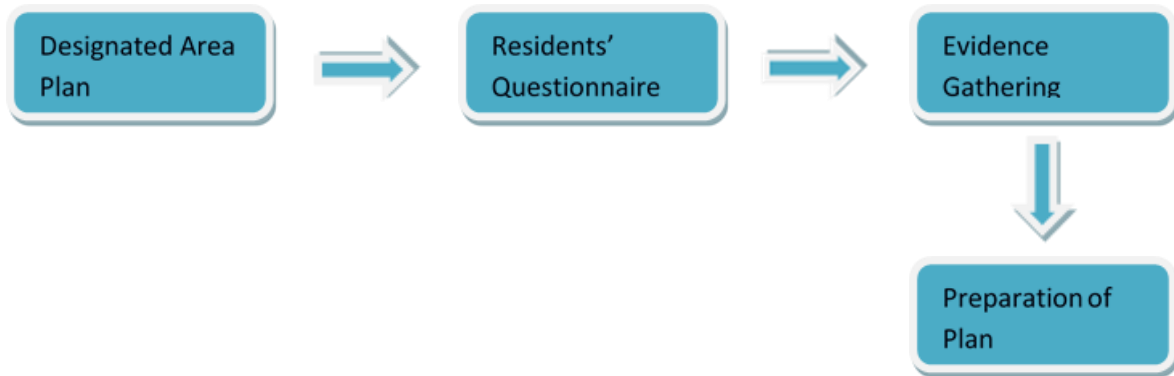
### 1.0 Residents Support for a Neighbourhood Plan

On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017 the Parish Council agreed that a Neighbourhood Plan Working Party should be set-up. It was decided to poll residents to find out their opinion on creating a Neighbourhood Plan. A leaflet was delivered to every residence explaining the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan and detailing how they could vote for or against it. Of the votes counted from the poll on the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 there was a 97.5% majority for YES.

At a meeting of the Parish Council on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan was approved.

## 2.0 Current Status of the Plan

The draft plan is going forward for public consultation being run in accordance with Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. To date the following steps have been completed:





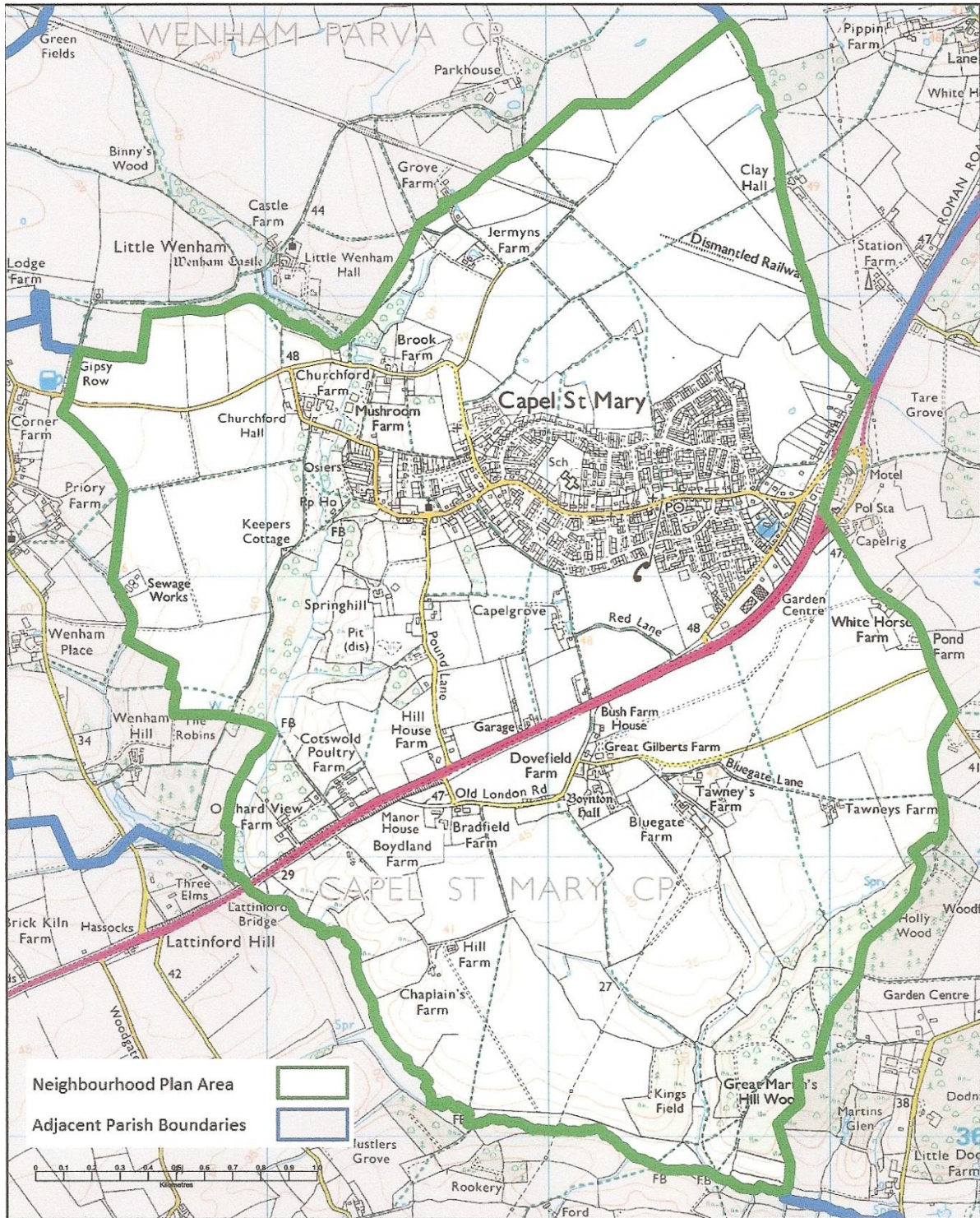
### 3.0 Introduction

For several decades Capel St Mary has enjoyed a peaceful existence following its major expansion into a garden village. With an increasing demand for housing, and Capel St Mary being listed as one of the core villages in Babergh District Council's plans, there is a strong possibility that housing, and population will increase in the near future. Nestling close to the Suffolk/Essex border and lying alongside the A12 trunk route, it has good arterial connections south to Colchester and London, north to Ipswich, Norwich and Lowestoft, and west via the A14 to Bury St. Edmunds, Cambridge and the Midlands. It is these factors which make Capel St Mary an attractive place to live and for developers to build houses. It is not the intention of this Neighbourhood Plan to stop housing developments taking place, but to ensure that they are appropriate to the character and needs of the village. The emerging Joint Local Plan (JLP) cannot feasibly deal with all issues particular to the village where a Neighbourhood Plan can by providing specific local needs and circumstances.



The driver for the Neighbourhood Plan is to give the community a voice in the sustainable development of the village. Any development will be judged against the views of residents, the existing character, and the demographic composition of the village. The Plan will cover the economic, social, and environmental needs of the village as well as balancing between the thriving community of residents and the business interests. The Plan covers the period 2018-2037 to bring it in line with the emerging JLP. Any references in the Neighbourhood Plan to the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP are taken from the Pre-Submission Document (Reg19) (November 2020) approved by Babergh Full Council on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The Examiner of the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP raised many queries during the public examination stage. As a result of these queries the JLP has been split into Parts 1 and 2 with Part 2 covering housing including site allocations. The site allocations in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP together with the rejected site allocations are all to be reassessed. Until Part 2 is published it will not be known whether or not there will be any changes to the housing allocation for Capel St Mary. The Neighbourhood Plan is therefore based on the Pre-Submission Document (Reg 19) (November 2020) being the only factual version currently available.

The first task was to register the Neighbourhood Plan Area with Babergh District Council. This was completed on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018, when an Area Designation Notice was issued for the following map. The boundary for the Neighbourhood Plan is the same as that of the Parish.

# Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037



Capel St. Mary Neighbourhood Plan Area

|   |                                 |   |  |
|---|---------------------------------|---|--|
|  | <b>BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL</b> |  | <b>SCALE 1:19000</b>   |
|   |                                 |   | Reproduced by permission of<br>Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.<br>© Crown copyright and database right 2018<br>Ordnance Survey Licence number 100023274 |

So, what is a Neighbourhood Plan? The Localism Act of 2011 provided a new statutory system for neighbourhood planning. This was followed by The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 Act, which set out the rules for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. The plan has the same statutory weight as a Local Plan, but it must conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) or successor. A Neighbourhood Plan shapes the development and growth of a local area including matters such as housing and infrastructure.

The data in this plan reflects information correct at the time of writing. Up-to-date information should be sought from the Local Planning Authority, the Parish Council, or appropriate statutory body.

### 3.1 Vision

In preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the future the first thing to decide is what the village should look like. In the responses received to the Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire residents identified a local need for some dwellings but concerns were expressed that the planned level of growth for the village in the emerging JLP would “swamp” the village and destroy its character. This requires a vision:

**That Capel St Mary retains its rural quality whilst meeting local housing needs and protecting and developing the infrastructure, including essential services, to provide a sustainable future.**

### 3.2 Objectives

To achieve this vision a number of objectives are required, and these are detailed in each chapter. To achieve these objectives planning applications will be monitored to ensure that local housing needs are met. Also, that the clubs, sports facilities, and green spaces which provide social, health and fitness services to the community are maintained at a level adequate for the population and are financially viable. These clubs and facilities are important for all age groups from the young to the elderly. The village also attracts people from the surrounding area, so it is important to control traffic flows and parking.

### 3.3 Action Colour Coding

A colour coding system has been used to distinguish different actions:

- Blue - Planning Policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.
- Orange - Community Actions where the Parish Council is the driving force to achieve the end result.
- Lilac - Community Aspirations are where the outcome is reliant on other organisations to achieve a result.

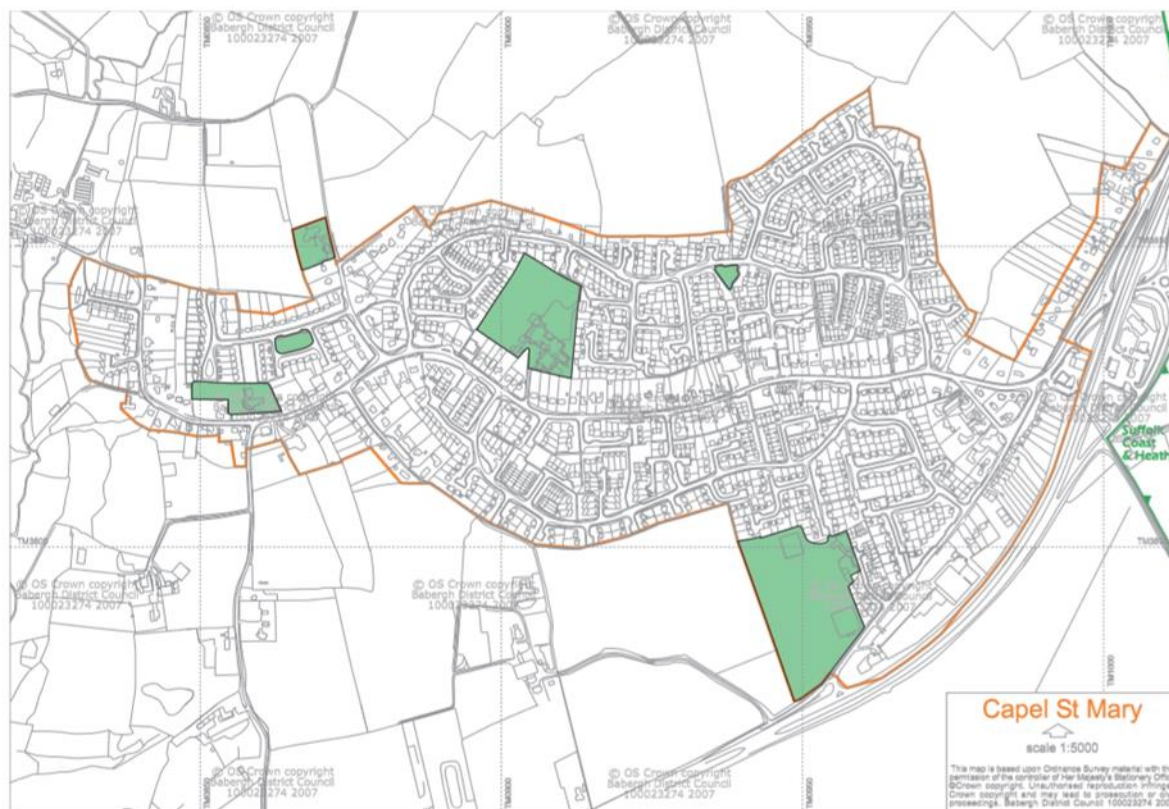
### 4.0 Capel Past and Present

To plan the future of the village the Parish Council needed to understand the past and the present.

#### 4.1 The Past

Archaeology has shown that there have been settlements in this area through the Late Stone Age, Bronze Age and Roman periods. The Suffolk Heritage Explorer website supports this as it has 68 records for Capel St Mary. Included in these records are finds, dating back to the Iron Age, from past archaeological digs. These include early Bronze Age pits, Roman kilns, Roman cremation pots and coins from various time periods.

For most of its life it has been an agriculturally based small village with a few small communities built around the medieval St. Mary's Church, Windmill Hill and at the other end of the village by The White Horse Inn and towards Bentley. Gradually, the village developed along The Street joining up these two areas with just under 200 houses in the late 1940s. The 1871 Census showed Capel St Mary had a population of 593 and this remained constant for 90 years with a population of 632 in the 1961 Census. The village was expanded to largely its current size in the 1960s, 70s and 80s with new housing being built around two semi-circular roads - Rembrow Road to the south of The Street and Thorney Road to the north - (see Map 1 below). The green areas in the map are the larger green spaces which are play areas, school playing field and the village playing field.



Map 1. Village after expansion in 1960's to 1980's

## 4.2 Growth of the Village

Despite Servicemen returning from the Second World War and starting up families the population was declining. In the 1950's the demand for houses in the rural areas began rising, and to avoid existing larger villages becoming overwhelmed new villages for expansion were considered. Capel St Mary surrounded by agricultural land, close to the A12 and midway between Ipswich and Colchester became the main target. A plan was drawn up to increase the population from 600 to 3,000. Whilst the close community in the village became overwhelmed by the new residents, many of these came from outside the area and needed to make friends and thus a new community spirit was formed.

The building of new houses began in the 1960s and ended by 1985. The population in 1961 was 632 rising to 1490 in 1971 and 3176 in 1991. During this period the village gained a doctors' practice, a shopping precinct, a new playing field, library and many other facilities. The infrastructure grew with the village. The housebuilding programme created over 1,000 houses, which were mainly three and four bedrooms. Whilst these covered the needs at the time with the ageing population that exists now the housing mix has become unbalanced with a need for smaller homes and bungalows. As a consequence of the imbalance in housing mix young people find it difficult to be able to afford to buy houses in the village and so move to the neighbouring towns in Suffolk and Essex, where employment can be found, housing is more affordable and the cost of commuting is lower. Responses to the Neighbourhood Plan

Questionnaire showed there is a demand for houses to allow young people to afford to buy in the village and, at the same time, there is a need for smaller dwellings that would allow the older generation of empty nesters to downsize and free-up larger accommodation for young people with families.

### 4.3 The Present

From 1991 to 2018, the number of dwellings has been constant with no pressure from the planning authorities to increase the size of the village. Many of the children who were born in the village have now grown up and moved away. This led to a decrease in the population of about 500. Since 2018 there have been several new housing developments in the village increasing the population once again to over 3,000.

### 4.4 Amenities

In this section the Parish Council will review the facilities that are currently available to the 3,000 residents and the activities that take place. It should be emphasised that should there be a large growth in the number of new dwellings during the period of this Neighbourhood Plan there is a need to replace, enhance and expand on the facilities currently offered.

### 4.5 Current Facilities

The current village facilities are as follows:

#### Centre of the village

- Community Centre incorporating the Library, Village Hall, Family and Lounge bars
- Children's play area
- Shops - Supermarket including a Post Office, Convenience Store, Bakers, Hairdressers, and Takeaway restaurants
- Offices, Building Society/Insurance Broker
- Parish Council office
- Local Medical Practice
- Methodist Church and hall

#### West

- St. Mary's Church and hall
- Days Road Community Church and hall
- Dove Close accommodation for older people
- Capel St Mary CEVC Primary School
- Robin's Childcare
- Nature reserve

### East

- Playing field with football, tennis and pickleball courts, bowling green, sports pavilion, and play area
- Garden Centre and Cafe
- Restaurants
- Petrol Station
- Dental Practice
- Public House

### South

- Allotments

### Throughout

- Public footpaths
- Green spaces

## 4.6 Village Centre

Whilst the village has all of these facilities, its design predates the rapid rise in car ownership. At the centre of the village the Methodist Church has no car parking spaces, the Community Centre attracts more car users than available spaces, and the Co-op Store attracts many car users. This often leads to the centre being overrun so that visitors are forced to use the wrong car parks and surrounding streets for parking.

## 4.7 Capel Community Centre

At the heart of the village is Capel Community Centre, which along with the playing field is administered by Capel Community Trust a registered charity. The centre includes a Village Hall, Library, the Vine Lounge and a family bar. Capel Community Association are responsible for running the bar facilities and other fund-raising activities. The Vine Lounge and the family bar are available to members seven days a week. Capel Community Trust is now using an online booking system for the community centre which, it is hoped, will increase use of the hall, library, and bars. The hall has had a booking for 85% of the available days and taking into consideration three sessions a day this represents 50% occupancy. For the library 95% of the available days have had a booking with 66% occupancy. In front of the community centre is a play area for children.



**The Community Centre and Play Area**

### **4.8 Playing Field and Pavilion**

The village has outgrown the playing field which was created before the village was fully built and the population grew to its existing level. With four men's football teams, 19 junior and one women's team the parking was inadequate with cars wrongly parking on the garden centre car park and causing problems for the residents of Friars. This has been partly alleviated with the building of a new car park. The state of the pitches, with all the usage, is poor as it has low quality grass and unsatisfactory drainage. Pitches have to be shared between adults, juniors and with the public. The football club have to hire facilities in other villages to enable players to train. Babergh District Council monitor the ratio of people to green spaces and the village is already in deficit. The addition of any new housing developments will exacerbate the situation.

The pavilion with changing rooms was in poor repair and the facilities inside not sufficient for the number of users. Essential maintenance is growing in frequency and cost. The responses from residents to the questionnaire revealed that 88% of the people indicated that the pavilion was essential to the village. Recently there has been a refurbishment of the pavilion to upgrade facilities.



### 4.9 Retail Facilities

The village centre has two food stores, a bakers and a hairdressers. On the outskirts of the village is a garden centre with a cafe. The village also has ample restaurants and takeaways with a Turkish and Indian restaurant both supplying takeaways. In addition to these there is a Chinese takeaway and an Indian takeaway. Capel St Mary has one public house, The White Horse Inn, which has the ability to serve food. There are also bars in Capel Community Centre which can be used by members of Capel Community Association.



### The Shopping Precinct

### 4.10 Churches

Capel St Mary is extremely fortunate that it has three very active churches, and between them they carry out many social activities. They are St. Mary's Church of England, the Capel Methodist Church, and the Capel Community Church. Whilst there is no Roman Catholic Church in Capel St Mary, Capel Capers, the village magazine, provides details of Roman Catholic services in the locality.



**St Mary's Church**



**Capel Methodist Church**



**Capel Community Church**

### 4.11 Education

#### Early-Years Care

This is provided by Robin's Childcare. Availability varies according to the age groups.

#### Primary

Capel St Mary CEVC Primary School has a capacity of 315 children and currently has around 80 children attending outside of the catchment area.

#### Secondary Education

The secondary education provision is East Bergholt High School which has a capacity of 930 pupils. This capacity is expected to be exceeded by 117 places in 2024/25, and there is expected to be a deficit of 293 places when considering the proposed growth allocated in the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Plan (2019-2036) - July 2019 includes expansion of the school to 1500 capacity.

### 4.12 Constable Country Medical Practice

Despite the falling population of Capel St Mary resulting in a reduced number of registered patients at the practice, it has in the past been struggling to cope with the current population with many complaints about the difficulty in getting appointments. Improvements have been made to the booking system and the practice currently offers around 1250 appointments a week. During 2018 the clinical rooms were renovated and refurbished. Automatic doors have been installed and the waiting room extended. The practice site, because of its size, does not allow for further extension to the practice. Some residents have expressed the view that with the growth of the village they would like a new practice, but this would have to be funded by NHS England and this is unlikely at the present time. Constable Country Medical Practice covering the East Bergholt and Capel St Mary sites has a capacity for a further 6,000 patients. Most of this capacity is at East Bergholt so if the expected growth in Capel St Mary takes place more residents will need to travel to East Bergholt for an appointment. With an ageing population many residents will find this difficult. There is also the possibility that this capacity could be substantially reduced by housing developments in East Bergholt and the surrounding area.

### 4.13 Capel Dental Practice

Currently, the practice is full and because the NHS contracts are fixed, it is likely that more residents would have to look outside the village for NHS dental care. There may be some provision to expand private dental care if required.

### 4.14 Library

Our village library is an important educational and social hub, enjoyed by many residents of Capel and the surrounding areas with an average monthly footfall of some 3000 users. The

dedicated and knowledgeable staff provide an important link for numerous elderly residents, who take the opportunity to socialise while visiting to select from the vast array of available books.

But it is not just about lending books, the library also organises and supports a number of other regular events and clubs, for example, Tot Rock, Lego Club, Minecraft, Parish Nurses and the ever popular Summer Reading Challenge. In addition, other facilities such as free access to computers and wifi is also provided.

The library is supported by a Friend's Group which raises funds to renew equipment and improve facilities offered to the community. Amongst the many events that are run or supported is the monthly cinema club, which pre-Covid attracted on average 60 people, but this has since fallen to an average of 35.



### 4.15 Nature Reserve

The Nature Reserve is an area of approximately four acres that lies at the West end of the village. This is a hidden treasure, which unfortunately some residents are not aware of.

This land is more of a wild place than a reserve and has been this way since the houses were built on Windmill Hill. It slopes steeply to the brook that runs through it and can be very boggy. Access to the Nature Reserve can be gained via several footpaths. The two entrances in the village are located in Windmill Hill and where The Street meets with Mill Hill.

In a previous survey, carried out by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, more than one hundred plant species were recorded. Oak, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple, willow, elm, and ash are all to be found in the Reserve's woodland. The rest of the area is mostly covered by nettles, brambles, and horsetail.

Wildlife in this area includes: muntjac and fallow deer, badgers, hares, stag beetles, shrews, field mice, hedgehogs, moles and dragon fly.

## Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037

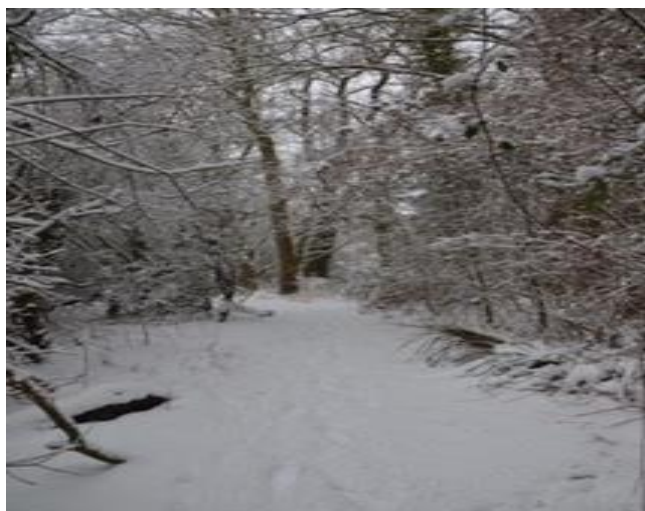
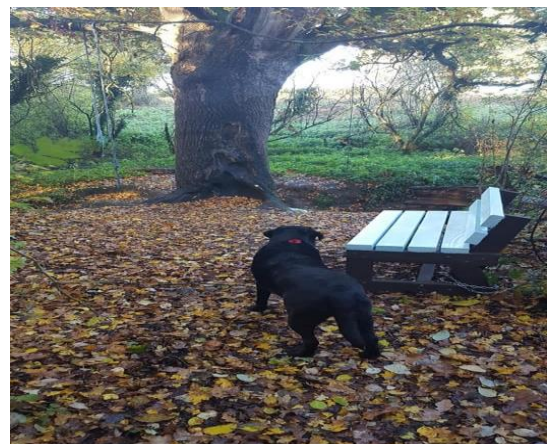
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Due to neglect over the years, the grassland areas have become overgrown by scrub, nettles and brambles. Management of this area would allow for improvement in the species diversity as well as opening up the area to increased public access.

In 2018 a few Capel residents started a Friends of Capel St Mary Nature Reserve group via social media. The intention of this group was to highlight the presence of the reserve within the Capel Community, improve the presentation of the area, keeping it free from litter and the paths clear.

Additional improvements have been a bench, put in place by the brook, and several bird boxes which have been painted by local children. There is also a hedgehog hotel! These changes have been instigated and implemented mainly by the efforts of one individual.

The creation of the Social Media group has elevated the profile of the reserve sufficiently to attract the attention of children's organisations in the village. Involvement at an early age will go towards instilling a sense of ownership and community spirit. Anyone wishing to get involved in supporting the Nature Reserve can do so by contacting the Parish Clerk for details.



### Views of Capel Nature Reserve

### **Community Action**

The Parish Council will investigate the option to secure ownership of this land, from Babergh District Council, so that further work can be done to improve the area ensuring that this valuable Community resource is adequately promulgated

## **4.16 War Memorial**

Capel St Mary was one of the few villages in the UK without a permanent War Memorial. Whilst previous initiatives had commenced, these were never completed.

The Capel St Mary War Memorial Trust (CSMWMT) was formed in March 2016 by residents with two objectives:

- To raise a permanent and fitting memorial to local people lost in conflict
- An educational project to raise awareness within the community, particularly the younger element, of the stories behind the events of the time and the local people involved

In April 2016, CSMWMT started a successful fund-raising campaign to raise the £20,000 needed to fund the memorial structure. A website was created, and presentations made to local groups and charitable trusts.

A design for the Memorial was agreed and planning permission secured on land made available by the Parish Council. The structure was installed on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2018 signalling that Capel St Mary had come together in just two years to ensure that the 35 men who had lost their lives would have a permanent Memorial. The Memorial was screened by boards that students from East Bergholt High School had decorated in the period up to the Dedication ceremony. The students and their work were featured in the local press and they met the local MP to tell him what remembrance meant to them.

As an additional project CSMWMT funded the refurbishment of a Memorial Garden at Capel St Mary Primary School and installed a second stone memorial to the children of that school who did not return from war.

A grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund of £10,000 was secured and used to support the educational element in achieving the second objective. This saw the production of a series of Capel Times newspapers which told the story of the village and its people and the impact of war.

The grant was also used to support the students of East Bergholt High School in their studies of World War I. As a result, more than 500 students were able to explore the theme of Remembrance and their own family connections to conflict. They developed skills in creative writing, genealogy research, design technology, public speaking and saw their work published

in Capel Times. They also enjoyed media attention and recognition from Her Majesty the Queen.

The Memorial was dedicated at 1100 hours on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2018, the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armistice. The service was preceded by a parade from Capel Primary School to the Memorial by Army Cadets, Air Cadets, the Combined Cadet Force, Capel Scouting and Guiding Groups. The service was attended by upwards of 2,000 people and was featured on the BBC TV Look East Program and in The East Anglian Daily Times. An exhibition was also held featuring the work of CSMWMT, local youth groups, Capel St Mary Primary School, East Bergholt High School and local adult groups.

In his address the Guest of Honour, the Deputy Lieutenant of Suffolk, Sir Michael Bunbury, congratulated the village on its community spirit and thanked all those who had worked hard to make the various elements of the project such a success.



**Views of the War Memorial**

### **4.17 Allotments**

Capel St Mary Allotments Association administers 97 full and half plots on land owned by the Parish Council off Pound Lane. Several events are held during the year, the premier event being the Annual Summer Flower and Produce Show.

## 4.18 Overview

Since Capel St Mary expanded in the 1960s, it has been a vibrant village offering many social activities to its residents. There has always been a generous supply of volunteers, not only to support the social events and community bodies but also to carry out the caring roles when needed. Appendix 2 lists activities and clubs available in the village. These provide many opportunities for the residents to meet and socialise. This community spirit must not be allowed to diminish with any increase in population. The Capel Community Trust and Association must be supported to continue their activities and the churches encouraged to continue their support and links to residents. This will ensure that Capel St Mary remains a vibrant village in which people are happy to make their home.



**Jubilee Cottage**



**The White Horse Inn**



**The Street West of Jubilee Cottage**



**The Street looking east**



**Capel Mushroom Farm**



**The Street**

### 5.0 Planning Strategy

#### 5.1 Introduction

As part of Babergh District Council's Spatial Distribution in the Reg19 emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP for the period 2018/2037 the locations to meet the housing needs, using the methodology required by central government, have been set across the district. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP not only sets out district level housing requirements for the plan period 2018 to 2037 but it also allocates sufficient sites to enable those targets to be met. The Standard Method Total in the JLP for 2018 to 2037 gives a housing total requirement of 7904 dwellings for the Babergh district. As a core village Capel St Mary was allocated 792 of the 7904 total in the Reg 19 Pre-submission (Nov 2020) version of the JLP. This allocation has been removed from Proposed Modifications Consultation (March 2023) on Part 1 of the JLP. This allocation is further in doubt as the planning application for the Red Lane site (LA055 in the JLP) has been withdrawn due to strong objections by the Highways Department to the proposed road junctions. In addition to this Babergh District Council is reviewing all of its site allocations considered in preparing the JLP and the results of these reassessments are not known. *[Note: all figures quoted include a number of outstanding planning permissions for dwellings yet to be completed as at 1st April 2018 base date.]*

#### 5.2 Significant Factor for Proposed Developments

One of the significant factors in allocating sites in the emerging Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP was the proximity of trunk roads to the settlements. Trunk roads have a strong effect on the demand for housing as they have a great influence on market forces and can reduce the need to travel or encourage sustainable travel by access to public transport. Capel St Mary adjacent to the A12 was bound to play a key role. The Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan is designed to see how the village can grow and remain sustainable.

##### **Objective:**

To develop and sustain the core village status of Capel St Mary by ensuring any future development is sustainable and supports a range of employment, services, housing and recreational facilities.

#### 5.3 Agricultural Land

The value of the agricultural land in the parish means that its protection is important; once lost, the ability to produce crops is gone forever. Recent development of some parts of the agricultural fields has ultimately meant that it is no longer economically viable to farm the remainder of the fields. As a result, a wider area is lost to agricultural production.



### 5.4 Infrastructure

What is important is that all growth is supported by the infrastructure that is most needed in Capel St Mary and will provide the greatest benefit to the wider community. Particular concerns are raised by residents about the extent of the healthcare facilities in the village. This needs to be addressed by developers and local authority and not dismissed as “a problem for the NHS to resolve”.

The additional number of people in the village will place an extra strain on the existing social and recreational facilities, which were provided to support the existing population. Additional infrastructure will be required should the village expand beyond its current size.

#### **Policy CSM1: Capel St Mary Spatial Strategy**

The Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan area will accommodate development commensurate with its designation as a Core Village in the District’s settlement hierarchy. The focus for new development will be within the Settlement Boundary as defined on the Policies Map and in accordance with other policies in this Plan.

All new housing proposals will be expected to address the following key matters:

- Ensure they address the evidence-based needs of Capel St Mary in accordance with Policy CSM2; and
- As appropriate to the scale and nature of the proposed development, ensure that suitable on-site and/or off-site provision is made to accommodate the infrastructure needs arising from the proposal
- Design high-quality buildings and deliver them in layouts with high-quality natural landscaping in order to retain the rural character and physical structure of Capel St Mary
- That development may only be supported where no likely significant effects (LSE) or adverse effects on site integrity (AEoI) have been demonstrated through an individual project-level HRA
- All residential development within the ZOI of European sites to make a financial contribution towards mitigation measures, as detailed in the Suffolk Coast RAMS or through bespoke mitigation agreed with the local authority

### 6.0 Housing and Design

#### 6.1 Introduction

The Parish Council aims to make Capel St Mary an even better place to live, now and for future generations. Neighbourhood Plans are formal documents allowing communities to exert more control over where development takes place, to influence the type and quality of that development, and to ensure that the change it brings meets local objectives.

In creating these objectives, the Parish Council gave due consideration to the responses received to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire.

##### **Objectives:**

- Through facilitating development, ensure that the needs of the community are met as these have not been met through recent speculative developments. This should include affordable housing and high-quality and affordable retirement bungalows
- Seek to encourage the development of a mix of housing stock in the village which meets the demands created by a changing climate and are specifically made using low-carbon methods; to encourage the construction of homes using new and proven materials and techniques which will reduce the total cost of ownership of the property and be responsive to the potential impact of climate change
- The village has little green and recreational space. We wish to create a green environment which is pleasant to walk through, which encourages people to walk around and through the village and reduces dependency on the car for short journeys. This green environment should extend beyond the built-up boundary.
- To set out the style of the built environment in the village through the creation of appropriate policies
- Maintain a strong and vibrant community with a better supply and a good mix of home types, sizes and tenures enabling people to stay in the village throughout their lifetime with special focus on good quality financially accessible housing for young families, housing suitable for older people and mechanisms to support people wanting to get on to the housing ladder
- Most importantly, through this plan, to introduce housing, the design and layout of which encourages the creation of a sustainable social environment which maintains the village character of Capel St Mary and does not allow it to become a large dormitory housing estate located alongside the A12 between Ipswich and Colchester.

Capel St Mary has little housing stock of significant architectural value, although the houses in and around the church are of interest. Appendix 1 shows a list of 22 statutorily listed buildings of historic interest. Any development plan must set out a positive strategy for their conservation and enjoyment. The Heritage and Settlement Sensitivity Assessment for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, March 2018, states the following for Capel St Mary:

*The value of the historic core, and its susceptibility to change, is low, with a small area of higher-value assets centred on the church at the western edge of the settlement. The*

*surrounding landscape is, however, of high value and includes the exceptionally significant complex at Little Wenham Hall.*

It is also surrounded by valuable farmland, which with the various woodlands provides a good habitat for a variety of wildlife. It also lies adjacent to the A12 and suffers from the resultant air pollution particularly when there is a build-up of stationary traffic held up at Copdock Mill roundabout intersection A12/A14.

The National Planning Framework (NPPF) updated in July 2021 has some relevant paragraphs. In paragraph 174 it suggests planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. In paragraph 185 it suggests planning policies and decisions should take into account the likely effect of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment.

The Babergh District Council publication of Part 1 of the JLP for the March 2023 public consultation states:

Policy LP21 – Agricultural Land to Residential Garden Land:

1. The change in use of agricultural land to residential garden land or land ancillary to a residential dwelling may be permitted subject to:
  - a. The location, size and scale of the proposal not having an adverse impact on the landscape characteristics and biodiversity of the locality.
  - b. The proposal not resulting in the loss of trees and hedgerows which contribute to the character of the area.

Policy LP15 – Environmental Protection and Conservation

1. Development proposals must demonstrate appropriate consideration of the following:
2. LAND

Efficient and Effective Use of Resources/Land

- a. Development on previously developed land will be prioritised. Where development needs to take place on greenfield land, avoidance of the best and most versatile agricultural land should be prioritised.
- b. Make more efficient use or re-use of existing resources and reducing the lifecycle impact of building materials used in construction.

It is with these principles in mind that new housing in the village should minimise the loss of productive farmland and minimise and mitigate air and noise pollution.

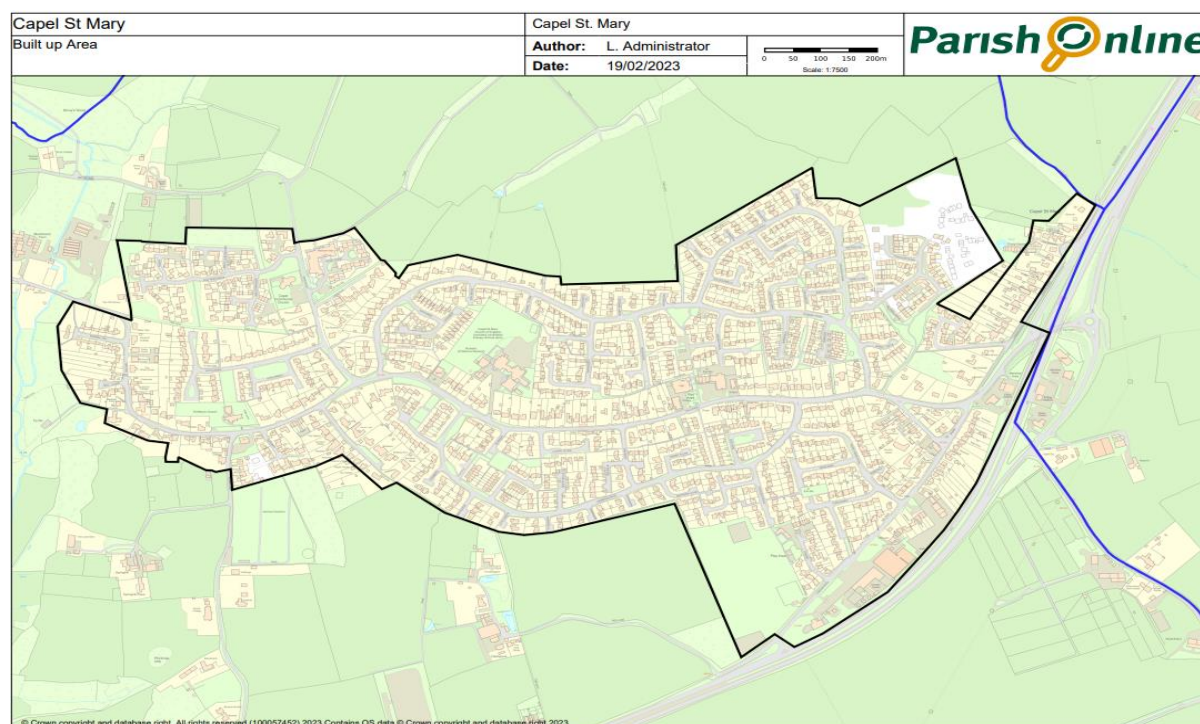
In recent times, developers have been given planning permission to build relatively large (compared to what has happened in the past 40 years) numbers of houses. These developments continue to build a mix of houses including a high percentage of large four and five-bedroom houses and do little to address the mix identified by the community in recent surveys.

This neighbourhood plan seeks to implement policies and design criteria through which future developments can be assessed.

## 6.2 Background

Capel St Mary is identified as a core village by Babergh District Council. Core villages are larger villages that provide services and facilities for their own residents and for those who live in smaller villages and rural settlements in a hinterland around them (often overlapping). This and the proximity to both the A12 and A14 means that it may be subject to development over the period of this plan.

Developments take place through the regional needs for housing as well as any local needs. The regional need is the planning authority's minimum housing requirement, which for the five years between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 is 2189 homes. With a supply of 3124 homes Babergh District Council has 7.13 years land supply. The submitted JLP (Nov 2020) set a minimum housing requirement for Capel St Mary of 792 homes between 2018 and 2037. The planning application for site allocation LA055 Red Lane for 550 homes has been withdrawn leaving a balance of 242 homes. This housing figure has no status and is regarded as an indicative figure by Babergh District Council. In 2018 there were 1,141 dwellings in Capel St Mary and by December 2022 there were 1,518, an increase of 367 well above the indicative figure of 242. The site allocations for Part 2 of the JLP will not be fully approved until the plan is adopted in the winter of 2025, so there is no current evidence that the settlement boundary of Capel St Mary will change (see map 2 below).



Map 2. Settlement boundary

The Neighbourhood Plan still needs to provide policies on housing for any future planning applications.

The aim of the policies in this section is to ensure that development enhances what makes Capel St Mary a great place to live, is sensitive to the character of its surroundings and contributes towards meeting the housing needs of all sections of the community. As well as housing numbers, the size, type and tenure of any new housing is also a key issue for local communities. The specific mix of housing will clearly have an impact on the existing community and therefore careful thought needs to be applied to determining that mix. The responses to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire provided valuable information on local housing needs and the information from these responses forms the basis for many of the proposals in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The following proposals identifies two groups of people for special consideration:

- Those who wish to own their own homes but do not have a readily available mechanism for providing the finance
- Older people who are empty nesters and may wish to move to smaller sized properties whilst maintaining an active lifestyle within the village

### 6.3 Local Context

Census data shows the village population increased to 1,488 in 1971 and to 3,356 in 1981. The 2011 census showed that the population had fallen to 2,847, but by the 2021 census this had risen to 3,100.

The Census 2021 breakdown of the population by age is as follows:

|                 | Capel | Babergh | England |
|-----------------|-------|---------|---------|
| Preschool 0-4   | 3.8%  | 4.3%    | 5.4%    |
| School age 5-19 | 16.3% | 15.9%   | 17.6%   |
| 20-44           | 22.8% | 24.7%   | 32.6%   |
| 45-64           | 26.2% | 28.5%   | 25.8%   |
| 65-85+          | 31.0% | 26.5%   | 18.4%   |

These figures show that Capel St Mary has a higher percentage of older population than Babergh and England. This can be partially explained by the 0-4 years old age groups being lower percentages suggesting that there are fewer families with young children.

## Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037

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New developments must cater for the needs of this aging population in Capel St Mary, but also build homes for a younger generation to be able to live in the village. This requires knowledge of the local housing stock. The Census 2021 provides a breakdown by the number of bedrooms for Capel St Mary compared with England.

| Bedrooms            | Capel | England |
|---------------------|-------|---------|
| 1                   | 1.9%  | 11.6%   |
| 2                   | 13.6% | 27.3%   |
| 3                   | 39.2% | 40.0%   |
| 4 or more           | 45.3% | 21.1%   |
| % of all households | 100%  | 100%    |

- These figures show the 4 bedrooms plus dwellings in Capel St Mary are more than double the England percentage.
- The Census 2021 also shows below that there is a far greater percentage of homes that are privately owned.

| Tenure of household                              | Capel | England |
|--|-------|---------|
| Owns outright                                    | 53.1% | 32.5%   |
| Owns with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership | 35.2% | 29.8%   |
| Social rented                                    | 5.5%  | 17.1%   |
| Private rented or lives rent free                | 6.2%  | 20.6%   |
| % of all households                              | 100%  | 100%    |

Many of these four-bedroom houses are occupied by one or two people in the 60-74 year age range. Whilst there is no proof that many of the residents living in these large houses wish to downsize there is some evidence that some do. The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire of 2018 received 71 responses which indicated that the respondent wished to move to a smaller property. The Capel St Mary Housing Survey 2016 showed out of 560 surveys returned that 56 households identified a need for housing. A majority of these responses stated a preference for a 2 or 3 bedroom house or bungalow. Included in the 71 responses were 35 responses indicating a preference for 2 and 3 bedroom properties to purchase on the open market for those in need to set up their own homes. A smaller more recent survey also showed that residents were interested in moving within the parish and with some people wishing to return to the village. The most sought-after properties were 2 bedrooms followed by 3 bedrooms.

These figures should provide a guide to the village requirements for new developments. It would appear that if the village does want to increase its younger population, while providing suitable homes for older empty nesters, then smaller properties are required.

### 6.4 Housing Projections

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA); which was jointly commissioned by a number of local authorities including Babergh District Council, forms part of the evidence base for the JLP. Capel St Mary adjoins the Ipswich Housing Market Area and therefore the following information taken from the January 2019 SHMA update is relevant.

The following chart shows the breakdown of residents living in a property:

| No. in Household    | Capel | England |
|---------------------|-------|---------|
| 1                   | 23.9% | 30.1%   |
| 2                   | 43.1% | 34.0%   |
| 3                   | 14.1% | 16.0%   |
| 4 or more           | 18.9% | 19.9%   |
| % of all households | 100%  | 100%    |

Compared to the SHMA figures the Census 2021 for Capel St Mary shows there is a greater percentage of two in a household and fewer with one.

The SHMA projects the tenure of the properties required as follows:

|                             | 2018        | Projected 2036 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Owner Occupied              | 66.8%       | 66.7%          |
| Private Rented              | 18.1%       | 17.4%          |
| Shared Ownership            | 0.5%        | 1.3%           |
| Social Rent/Affordable Rent | 14.6%       | 14.6%          |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>100%</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

The projection of house sizes across all tenures for the 18 years to 2036 is as follows:

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| One Bedroom    | 13.3%       |
| Two Bedroom    | 29.1%       |
| Three Bedroom  | 30.0%       |
| 4 Bedroom plus | 27.6%       |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>100%</b> |

With the information obtained from these surveys the Parish Council can now summarise the local housing needs.

### 6.5 Summary

In summary, the housing needs of Capel St Mary are those that can support the changing requirements for housing throughout a person's life. Initially, small and affordable dwellings are needed to cater for young people who may then move to larger accommodation in the future. Parents may move to smaller accommodation in retirement, freeing larger dwellings for growing families. Aside from this general case, there will be the need for other more specialist accommodation. In particular, there will be a need in the future for accommodation to support assisted living, which will allow older people to live at home without the need to move to a care home.

The type of houses the community would like to see in the village was determined in the 2016 Housing Survey undertaken by Community Action Suffolk on behalf of the Parish Council and to the 2018 questionnaire produced in conjunction with this plan.

Amongst other things the 2016 Housing Survey Report concluded that:

- There is a need to provide a more balanced housing stock with smaller houses
- More affordable housing should be provided
- Housing suitable for older people should be provided. This is especially for older people wishing to downsize and remain in the village
- Housing should be provided at a scale which is appropriate to the character of the village
- There should be provision for those with a strong local connection to have preferential access to housing

The survey received 46% return rate (which is above average for this type of survey), with the majority of respondents in favour of housing development composing of small-to-medium homes for people with local connections as well as general housing.



When asked what type of housing was needed in Capel St Mary, 12% of respondents wanted homes for single people, 22% of respondents wanted home for couples (1-2) bedrooms and 25% of respondents requested small family homes (2-3) bedrooms.

In contrast, the mix of housing in Capel St Mary as evidenced from 2011 census data is 41% of three-bedroom houses, 41% four-bedroom houses and 6% of houses have five or more bedrooms. This clearly shows an imbalance at the time between the existing housing stock and the expressed need of the community.

Demographic data from the census 2021 already presented shows the number of people in the 20-44 age group in the village are below the percentage of population comparison with Babergh and England. The 2016 Housing Survey asked whether there were family members living outside of Capel wishing to return. The responses indicated that the highest percentage were in the 25-44 age group. Hence, there is an identified need of housing for young people who have left the village and want to return.

The majority of people who expressed a need for new housing preferred a two or three-bedroom house or bungalow to purchase on the open market to set up their homes.

The 2018 survey generally agreed with the results of the earlier survey. The majority preference for new homes was in the form of bungalows (76%) and smaller houses (three bedrooms or fewer), with only 18% of responses indicating a need for a few or a lot of four or more bedroomed houses. People expressed the significant majority opinion that there were already too many large houses in the village and there was a need for smaller houses and bungalows.

In terms of design criteria, the vast majority of respondents indicated a desire for:

- New build houses of similar proportions to those already in the village
- New houses to be built to environmentally friendly and energy efficient standards
- For them to have a good area of open space surrounding the houses

Sufficient car parking space and the need to accommodate the needs of cyclists and pedestrians within the developments were also represented by an extremely high number of respondents.

Unadopted roads as part of any scheme will not be welcome as these lead to issues for residents in the long term.

The following policy defines the future priorities for housing in Capel St Mary:

### **Policy CSM2: Housing Mix**

Housing Mix Support will be given to the provision of a wide range of types of housing that meet local needs and enable the creation of a mixed, balanced and inclusive community. In line with the latest evidence of need new developments should include:

- Family housing 2-3 bedrooms, semi-detached and detached houses
- Starter homes/homes for first time buyers (e.g. 1-2 bedroom homes)
- Affordable Housing\*\*
- Housing for the elderly including bungalows
- Self-build or Custom-Built Housing
- Assisted living dwellings (which may include those suitably equipped to allow for telehealth monitoring and management)
- Adaptable homes are encouraged.

\*It should be noted that the above housing types may not be suitably accommodated on every site.

\*\*Paragraph 64 of the NPPF (July 2021) states that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer).

### 6.6 Design: Overarching Design Principles

The NPPF (July 2021) places great emphasis on the role that good design can have in delivering sustainable development. Paragraph 127 states “Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers.” Paragraph 130 states that Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short-term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

In addition, the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas provides examples of good and bad practice in laying out residential areas. See: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/planning-waste-and-environment/planning-and-developmentadvice/suffolk-design-guide-for-residential-areas/>. The National Design Guide is also a good reference document. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

### **Policy CSM3: Conformance to Best Practice Design Principles**

It is expected that development proposals being brought forward shall conform to best practice of design principles, for example as represented by the Suffolk Design Guide for Residential Areas and the NPPF (July 2021) paragraphs 126 and 127 and any subsequent updates.

## **6.7 Local Context for Design and Layout**

The expansion of Capel St Mary in the 1960's, 70's and 80's created a garden village with a vibrant community. The features that helped achieve this result were:

- a) well spaced-out housing developments
- b) protection of the older and historic buildings
- c) green verges and areas with trees giving the appearance of the garden village
- d) pathways around the village linking the various streets and giving easy access to the village centre for most residents
- e) access from the village to public footpaths surrounding the village giving residents easy access to the benefits of the countryside
- f) community facilities in the village allowing activities to take place which improve the health and wellbeing of residents

The following policy is intended to protect these features and extend them into future developments.

### **Policy CSM4: Retaining and Enhancing Character Through Residential Design**

Development proposals must demonstrate how they contribute to the features which positively define Capel St Mary's character. All development shall protect the amenity of neighbours, and reflect the scale, mass, height and form of neighbouring properties.

In particular, development proposals are encouraged to:

- Retain and not obscure or dominate historic buildings that contribute to the distinctive character and historic and architectural interest of the village
- Not lead to over-development of a site and avoid the appearance of cramming
- Ensure provision is made to store refuse and recycling bins out of sight and move them easily to and from the kerbside for collection
- Provide off-street parking commensurate with the number of bedrooms in the house.

As there is no local employment and limited public transport, each adult living in the house will usually require their own car to get to and from work. In addition, many people in the village are self-employed tradespeople, requiring vans for their work. Consideration needs to be given to the requirement for parking these vehicles and security requires that they be parked at or close to the house.

### 6.8 Green Infrastructure

The Babergh District Council Core Strategies and Policies Document (2014) promotes the use of green infrastructure in the design of new developments. Specifically:

A good network of multi-functional green infrastructure within and between urban and rural areas should aim to achieve the following:

- Create links which connect existing spaces to each other especially close to areas where people live and work
- Contribute to habitat connectivity and to habitat creation, protection and enhancement
- Assist in adapting to climate change and contribute towards mitigating climate change
- Promote healthy living by providing opportunities for exercise
- Improve access and recreation opportunities, including providing alternative locations away from more sensitive locations
- Enhance links from urban areas to the countryside
- Enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape
- Make a positive contribution to creating a sense of place especially within large new developments, including the strategic sites. Use green infrastructure opportunities to inform the shape and character of development and ensure the design reflects this. Greenfield sites and those within, or close to, sensitive landscapes will be particularly important, including the strategic site at the Babergh Ipswich Fringe

*(Appendix 3 lists the native trees for landscape planting.)*

In addition to adopted local plan requirements green infrastructure in Capel St Mary should include:

- Open spaces free from traffic which can be used for recreation
- Where non-residential car parking is provided, the use of trees and shrubs to screen these car parking areas
- The incorporation of pathways which are accessible and easy to use by people pushing prams and pushchairs as well as those in wheelchairs and mobility scooters

- The design of interconnecting green spaces such that people are encouraged to walk from point-to-point within the village rather than take the car
- Public right-of-way should be protected and enhanced. Where a public-right-of-way is within a development it should be incorporated into the development. Where appropriate new routes, extension to routes and new connections should be added to the network within the development
- Provide short, winding streets/closes (excluding main access roads) that promote an intimacy to development
- Green space provision (beyond garden space) in any development should be sufficient to allow space for play/recreation

### **Policy CSM5: Green Infrastructure in New Developments**

Unless demonstrably impractical, major new housing development should:

- Include green alleyways, connecting small areas of amenity grassland in all new developments, giving access to local amenities on foot
- Include new areas of green space associated with small clusters of houses in all new developments
- Include road access with separate footways and grass verges as appropriate
- Include sufficient garden space to both the front and rear of properties
- Any developer must refer to Suffolk Coast RAMS which provides advice on greenspace for residential development to avoid adverse effect on integrity on the Stour & Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site

*N.B Major new developments for the purposes of this policy are defined as 25+ dwellings.*

## **6.9 Sustainable Construction and Design**

There is currently great uncertainty about the future climate of the UK and houses being built today will be in use during a time when climate change is likely to have a significant impact on the resources available for living. Developers should be encouraged to consider the potential impact now and be encouraged to make provisions in their development proposals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

### **Aspiration:**

The design and standard of any new development should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction. In particular:

- All new development is required to minimise its dependence on fossil fuels
- All new residential development is required to achieve reductions in CO2 emissions and meet higher water efficiency standards of 110 litres per person
- Developments that incorporate a high level of building materials with low embodied carbon will be encouraged

- Developments should include energy efficiency measures such as insulation, airtightness and efficient building services, with a proactive approach to improving on the minimum standards specified in the building regulations
- Developers of all new dwellings should be encouraged to include water harvesting schemes or make provision for retrofitting
- Developers of all new dwellings should be encouraged to provide solar panels or make provision for retrofitting
- New dwellings that incorporate electric charging points for vehicles will be supported

### 6.10 Affordability

A key concept in any planning application is that there should be a mix of affordable housing. Annex 2 of the NPPPF (July 2021) states:

**Affordable housing:** *housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:*

- a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).*
- b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.*

Further details are as follows:

- Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

- Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority, or with the Homes and Communities Agency.
- Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities, or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).
- Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as low-cost market housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes. Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/definitions-of-general-housing-terms>

There are a number of affordable homes included in the large developments already approved by Babergh District Council in Capel St Mary. The Parish Council would welcome proposals for small developments of housing to meet the spirit of the definition of affordable housing, but which could introduce innovative methods of achieving the affordability requirement.

### **Policy CSM6: Affordable Housing**

- In order to facilitate cohesive communities, affordable housing must be tenure blind and must be designed to be integral to the character of the area as whole.
- Residential proposals which do not meet Babergh District Council's affordable housing requirement of 35% will only be supported if the proposals are justified by an open book assessment of viability, and it is proven that there is no funding available for affordable homes.

Innovative proposals from developers, designed to meet the need for younger people to be able to afford to buy their own home and remain in the village, will be given special attention and priority. The Parish Council supports the Gateway to Homechoice Policy (April 2018) that promotes the ability of people with a local connection to be eligible for affordable housing.

## **6.11 Accommodation for Older People**

The Housing Surveys identified the need for housing for older people.

The Parish Council would welcome small developments of housing integrated within the existing developed area of the village which will provide good quality housing for older people

who are active and who wish to downsize from existing family homes in the village, but which are too big for their needs. The developers should consider the innovative use of technology to support ageing occupants and aim to allow them to be able to live at home for as long as possible before perhaps moving to sheltered accommodation.

### **Policy CSM7: Accommodation Needs for Older People**

The provision of housing which meets the needs of older people within the village will be supported. In principal support will be given to:

- Adaptable homes - we welcome any developments that include the building standards for adaptable homes including smaller two and three-bedroom homes that are adaptable, in order to meet the needs of an aging population, without excluding the needs of the younger buyers and families
- Housing with care, particularly extra/assisted care housing
- Residential care accommodation

These should be located within or adjacent to the built-up area boundary of Capel St Mary and where the scheme can be clearly demonstrated to be well related to the existing pattern of development in Capel.

## **6.12 Residential Extensions and Divided Plots**

Many planning applications are for extensions for existing dwellings. They may also be for divided plots or demolition of an existing building for replacement with a new build. These will be welcomed with certain conditions.

### **Policy CSM8: Extensions, Division and Demolition New Builds**

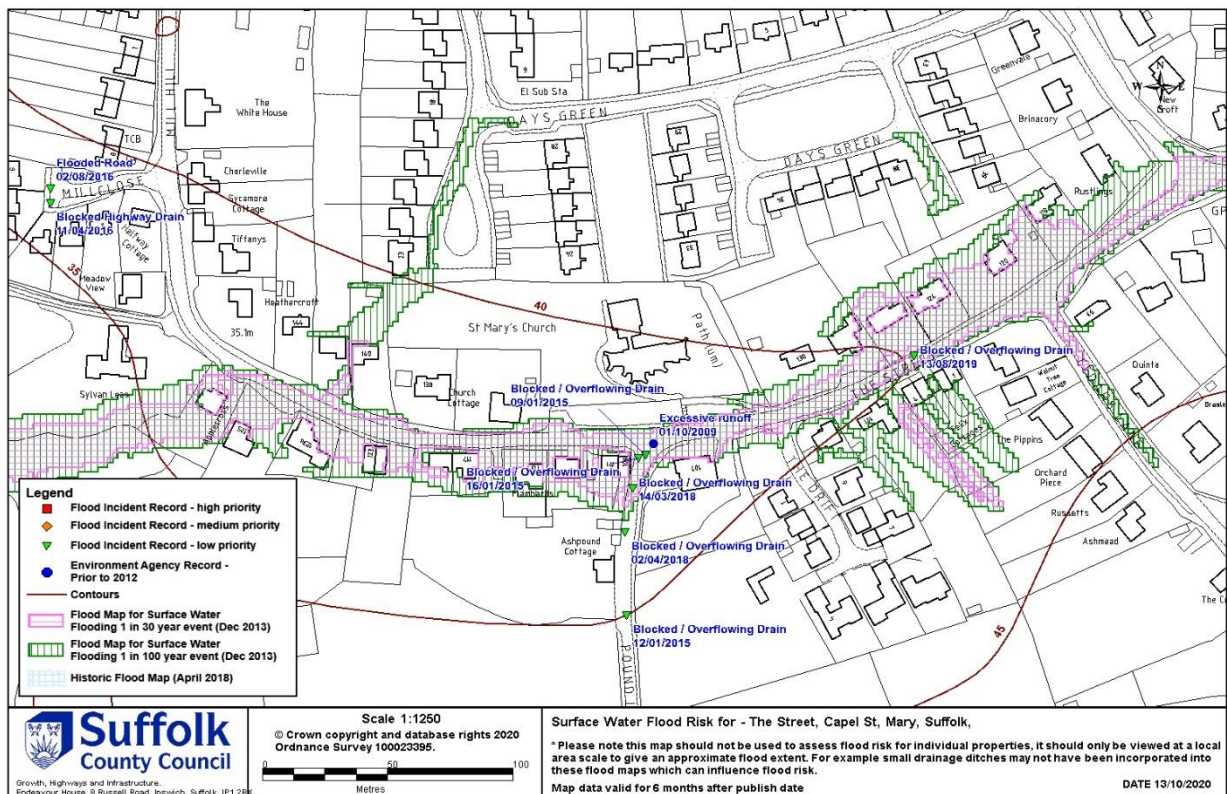
The extension, division or new build on an existing plot may be permitted provided that the proposal:

- Is in keeping with the size, scale, mass, design and materials of the existing dwellings and wider setting
- Incorporates good quality design which maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the building, street scene, surroundings, and adjoining property
- Provides safe vehicle access and sufficient space remains available to park vehicles in the curtilage of the dwelling
- Will not result in the over development of the plot
- Does not unacceptably affect a listed building



## 6.13 Localised Flooding

Capel St Mary, historically, has constrained surface water drainage systems. Most of the parish relies on discharge to an unmaintained watercourse which drains to the East and then via a pumped system adjacent to the A12 interchange underpass. Whilst the village is not at risk of fluvial (river) flooding, there are large areas of the village that are likely to be affected by pluvial (surface water) flooding (see map 3 below). This risk ranges from medium to high three. Any new developments will need to take measures to counteract the problems.



Map 3. Areas at risk of fluvial flooding

### Policy CSM9: Local Flooding

All new developments will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Proposals should, as appropriate, include the use of above-ground Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Surface water can cause a problem in two ways in the parish.

- Where there is heavy clay soil drainage is very poor and heavy rain will lay on the surface and drain to the lowest level. This surface water has sometimes flowed into residential areas.
- There are also areas of marsh in the parish where even in dry periods the ground does not dry.

All new developments will be required to submit schemes appropriate to the scale of the proposal detailing how on-site drainage and water resources will be managed so as not to cause or exacerbate surface water and fluvial flooding elsewhere. Proposals should, as appropriate, include the use of above-ground Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

### 6.14 Planning Applications Outside the Settlement Boundary

The Parish Council recognizes that planning applications can be submitted for land outside the existing settlement boundary. Whilst these are rarely approved there is still the need to set out the conditions which should be met.

#### **Policy CSM10: Settlement Boundary**

Any proposal for new housing development outside the defined settlement boundary will only be permitted where it meets all of the following criteria:

- a) single dwellings and groups of up to 10 dwellings provided they are immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary.
- b) the site has easy access to the village centre by means of footpaths and roads.
- c) the site is well designed and landscaped and is compatible with the character of the village.
- d) The proposal meets the local identified housing needs or those of the local plan.
- e) the proposal must have safe road access to the site with connections to the existing road network.
- f) the proposal must have the infrastructure in place to cope with the additional population e.g. access to school places, medical and dental facilities.

### 6.15 Conclusion

It has already been mentioned in the Neighbourhood Plan that between 2018 and 2022 there were 367 new builds in the parish, a growth of 33% in the housing stock. Of these over 70 properties were smaller properties including some bungalows, The additional smaller properties provided the dwellings that were required from the responses in the local needs surveys. As there have been no improvements to the infrastructure to support this growth the Parish Council has decided not to allocate any further housing in this Neighbourhood Plan.

## 7.0 Transport

### 7.1 Objective

To create a safer road system within the parish for vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and other users.

### 7.2 A12 Access

Any growth in Capel St Mary will have an impact on the adjacent A12. The village is connected to both the A12 North and South via an underpass. The A12 North joins the A14 at the Copdock Mill roundabout, which already is unable to cope with the volume of traffic. Tailbacks of several miles to Capel St Mary often occur, having an adverse effect on the village environment.

Whilst some discussions are taking place in Government circles regarding the Copdock Mill roundabout, there are no immediate plans or finance available to deal with the problem. Any change is likely to take place well into, or beyond, the period of this Neighbourhood Plan. Any major house building programme along the A12 South during the period of the plan will exacerbate the existing problem, especially as a majority of residents in the area travel North to Ipswich or the A14. Copdock Mill is in urgent need of an upgrade.



A12 at Copdock

## 7.3 Speeding

Speeding was one of the major concerns raised in the responses to the questionnaire with buses, lorries and cars mentioned.

A speed watch operates in the village, but the team cannot always be out or cover the whole village. Speed awareness signs have been installed in the village and it is thought that this will help.

In view of residents concerns about speeding the Parish Council commissioned a report to improve road safety. The report made several proposals consisting of 20mph speed zones and a zebra crossing in the village centre. These proposals affect many residents in the village, so the Parish Council held a Public Consultation on the proposals in February 2023. The results of the public consultation are being analysed and no decision has been made.

## 7.4 Dangerous Junctions

Residents and developers need to be aware of the dangerous junctions within the village (see map 4 below). The increase in traffic through the village presents an increased risk at the junctions listed below which have been highlighted as potential hazards for the reasons stated.



Map 4. Dangerous junctions shown with red circles

Following consultation with volunteers and parish councillors considering the transport issues in the village certain junctions were regarded as dangerous. Whilst these have no serious history of accidents the volume of traffic has been light. With the recent growth in the village the traffic flows are increasing thereby increasing the danger of collision as many of these junctions are in roads which are widely used. These junctions are highlighted on the above map and the reasons for their classification given below.

From left to right on the map the junctions are:

**By Churchford Farm:** Blind corner.

**Pound Lane:** Narrow lane with bends and two way traffic joining The Street with a blind bend for traffic turning into Pound Lane and travelling along The Street.

**Days Road/Thorney Road:** There is a wide entrance to these roads, which encourages drivers to cut the corners and not reduce speed. Vehicles exiting Days Road and entering Thorney Road could face cars parked or exiting the two driveways immediately on the left.

**The Street at Shopping Centre:** The road becomes single file here, with parked cars, pedestrians crossing, and the entrance and exit for the car park is particularly dangerous.

**Thorney Road:** The Dentists attracts parked cars near this junction. Vehicles entering Thorney Road can face cars coming towards them when they are overtaking the parked cars. It is also a very busy junction.

**The Old Street:** Both ends of this street are highlighted, because it is very narrow and is also a bus route. There is a blind corner at The White Horse for traffic turning right from The Old Street.

**The Parkins:** Traffic using the slip road to the A12 do not expect cars turning right out of Parkins coming towards them.

**London Road into The Street at the garage:** Traffic coming up the hill is blind to vehicles exiting London Road.

**London Road/A12 Junction:** Traffic exiting the A12 is often travelling too fast for this sharp bend in the road. Also, there is not a long enough slip road for traffic joining the A12.

Residents and other road users need to drive at safe speeds through these junctions and consideration should be taken in future when planning all new developments. Any developer will need to assess the effect of additional traffic flows through these junctions and take steps to mitigate identified problems.

## 7.5 Parking

The village questionnaire raised the fact that there are not enough off-road parking facilities for residents or businesses. The following table shows the number of off-road car parking spaces, at key locations, in the village:

| Location                  | Number of Spaces | Restrictions                             |
|---------------------------|------------------|--|
| Co-op Car Park            | 23               | For users of shopping precinct (2 hours) |
| Community Centre Car Park | 21               | Users of the complex                     |
| Newsagents                | 2                |  |
| Rear of Co-op             | 27               |  |
| Doctors' Practice         | 10               |  |
| Playing Field             | 58               | Some height restrictions                 |
| Capel Dental Practice     | 2                |  |

*N.B These figures are as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023*

Other major concerns raised in the questionnaire relating to parking are:

- Parking on pavements - blocking access to buggies, wheelchairs, mobility units and vehicles
- Parking across residents' driveways
- Not using spaces in the nearby lay-bys. There are many lay-bys which add to the overall number of parking spaces, but many are regularly filled with residents' cars and vans
- At certain times, The Street becomes an obstacle course with the number of cars parked along it; yet expanding the number of car park spaces in the centre of the village is very problematical

A new car park has been created at the Playing Field to alleviate the problems of parking there, but no options exist for creating more parking spaces in the village centre.

The Parish Council supports the Suffolk Guidance for Parking 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (May 2019), or any successive document which deals with these issues and many more parking problems.

## 7.6 Public Transport

It is especially important that local bus services are maintained or improved. Currently, Ipswich Buses run regular services between Ipswich and Colchester.

As not every household in Capel St Mary has a car and to encourage people not to use their own vehicles, it is particularly important that these services are maintained.

### 7.7 Modal Shift

Modal shift means replacing a saturated means of transport with another to make the first less congested. An example of this is encouraging people to cycle rather than use their cars. Modal share is therefore an important component in developing sustainable transport within a city or region. In recent years, many cities have set modal share targets for balanced and sustainable transport modes. Suffolk County Council is working with District and Borough Councils in the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (ISPA) to develop a strategy to produce modal shift. This could reduce the traffic congestion in the area of Capel St Mary and, therefore, the Parish Council supports this initiative.

**Aspiration:**

To support any modal shift system developed in the area of Capel St Mary which would help to reduce traffic congestion.

### 7.8 Impact of New Developments

The following policy seeks to respond to the many local transport related concerns:

**Policy CSM11: Transport - New Developments**

All new developments will be expected to plan for transport by sustainable modes wherever feasible by incorporating:

- Safe, attractive and convenient pathways for pedestrians including disabled persons and those with impaired mobility
- Safe, attractive and convenient routes for cyclist and secure cycle parking
- Linkages to existing road and path networks
- Links to countryside public rights-of-way
- Access to, and where appropriate enhancement of, public transport facilities. Access to car-park facilities by adopting at least the minimum standards in the relevant parking guidance. To minimise on street parking, however, some street parking may be provided which is well designed, located and integrated into the scheme to avoid obstruction to all highway users and visibility
- Appropriate electric vehicle charging points

**Aspiration:**

Suffolk County Council is planning a cycle route from Ipswich to Junction 32A on the A12 (Copdock Business Park roundabout). Effort will be made to extend this to Capel St Mary.

### 8.0 Infrastructure, Community and Heritage Assets

#### 8.1 Infrastructure

Capel St Mary was previously developed as a complete village with the infrastructure matching the needs of the residents. The population has fallen from its peak as children have grown up and left the village whilst their parents are staying and growing older. With the village once more beginning to expand the infrastructure needs reassessing to determine the strengths, weaknesses and ability to cope with an increased population.

**Objective:**

To ensure the infrastructure of the village is maintained in relation to the needs of its residents, and that assets important to the village are protected.

NPPF (July 2021) paragraph 20 states that:

*Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:*

- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;*
- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);*
- c) community facilities (such as health, education, and cultural infrastructure); and*
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*

Infrastructure can be funded through a number of different funding methods:

- a) Section 106 obligations (entered into by the relevant local authorities, the developer and affected landowners)
- b) Community Infrastructure Levy expenditure (subject to the Local Authority's own expenditure regime (as this is not prescribed nationally)
- c) Contributions from the Parish Council and organisations within the village through grants obtained from the Lottery, Sports England, Central and Local Governments etc
- d) Provision of infrastructure, through other funds (e.g. by other external organisations)

The planning of any development will cover much of the infrastructure such as utilities but there is infrastructure outside the development land which will need improvement as some of the infrastructure of the village is at a capacity.



The Medical Practice in Capel St Mary has no room for expansion although the East Bergholt Practice does have some space for expansion. With an aging population which increasingly needs more medical care, and with an increase in housing attracting younger people with children there will be a need for more medical facilities within the village. There is already a problem with transporting people who have no transport to the East Bergholt Practice for an appointment.

There is one dental practice in the village which is operating at full capacity. Any new residents will have to seek a dentist outside of the parish.

Provision of land for public space and for community use. It is recognised that the availability of green space, for recreation, aids the health and wellbeing of residents. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk Infrastructure and Delivery Plan (2019-2036) states that whilst the parks and recreation grounds together with the play areas for youths met the required standards the allotment areas and children play areas failed. Any future development in the village needs to address the shortfalls. The play areas in the village are going to be improved as planning applications have been approved and finance is in place. The Parish Council consider that the parks and recreation grounds are inadequate. With the number of football teams and other activities on the playing field it is overused, and more space is required.

### **Policy CSM12: Infrastructure**

Development proposals which expand the health care capacity of the village and/or which provide necessary additional Pre-school capacity and the justified expansion of the Primary School will be supported. Where justified, development proposals that include provision of green space for community use will also be supported.

With regard to health, Capel St Mary has an aging population which is likely to lead to more cases of residents suffering from dementia. The following aspiration is included in the plan to support dementia sufferers.

### **Aspiration:**

To make Capel St Mary a Dementia Friendly Village by supporting an organisation which will provide services to people suffering from dementia, raise awareness of the illness and liaise with businesses and organisations in the village to make their premises dementia friendly

The village questionnaire did not highlight any significant concerns regarding the existing infrastructure apart from:

- There is a perceived lack of off-road parking facilities for the vehicles associated with homes or businesses in the village
- There are no public electric vehicle charging points available at the amenity locations, other than the village petrol stations and Bypass Nursery, where people

might ordinarily expect to be able to recharge. This will become essential in the future as the Government drive to a Low Carbon Economy becomes a reality.

- Social media has shown that high speed fibre broadband has been slow coming into the whole of the village and speeds in some areas have been poor

The Parish Council has responded to the concerns from the village questionnaire over high-speed broadband by introducing the following policy.

### **Policy CSM13: High-Speed Broadband**

All new residential dwellings and commercial premises shall include suitable ducting and/or cabling to the premises to enable high-speed broadband connectivity.

## **8.2 Community Assets**

The infrastructure of the village does not just include education, health and utilities. It also includes retail facilities, social and sport facilities, churches and all other organisations and premises that support the residents/community of the village. Easy access should always be provided to these facilities and new developments should take these into consideration and should support and enhance them. Many of these facilities are also used by the surrounding villages and communities and must continue to do so. To protect these assets, the following policy has been created.

### **Policy CSM14: Loss of Facilities and Services**

Proposals that would result in the loss of facilities or services which support the local community (or premises last used for such purposes) will only be permitted where:

- it can be demonstrated that the current use is not economically viable nor likely to become viable. Where appropriate, supporting financial evidence should be provided including any efforts to advertise the premises for sale for a minimum of 6 months; or
- it can be demonstrated, through evidenced research, that there is no local demand for the use and that the premises/site is not needed for any alternative social, community or leisure use; or
- alternative facilities and services are available, or replacement provision is made, of at least equivalent standard, in a location that is accessible to the community it serves with good access by public transport or by cycling or walking.

## **8.3 Heritage Assets**

The village contains a number of designated heritage assets. These are listed in Appendix 1. They are part of the village's history and character and need to be protected for current and future generations to enjoy. The following policy is designed to protect these assets.

### **Policy CSM15: Heritage Assets**

To ensure the conservation and protection of the Village's designated heritage assets, any proposals for works that could lead to the loss of or harm to the significance or the setting of the asset must be accompanied by a heritage statement. The level of detail of the heritage statement should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, the works proposed and be sufficient enough to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance and/or setting of the asset. Proposals will not be supported where the harm caused as a result of the impact of a proposed scheme is not justified by the public benefit that would be provided.

## **8.4 Future Wishlist**

The following do not form part of this plan, but should the opportunity arise the village would benefit from:

- Broadband coverage should be high on the list and since this plan is looking forward several years it should, perhaps, be a plan to get FTTP (Fibre to the Property) for every dwelling and business in the village and not just FTTC (Fibre to the cabinet) which is the current standard (there are grounds for this when there are significant numbers of residents working from home). It is a behavioural pattern that more people will choose to do so and the facilities should allow for it
- The undergrounding of all overhead cables in the village to improve the aesthetics of the streetscape and reliability of service provision

### 9.0 Environment

Traditionally, considerations of environmental matters concentrated on wildlife habitats and the flora and fauna they support, along with concerns regarding pesticides and pollution and the impacts that these have upon plant and animal ecosystems and human health. More recently, it has been recognised that a high-quality environment is important for humans, too, with mental health and well-being boosted where there is access to open countryside, green spaces within towns and cities and where wildlife is encouraged into the urban landscape.

**Objective:**

Villagers should be able to enjoy Capel St Mary's natural environment and every opportunity should be taken to enhance and access it.

Environmental matters should touch upon all other aspects of village life and future development. They can be included within future housing needs through high-quality building insulation, the installation of renewable energy technology (e.g. solar panels), the layout and juxtaposition of gardens and their connectivity for animals such as hedgehogs. New buildings can have special bat roost bricks or roof tiles built into their fabric and artificial swift or house martin nests can similarly be incorporated into buildings, both old and new. Traffic management can influence air pollution, with inappropriate traffic calming measures (such as narrow squeezes or speed bumps) unfortunately contributing to a localised increase in air pollution as vehicles accelerate away from each restriction. The provision of small areas of greenspace, even merely the existence of grass verges separating traffic from pedestrians, enriches lives in a small, almost subconscious way.

The division of the parish by the A12 gives rise to two quite different landscapes. Although still a relatively small settlement, Capel village rather dominates the Northern section, with open farmland to the North. The section to the South-East has a quieter, more completely rural feeling, flanked by the large Great Martin's Hill Wood and the unspoilt Stutton Brook valley at its Southern boundary. This division has both advantages and disadvantages. New development pressure will inevitably be primarily focussed on the Northern section, extending the existing village and threatening the feel of a small rural community. However, the tranquil Southern section is, as a result, likely to be spared much of the development pressure and it could be retained as profitable farmland and a place where residents can hopefully enjoy the open countryside.

This chapter will look at three different aspects in turn: traditional nature conservation, including nature reserves and legal protection of certain species and habitats; benefits to humans and how exposure to green space and wildlife enriches our lives; and human impacts upon the environment and how they might be mitigated.

### 9.1 Conservation of Flora and Fauna

No habitat type receives blanket legal protection in itself, although specific pieces of land that support protected plants, animals and their habitats can receive such protection. In these cases, the relevant land might be designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR), Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). At a more local level, individual planning authorities are required by Government policy to identify areas of substantive nature conservation interest and, in Suffolk, these are termed County Wildlife Sites.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 imposes an obligation on all public bodies, including local authorities, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, particularly of those plants, animals and habitats identified as being of principal importance. Section 41 of the Act requires a list to be published that identifies such species and habitats, and for England these are now referred to as Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England (hereafter referred to as SPIE and HPIE, respectively). The presence of these species and habitats is, therefore, material to the determination of planning applications.

Much of the following information on the important wildlife habitats, animals and plants has been provided by Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service:

- There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas for Conservation or Ramsar Sites within the parish
- There are no Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). This should not be confused with the nature reserve to the west of Mill Hill, adjacent to the small stream (Stutton Brook), which is a purely informal designation, rather than formally registered with Natural England (and identified as such by the use of lead capital letters)
- There are two County Wildlife Sites in the parish: Springhills Meadows to the west of the village comprise damp, flower-rich unimproved grasslands; Great Martins Hill Wood, a complex of ancient woodland and other habitats, straddling the border with East Bergholt Parish
- The following Species of Principal Importance in England have been recorded within the parish: common toad, skylark, cuckoo, yellowhammer, herring gull, linnet, house sparrow, marsh tit, dunnock, turtle dove, starling, song thrush, stag beetle, white admiral, numerous moth species, slow-worm, grass snake, common lizard, water vole, hedgehog, brown hare, otter, dormouse, brown long-eared bat
- The following Habitats of Principal Importance in England (HPIE) are thought to occur within the parish: hedgerows, eutrophic standing waters, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heathland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, and wet woodland. More detailed assessment may show that the following HPIE also exist here: traditional orchards, ponds (qualifying criteria apply), lowland meadows, lowland fens

The protection of these sites and habitats from development is adequately covered by robust planning policy at both the national and district level.

The Local Validation List requirements adopted in January 2020 defines when Ecological Survey and Impact Assessments are required for all sizes of developments from a single householder to major development.

Where a development is likely to have biodiversity issues Suffolk planning authorities will determine the planning application in accordance with Clauses 7, 8 and 9 of BS42020 Biodiversity - Code of Practice for Planning and Development (2013). This provides applicants with a transparent process that is in accordance with a nationally recognised professional standard.

The Parish Council will support and encourage any developer who aids biodiversity.

### **Policy CSM16: Biodiversity**

Development proposals that incorporate design features (including, but not limited to Swift Bricks, Bat Boxes etc.) and habitat which provide net gains to biodiversity will be supported. Landscaping and planting should encourage wildlife, connect to and enhance wider ecological networks, and include nectar rich planting. Divisions between gardens, such as walls and fences, should still enable the free movement of species such as hedgehogs.

Whilst the following do not form part of the Neighbourhood Plan policies where the possibility arises, they should be encouraged to enhance the diversity of wildlife habitats within the parish:

- To ensure that all Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England (SPIE/HPIE) are properly assessed within ecological statements provided in support of all planning applications
- To encourage the retention of all HPIE, especially hedgerows, within future developments, through appropriate landscaping design
- To encourage the creation of new habitats linking existing HPIE in order to improve their functioning as wildlife corridors and to encourage wildlife into new urban environments
- Formally designate the Mill Hill nature reserve as a statutory Local Nature Reserve
- To seek further opportunities to create formal or informal nature reserves close to the village
- To encourage the creation of reed beds and other wetland habitats as part of sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) associated with any new housing development

- To ensure that native trees and shrubs are used in new landscaping schemes. Only significant existing trees should be included within any new Tree Preservation Orders to protect our current tree stock. (See Appendix 3)

Many of the above points will not only form discussion topics with developers to ensure the existing habitats are protected, and where possible added to, but also be a guide for any other changes to green spaces within the parish.

### 9.2 Enriching Our Lives

The notion that access to open green space is important for all our lives is promoted now by many organisations, such as the Land Trust charity. They advocate that everyone should have access to good quality green space, since this can contribute to people's health and wellbeing. The benefits include improved physical and mental health, with the added financial benefit that there should be a consequent drop in demand for health services provided by the NHS. Areas of informal open space provide opportunities for people to meet, providing a sense of social belonging, reducing isolation and the stresses of modern life. Larger sites can contribute positively to improving air and water pollution, with benefits to both wildlife and human health.

Within the current village environment, areas that might be considered for designation as Local Green Space include: the village green, adjacent to the shops; the two open areas of Days Green; the playing field off Playfield Road; the central green of Elm Lane cul-de-sac; at the end of Chapel Close; at the end of Dodmans; between Plough Road and The Street.

It is perhaps, then, no surprise that Capel St Mary won awards for its design as a Garden Village with its generous grassy verges, small pockets of amenity grassland and open-plan front gardens giving a pleasant, wide-open feel to the suburban environment.

As the village grows, it will be necessary to ensure that residents, new and old alike, can still access the surrounding open countryside. New access routes may need to be built to encourage access to the countryside before the enjoyment of those open spaces can begin. Such entrance points need to be easily accessible and welcoming, with the subsequent countryside experience fulfilling and enjoyable.

### 9.3 Local Green Space

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) in Section 102 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, for example 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.*

Many green spaces were created when the village was vastly expanded, which began in the 1960's. They helped the village obtain an award as a garden village and the Parish Council aims to carry on this tradition and protect them.

Where possible green spaces should be brought under the control of the Parish Council, which will consult with the residents of the parish about which areas of land should be identified as local green space.

### **Policy CSM17: Green Spaces**

The following local green spaces are designated in this Plan and are identified on Policies Map 11.1:

1. Allotments
2. Days Green
3. Thorney Road and Days Road
4. Between Plough Road and The Street
5. Adjoining Little Gulls, Dodmans and Chapel Close
6. Between Letton Close and Link Road
7. Elm Lane
8. Long Perry opposite the Garden Centre
9. Mowlands
10. Beside the Premier Shop in The Street
11. In front of the Community Centre, The Street
12. Between the houses in Barnfield
13. Between Thorney Road and Winding Piece
14. The Playing Field

Development in the local green spaces will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts.

*N.B Further information on these are given in a supporting document.*

All residents should have access to the countryside and use of the public right-of-ways (PRoW). Suffolk Green Access Strategy (2020-2030) states the following PRoW:

- *Public footpath - these are for walking*
- *Bridleway - in addition to walking, these are also for riding on either horseback or bicycle*
- *Restricted byway - these are as bridleways with the addition of being available to non-motorised vehicles, such as horse drawn carriages or husky sledges*



- *Byways open to all traffic (also referred to as BOATs) – as restricted byways but with the addition of being also open to motorised vehicles for off-road driving*

Green access is important for people's health and wellbeing as inactivity is one of the top ten causes of disease and disability. PRow enable people to exercise by walking through the countryside, getting the benefit of fresh air, and seeing nature at its best. For a village like Capel St Mary, this is a great benefit.

The countryside around Capel St Mary has many public rights-of-way which enable residents to gain access to the surrounding countryside with its rural views. The Parish Council will support any initiative which protects these rights-of-way.

Suffolk Green Access Strategy also states:

*After 2026 (known as the '2026 cut-off') all historic routes not recorded on the definitive map will be extinguished (subject to certain limited exemptions). In Suffolk, many historic routes have already been added to the definitive map, but further scoping and evidential investigation is required to ensure any useful unrecorded routes are not lost.*

The Parish Council support the initiatives in this strategy to maintain PRow and residents using the local routes need to ensure that they are maintained and mapped.

### **Aspiration:**

To cooperate with developers and local parishes to provide, where possible, the following:

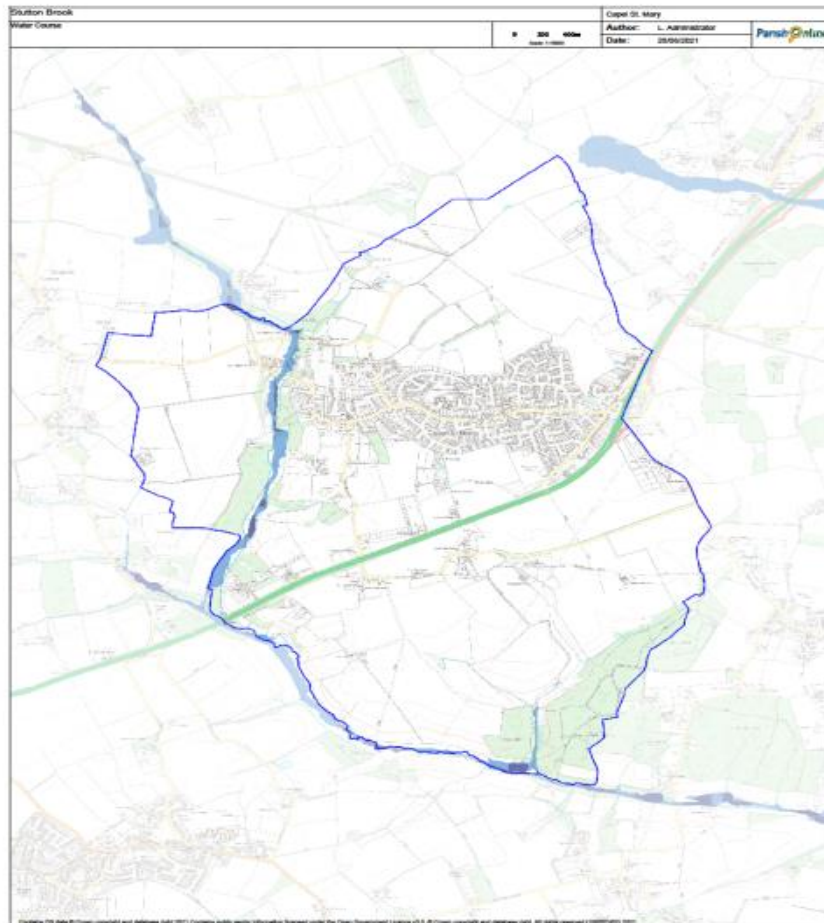
- All new housing developments should have, where reasonably possible, new footpath and/or bridleway connections created, linking to the existing right-of-way network surrounding the village
- To create new access routes across the A12, giving access to the countryside within the South of the parish. These should connect with current or new footpaths and bridleways, thereby improving links with neighbouring centres of population, such as Bentley and East Bergholt
- To promote, in association with neighbouring parishes, the creation of a new cycle route along the course of the disused railway line, providing connectivity with Hadleigh town centre

Capel St Mary has farmland on three sides and most importantly to the West and South the Stutton Brook corridor. Bordering Stutton Brook are many trees and natural habitats where wildlife can thrive, consequently harmful developments should be avoided.

### **Policy CSM18: Stutton Brook Corridor**

Development proposals should preserve the rural character of the Stutton Brook corridor that runs through the Parish from the mushroom farm, through the nature reserve, and approximately follows the parish boundary to Kings Field.

Map 5 below from Parish Online shows Stutton Brook running from Little Wenham in the north of the Parish southwards. On reaching the southern boundary Stutton Brook turns eastwards following the southern boundary of the Parish.



*Map 5. Stutton Brook corridor*

With more and more land being used for housing developments it is important to provide habitats for wildlife where possible. To assist this aim the following policy has been created:

### **Policy CSM19: Trees and Shrubs**

Development proposals requiring landscape schemes must include the native species listed in Appendix 3 which support the highest diversity of insects.

## 10.0 Economy and Employment

### Objective:

Wherever possible the existing community commercial assets and the opportunities they provide for employment should be preserved.

### 10.1 Introduction

The Census 2021 provides useful data on employment and the following tables are produced from this census.

The occupations of the working population were:

| Occupations   | Capel | England |
|---|-------|---------|
| 1. Managers, directors and senior officials         | 16.6% | 12.9%   |
| 2. Professional occupations                         | 20.6% | 20.3%   |
| 3. Associate professional and technical occupations | 16.4% | 13.3%   |
| 4. Administrative and secretarial occupations       | 11.5% | 9.3%    |
| 5. Skilled trades occupations                       | 10.1% | 10.2%   |
| 6. Caring, leisure and other service occupations    | 6.5%  | 9.3%    |
| 7. Sales and customer service occupations           | 7.3%  | 7.5%    |
| 8. Process, plant and machine operatives            | 4.2%  | 6.9%    |
| 9. Elementary occupations                           | 6.7%  | 10.5%   |
| % of people aged 16 years and over in employment    | 99.9% | 100%    |

Professional workers are attracted to the village because of the supply of large 4 and 5 bedroom houses.

The weekly hours worked were as follows:

| Hours Worked                                     | Capel | England |
|--|-------|---------|
| Part-time: 15 hours or less worked               | 13.8% | 10.3%   |
| Part-time: 16 to 30 hours worked                 | 20.9% | 19.5%   |
| Full-time: 31 to 48 hours worked                 | 55.3% | 59.1%   |
| Full-time: 49 or more hours worked               | 10.0% | 11.1%   |
| % of people aged 16 years and over in employment | 100%  | 100%    |

The distances travelled to work:

| <b>Distance Travelled</b>                        | <b>Capel</b> | <b>England</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| Less than 10km                                   | 20.8%        | 35.4%          |
| 10km to less than 30km                           | 21.7%        | 14.4%          |
| 30km and over                                    | 6.1%         | 4.3%           |
| Works mainly from home                           | 37.6%        | 31.5%          |
| Other  | 13.9%        | 14.5%          |
| % of people aged 16 years and over in employment | 100%         | 100%           |

Now it is important to look at the economic activity:

| <b>Economic Activity Status</b>                  | <b>Capel</b> | <b>England</b> |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| Economically active: In employment               | 55.3%        | 57.4%          |
| Economically active: Unemployed                  | 1.1%         | 3.5%           |
| Economically inactive                            | 43.5%        | 39.1%          |
| % of people aged 16 years and over in employment | 99.9%        | 100%           |

The high percentage of economically inactive people can be analysed further:

| <b>Economic Activity Status</b>                     | <b>Capel</b> | <b>England</b> |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| Not in employment: Worked in the last 12 months     | 6.6%         | 13.2%          |
| Not in employment: Not worked in the last 12 months | 82.9%        | 61.1%          |
| Not in employment: Never worked                     | 10.4%        | 25.6%          |
| % of people aged 16 years and over in employment    | 99.9%        | 99.9%          |

With 31% of the population of the village over retirement age this has a bearing on the numbers who are economically inactive. In addition, there will be parents with young children to care for. There is also a small percentage (3.5%) of residents with serious health problems, but it is not known how many of these are of working age.

The local opportunity for businesses and employment must now be considered.

## 10.2 Businesses

Capel St Mary has a variety of small businesses, which consist of shops, restaurants, takeaways, hairdresser, a garden centre, mushroom farm and small business units. Local businesspeople were contacted and most of them reported that they had adequate space and have no need for larger or additional premises. There was, however, a small need for shop space and warehouse/storage facilities.

### **Policy CSM20: New Business Premises**

There may be opportunities for additional business premises in Capel St Mary providing employment opportunities for residents. Development proposals will be supported in principle provided that:

- Their scale does not harm unacceptably the character of the village or the local landscape
- They do not generate unacceptable levels of vehicular traffic
- Their usage does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment and the amenities of nearby residents
- They make provision for adequate parking

### **Policy CSM21: Harm to Existing Business Premises**

Expansion of existing businesses, including small-scale extensions, will be supported provided they do not have an impact on adjoining properties, or significantly harm the character of the area.

Proposals for the change of use for existing business resulting in the loss of land or premises providing employment opportunities will be supported only if:

- Alternative provision can be made in the parish at a location which is equally safe and convenient, or
- It can be demonstrated that the site has no reasonable prospect of being viable for business premises

## **10.3 Employment**

Local businesses do provide full and part-time employment to residents and non-residents. Some are willing to offer apprenticeships to local young people, but generally most struggle to recruit locally. This may be due to the ageing population but should housing developments bring to the village younger adults with children then the demand for these jobs could increase. It is, therefore, important to at least retain the sites that provide employment.

### **Policy CSM22: Retention of Existing Employment Sites**

Proposals for non-employment use for sites which are currently or formerly used for employment will not be permitted unless they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- There is a supply of land available to meet the employment growth needs or an alternative site is provided to offset the loss
- It can be demonstrated that the site has been up for sale/let for a considerable period of time and no interest has been shown, or is likely in the foreseeable future to be found, for viable employment use for the site
- The existing site has created environmental problems (e.g. noise, odours, traffic) and a change of use would provide environmental gains which would outweigh the loss of employment

## 11.0 Policy Map Section

### 11.1 Policy Map- Green Spaces



|   |  |    |  |
|---|--|----|--|
| 1 | Allotments                                       | 8  | Long Perry opposite the Garden Centre        |
| 2 | Days Green                                       | 9  | Mowlands                                     |
| 3 | Thorney Road and Days Road                       | 10 | Beside the Premier Shop in The Street        |
| 4 | Between Plough Road and The Street               | 11 | In front of the Community Centre, The Street |
| 5 | Adjoining Little Gulls, Dodmans and Chapel Close | 12 | Between the houses in Barnfield              |
| 6 | Between Letton Close and Link Road               | 13 | Between Thorney Road and Winding Piece       |
| 7 | Elm Lane   | 14 | The Playing Field                            |

## 12.0 Implementation and Monitoring

### 12.1 Implementation

The Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan has been developed to assist with the planning of sustainable growth across the parish until 2037, a date which has been chosen to coincide with the Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP. The implementation of the neighbourhood plan will require the input, cooperation and support of statutory bodies, private sector organisations and the local community. The Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan is intended to be the starting point for bringing about a positive change to the village.

### 12.2 Policies

The policies in the Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan are designed to shape the way that development takes place in the village. To deliver these policies will require cooperation between Capel Parish Council, Babergh District Council and Suffolk County Council.

### 12.3 Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a planning charge, introduced by the Planning Act 2008, to help deliver infrastructure to support the development of the area by imposing a charge on developments. The CIL funds are managed by Babergh District Council and consist of one element which can be spent in the Babergh area and another element which is paid to the Parish Council for use in the parish. Once the Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan is adopted Capel St Mary Parish Council will benefit from 25% of the levy revenues arising from developments in the parish. This revenue will help to support projects contained in the neighbourhood plan.

### 12.4 Monitoring

It will be the responsibility of Babergh District Council to monitor the implementation of the Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan assisted by Capel Parish Council. Whilst the neighbourhood plan covers the period 2018-2037 it will require amending during this period. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk JLP requires updating every five years and no doubt this will bring about a need to review the Capel St Mary Neighbourhood Plan. When the Capel St Mary Plan has been adopted regular updates on the progress of the development plan will appear in the Parish Council Minutes and on the Capel Parish Council Website.

## Appendices

### A1 Heritage Assets in Capel St Mary

The information in this appendix was correct at the time of writing this Plan. Up to date information should be sought from the Local Planning Authority, the Parish Council or appropriate statutory body.

The following are 22 listed buildings with Historic England. The properties must be safe guarded so that they can be enjoyed by future generations:

- Boynton Hall
- Church of St Mary
- Little Owls, Thatched Cottage
- Manor House
- Spring Hill
- Stable/Granary approximately 50 metres South-East of Capel Grove
- Church Cottage
- 130 The Street
- Orchard Cottage
- Barn approximately 30 metres South-West of Jermyn's Farmhouse
- Ladysmead
- Old Hadleigh
- Bluegate Farmhouse
- Oliver's Cottage
- St Mary's Cottage
- Jermyn's Farmhouse
- Bush Farmhouse
- Hillberry Cottage
- Pump adjacent to rear of Manor House
- Capel Grove
- The White Horse Inn
- Appletree Cottage/Jubilee Cottage

Further information on the heritage assets and archaeological finds can be found by visiting the Suffolk Heritage Explorer pages for Capel St Mary.



### A2 Clubs and Activities

Capel St Mary has many clubs and activities and the following are the known ones. There may be informal ones and apologies to those people for not naming them. In the questionnaire responses, suggestions were made for additional clubs. This list is intended to notify residents which clubs are available so where interest is shown in additional activities further clubs could be formed.

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Capel Brownies
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Capel Guides
- Capel St Mary Allotments Association
- Capel Countryside Club
- Capel Play Scheme
- Capel St Mary Mini-Tennis Club
- Capel Singers
- Dance Classes
- Dog Training
- Gardening Club
- Methodist Youth Club
- R.O.M.E.O. Luncheon Club
- Strength and Balance
- Suffolk Pickleball Club
- 1st Capel Brownies
- 1<sup>st</sup> Capel Rainbows
- 1<sup>st</sup> Capel Scouts
- Capel Bowls Club
- Capel Ladies Club
- Capel Plough Football Club
- Capel St Mary's W.I.
- Carpet Bowls
- Dementia Cafe
- Flower Arranging
- Joan's Coffee Shop
- The Orchard Players
- Trampoline Club
- Suffolk Bereavement Support

In addition to the clubs, facilities are available for many other social activities including pool, darts, badminton, tennis, dance classes and many more. For young people, there are play areas, baby bounce, trekkers, Minecraft and Lego Club.

### A3 Appropriate Trees and Shrubs for Landscape Planting

These are all native species which support the highest diversity of insects feeding on their leaves, flowers, fruit:

- Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*)
- Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*)
- Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa*)
- Small-leaved Lime (*Tilia cordata*)
- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*)
- Crab Apple (*Malus sylvestris*)
- Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Field Maple (*Acer campestre*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*)
- Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) (not in woodland planting)
- Guelder-Rose (*Viburnum opulus*)
- White Willow (*Salix Alba*) (suitable for parkland and landscape locations)
- Grey Willow (*Salix Cinerea*) (suitable for woodland edge or scrub locations)
- Goat Willow (*Salix Caprea*) (suitable for woodland edge or scrub locations)

## Glossary

### Affordable Housing:

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. The definition also includes “starter homes”.

### Biodiversity:

Describes the range and variety of living organisms within an ecosystem. It can include all living organisms, plants, animals, fungi and bacteria and is often used to indicate the richness or number of species in an area. Such an area can be defined at different levels across the globe or be limited to a local area such as a parish.

### Community Infrastructure Levy:

A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

### Development Plan:

This includes adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

### Green infrastructure:

A network of multi-functional, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life for local communities.

### Habitat:

The natural home of an animal or plant often designated as an area of nature conservation interest.

### Heritage Assets:

A term that includes designated heritage assets (e.g. listed buildings, world heritage sites, conservation areas, scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens and battlefields) and non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Non-designated heritage assets include sites of archaeological interest, buildings, structures or features of local heritage interest listed by, or fulfilling criteria for listing by, the local planning authority.

### Infrastructure:

The basic physical and organisational structures and facilities (e.g. buildings, roads and power supplies) necessary for development to take place. International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

**Local planning authority:**

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area which in this case is Babergh District Council.

**Local Plan:**

The plan for the future development of the district, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community.

**Neighbourhood Plan Area:**

The Neighbourhood Area is that which the Neighbourhood Plan covers. It normally covers a whole parish and is formally designated by the local planning authority upon request of the Parish Council.

**Neighbourhood Plan:**

A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular Neighbourhood Area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

**Starter Homes:**

The Housing and Planning Act 2016 provides the statutory framework for the delivery of starter homes. The Act defines starter homes as new homes costing up to £250,000 (£450,000 in London), to be available at a minimum 20% discount on market value to eligible first-time buyers.