



109. The Bride Valley as shown on the 1886 reprint of the first 1 in. to the mile Ordnance Survey map of 1811.

### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this topic paper is to investigate the heritage of our Neighbourhood Area, to define local heritage assets and to document how the Neighbourhood Plan can conserve and enhance these assets. It also provides a rationale for the inclusion of non-designated heritage assets.

Resources used are cited in Section 12 – citations are S12;R\_ followed by the number of the resource listed.

1.1 The historic environment is defined by The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (S12; R1) Annex 2: Glossary as “All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.” The NPPF also defines heritage assets, their setting and significance as follows:

Heritage asset: “A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.”

Setting of a heritage asset: “The surroundings in which a heritage assets is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.”

Significance: “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

1.2 Heritage plays an important part in shaping how we perceive and experience a place. It is often a place’s distinctive heritage that makes it special. It can give local people a sense of belonging, pride in a place and can boost the local economy by attracting visitors and investment. Historic England (S12; R2, 3) is the government’s statutory advisor on the historic environment, promoting historic places and helping people to understand, value and care for them. Their role includes managing the National Heritage List which is the register of all nationally protected historic buildings and sites including scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, parks and gardens and battlefields.

1.3 The 2016 West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (S12; R4) states in Section 2.1.4 “High priority will be given to protecting and enhancing the area’s heritage assets - including its listed buildings and conservation areas, and other features with local historic or cultural associations, particularly where they contribute to the area’s local distinctiveness.”

The Local Plan also says in Section 2.3.2 “Heritage assets provide wide social, cultural, environmental and economic benefits and once lost they cannot be replaced.” The council strategy given in 2.3.3 is to ensure that “historic buildings and other heritage assets that make a positive contribution to local character are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation.”

1.4 Dorset Council currently have a new Local Plan out for consultation which will replace the 2016 document quoted in 1.3. There is almost no mention of heritage or conservation issues in the draft Local Plan. This is because Chapter 16 of the NPPF ‘Conserving and enhancing the historic environment’ is being replaced under planning reform law with National Development Management Policies. These proposed policies will cover heritage and landscape issues at a national level.

## **2. Context**

2.1 The Neighbourhood Area of Puncknowle and Swyre is mainly rural and covers about 2,160 acres within which there are about 300 properties occupied by 530 residents of whom 34% were aged 65 and over in 2021 (S12; R5). The parish comprises the three villages of Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington plus outlying settlements such as Berwick and Modbury.

Evidence of settlement in the area dates back to the Bronze Age; there are nine bowl barrows all listed by Historic England. A large Romano-British enclosure was excavated at Walls Plantation 1964-69 (fig. 1) which according to CJ Bailey (S12; R6) may have been a Roman-Celtic temple; a burial site was found on the east side of The Knoll and another settlement was found in Oxclose field at Swyre. The three villages have existed since before the Domesday Book but have developed in very different ways – a really quite remarkable divergence in such a small and closely linked community.

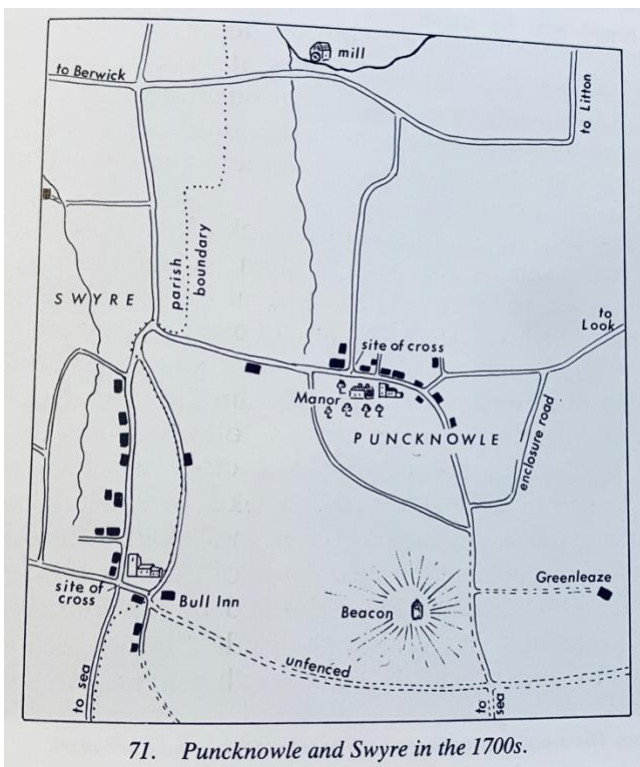


Fig.1 Photo of remains uncovered at Walls Plantation

66. The 'Walls' excavation (1968) looking south. Later work showed that the enclosure extended to the field wall along the bottom of the photograph but beyond it had been destroyed by ploughing.

### 3. Puncknowle

#### 3.1 History and village development



71. Puncknowle and Swyre in the 1700s.

The medieval village was small – according to the Domesday Book ‘Pomecanole’ was taxed for five hides and had land for four ploughs with a value of £5 (\$12; R7). There were many changes of owner in the later Middle Ages (in The History of Dorset, John Hutchins lists eight families over 200 years from the late 1200s), none of whom seem to have lived in the village. The choice to live elsewhere reflects the low esteem in which the owners held the village. In the late 15<sup>th</sup> century the Napier (or Napper) family arrived from Merchiston in Scotland and over the next century built houses at Puncknowle, Bexington and Baglake. Their interest lasted until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century when the estate was sold to William Clutterbuck, a sea officer from Devon. The last of the family Rev. George Clutterbuck Frome was rector for 44 years and one of his daughters married her cousin Morton-Grove Mansel of Smedmore

Fig.2 Map of Puncknowle in the 1700s Section 1: Resource 11

who became sole owners by 1859. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Manor was occupied by Colonel Shrapnel, inventor of the Shrapnel shell. On 29 September 1802 there was a fire which destroyed twelve houses of poor families. In 2000 the estate passed to the current owners – the Wild family and comprises some 5,000 acres spread throughout the Bride Valley.

Fig.3 The Knoll



Fig.4 View from The Knoll towards Swyre in the valley

### 3.2 Settlement pattern

The following description is taken from West Dorset 2000:Puncknowle (S12; R7). Puncknowle sits on the side of the north-facing slope of the Bride valley in the shelter of The Knoll – a hill almost 600 feet high (Figs.3 and 4). It is half a mile from the main B3157 coast road and is built around a rectangular network of small lanes (see Fig.2 map ). The nucleus of the village is Church Street, the main east-west street from which runs Looke Lane to Looke Farm and Litton Cheney. Clay Lane runs uphill to the Knoll and the B3157 road. Rectory Lane runs downhill to Golly Knapp Farm and a junction with the valley road that runs west to Berwick and Modbury. Hoopers Lane runs parallel to Rectory Lane and ends in a cul-de-sac. At its west end Church Street becomes Swyre Road linking the two villages.

The coherent village core runs from Greystones and Manor Cottage at the west end of Church Street through to the junction of Clay and Looke Lanes. Church Street contains St Mary's Church, the Manor House, The Crown Inn, Manor Farm, the Village Hall (formerly the school) and a number of cottages, mainly terraced. Rectory Lane contains the Old Rectory, Home Farm camping and caravan site, a burial ground and cottages. There are outlying settlements at West Mill Farm and Looke Farm.

There is a modern ribbon development of mainly bungalows along Swyre Road and Hoopers Lane but the most recent additions to the village are cul-de-sacs at the eastern end of Church Street and Clay Lane in Lytton Close, Napier Close and Springfield.

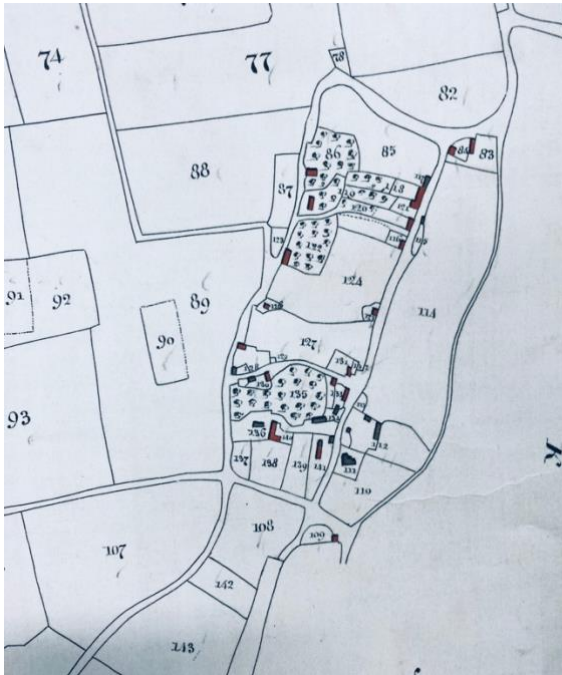
### 3.3 Building materials

Most of the village's older buildings are of Forest Marble in rubble form, sometimes laid to courses, with stone tiles of the same material on the Church, lych gate and Manor House. Cornbrash is used in some Church Street cottages and part of the Manor House. There have been several quarries in the parish, at Golly Knapp Farm, Limekiln Hill and Looke Farm among others. Several colours of bricks are used on the Red House and brick window heads and quoins in some

C19 buildings. The orange-red brick probably originates from local Oxford clay at Quarr Mead, near Golly Knapp Farm. Smooth or rough cast render are sometimes used as a finish for rubble walling. Roofs may be thatched, slated or of plain clay tiles with pan tiles on some cottages and farm buildings. Modern houses are of stone, artificial stone, render or brick with concrete or pantile roofs (S12; R7, 9).

#### 4. Swyre

##### 4.1 History and village development



According to the Domesday Book (S12; R6) Swyre belonged to William de Eu, an important Norman baron. It was relatively large, worth £9 with nine hides and land for seven ploughs. In the medieval period there was a village at Modbury, since deserted. The manor was controlled by the Crown after the 1440s. The Napiers held it until 1584 when it passed to the Harbins and in 1660 became part of the Duke of Bedford's estate. The Bedford connection arose through John Russell who owned Berwick Manor. He became a close advisor to Henry VIII and Edward VI for thirty years and was created 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Bedford in 1551. By 1895 the estate owned all the land in the village and it was sold off in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Fig.5 Tithe map of Swyre 1839

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the village was very poor. It has always had a strong connection to the sea and the inhabitants were mainly fishermen, smugglers and farm labourers. The Duke built a school in 1851 and a series of small stone houses in the 1860s, this growth can be seen by comparing the maps of 1839 (Fig.5) and 1870 (Fig.6).

##### 4.2 Settlement pattern

The following description is taken from West Dorset 2000: Swyre (S12; R8). Swyre is mainly located to the north of the B3157 coast road, developed in a linear fashion along the minor Swyre Road to Puncknowle. Two other lanes, Back Lane and Bull Lane run parallel to the main village street. The village is located on a ridge with a steep valley to the west. There is a small cluster of development on the B3157 coast road by Swyre Cross – The Lemon Tree (formerly the Bull Inn) is the most conspicuous main road building and caravan site. (Fig.6) South of the B3157 Swyre Road continues towards the sea all the way into West Bexington. The war memorial, a few houses and Gorselands caravan site are on the south side of the road – however, most of these houses and The Lemon Tree are classed as being in Puncknowle.



Fig.6 Swyre map 1870

The main village street has Manor Farm buildings on both sides at its southern end, Holy Trinity church on the east side, Swyre House (former rectory) on the west and two large, modern houses between the church and The Lemon Tree. Northwards the former School House, a small group of newer houses at Green Barton and a series of semi-detached and terraced properties (the former estate houses) run mainly along a tight building line to the road. The eastern side of the street north of Manor Farm is undeveloped and the dry stone wall that lines the road is an important feature (Fig.7). There are outlying settlements at Vurlands Farm, Modbury Farm and Berwick (Fig.8).

#### 4.3 Building materials

All the older village buildings are of locally quarried Forest Marble in coursed or random rubble construction. Worked stone dressings such as quoins and window heads are features as are the stone porches. The church has dressed stone for window and doorway masonry - possibly Abbotsbury Oolite. Forest Marble is also used for boundary walls. Roofs are of slate or plain tiles. Double Roman pantiles are used on farm buildings. Swyre House and Modbury farm house are rendered. Modern buildings use stone (The Lemon Tree and Green Barton houses), brick, render and artificial stone with slate, concrete tile and pantile roofs.

### 5. West Bexington

#### 5.1 History and village development

According to the Domesday Book Bexington had twenty households, nine and three-quarter hides and land for seven ploughs (S12; R6, 18). There was a church, St Giles and a Manor House. By the medieval period the village was already in decline and this was hastened when in 1440 it was raided by French pirates who killed the men and kidnapped women and children to be ransomed. In 1451 the bishop declared Bexington to be united with Puncknowle. The damaged church fell into disrepair and a small chancel was built at St Mary's for the few remaining parishioners. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was reduced to a single farm. In 1663 the Manor House at Puncknowle burnt down so the Napiers (who owned Bexington) owned the estate moved into the farmhouse and made improvements including a forge, saddlery, stables, granary and a water mill and built a row of four cottages – now Tamarisk Farm (Fig.9). After that the only other additions to the village were Labour-in-Vain farm and the Long House, both 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig.10).



Fig.9 (L) The manor at West Bexington – tithe map 1841



Fig.10 (R) The farm at Labour-in-Vain and the Long House – tithe map 1841

By 1852 the manor was owned by Rev. Edmond Holland of Suffolk. On July 1<sup>st</sup> 1920 his descendants put the estate up for sale in small lots. Some of the lots sold and beach bungalows began to be built along Swyre Road. (Fig.11). In 1932 an attempt was made to create a seaside resort. The road was built down to the beach and a car park. The café, swimming pool, tennis courts and beach chalets were built (Figs.12 and 13). They were rented out at two guineas a week. By 1934 the resort had failed, the owners went bankrupt and all properties were auctioned off on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Development was limited by lack of infrastructure until the early 1960s when the village was connected to mains water and drainage. Since then, many more houses have been built and most of the original bungalows have been rebuilt and extended, some to several times their original size – see Fig.14.



Fig.11 (L) The first bungalows built along Swyre Road in the 1920s.

Fig.12 (Below L) The swimming pool and changing cabins of Bexington-on-Sea resort, 1932-4

Fig.13 (Below R) The tennis court and row of beach chalets of Bexington-on-Sea, 1932-4



## 5.2 Settlement

West Bexington sits on the south side of the South Dorset Ridgeway on a steep hill leading down to the Chesil Beach (S12; R10). There are two roads – Swyre Road that leads from the B3157 coast road to the original part of the village and Beach Road which continues the road to the beach (Fig.13). Labour-in-Vain Lane leads from the original village east to the farm which bears its name. There is also an old lane going from the original



Fig.14 Beach Road showing extended bungalows

This is Donkey Lane so called because it was the main route for fishermen coming from Puncknowle down to the beach to fish who used donkeys to carry their

equipment and catches. The beach bungalows extend mainly along the north side of Swyre Road with a few scattered houses on the south side. Both sides of Beach Road have mainly large detached bungalows or chalet bungalows in big gardens, well set back from the road with wide verges. At the bottom of Beach Road a narrow track leads to the 14 wooden chalets which remain from the holiday resort (Fig.13). These are still in the main holiday homes.

### 5.3 Building materials

The Manor, farmhouse and outbuildings are built of Forest Marble with slate roofs. Labour-in-Vain farmhouse and the Long House are both rendered with slate roofs. The bungalows are built of artificial stone or rendered block work with glazed or timber balconies and some have timber cladding. Roofs are slate or pantile. The beach chalets are timber-framed with timber or plastic wood cladding and felt roofs.

## 6. Outlying Settlements

6.1 Across the Neighbourhood Area there are a number of outlying small settlements and farmsteads. Although set apart from the main villages, these are important, some are of historical interest and any future development needs to be sympathetic.

### 6.2 Puncknowle

The settlements at Puncknowle and Swyre are mainly along the valley road which follows the course of the River Bride and runs from Litton Cheney to Burton Bradstock. Golly Knapp Farm is at the bottom of Rectory Lane and West Mill Farm in the valley road is on the site of an old water mill – the substantial Mill House is dated 1690. To the east of the village Looke Farm is another group of historic and listed buildings.

### 6.3 Swyre

The most important settlement is Berwick Manor and Little Berwick (Fig.15), both on the valley road. For the history of Berwick see section 4.1. Further along the valley road is Modbury Farm and farm shop and the remains of the deserted medieval village of Modbury. At the western edge of Swyre on the B3157 is Vurlands Animal Farm, a farm which has diversified and now provides children's activities and a café.



Fig.15 Berwick Manor (L) and Little Berwick (R)

## 6.4 West Bexington

Outlying properties in West Bexington run along Labour-in-Vain Lane to Tulks Hill. There are two 19<sup>th</sup> century houses at Labour-in-Vain farm and The Long House. The farm is now owned by the National Trust and the land farmed by Tamarisk Farm.

## 7. Evidence and approach

### 7.1 Community events

There have been four events at which views on heritage were sought:

- Drop-in sessions held in Puncknowle village hall on 13 May 2023

Three sessions were held during the afternoon. From the feedback report distributed as a leaflet to all homes “There was a desire to sustain the distinct identities and general “feel” of the three villages. Guidelines would help ensure that any new development was suited to the character of the villages. Greater use of heritage buildings should be explored to maintain a strong sense of community.”

- Drop-in sessions held in each village on 2 and 3 November 2023

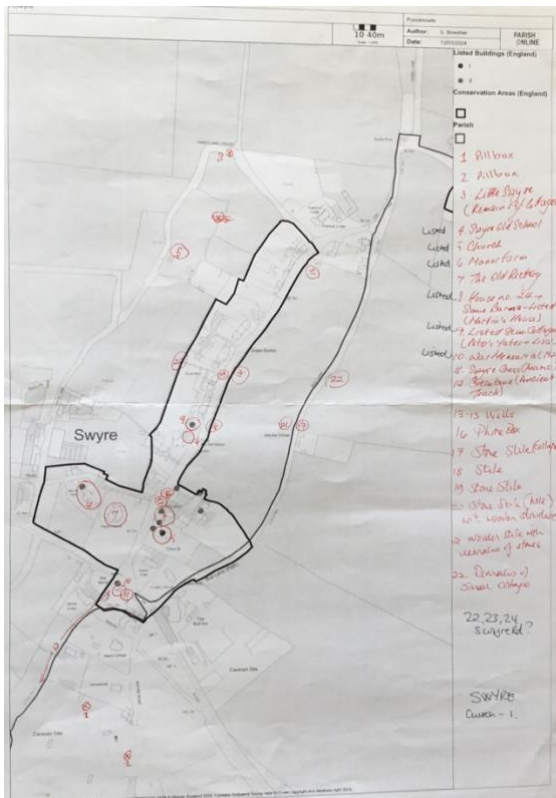
An evening session was held on 2 November and a morning one on 3 November in The Manor Hotel, West Bexington, St Mary’s church in Swyre and the village hall in Puncknowle. Residents were asked to give their views on various issues. From the report of these meetings: “All three villages have heritage buildings in one form or another, but residents were clearly knowledgeable about what they saw as heritage or in need of protection. The future of churches, with dwindling congregations should have a plan enabling them to be retained as heritage sites. It seems despite the protection of conservation areas and National Landscape (AONB) status there is little confidence that policy is being applied. How can the character of villages be maintained and homeowners encouraged to comply with listed property repair requirements?”

- Drop-in sessions held in Puncknowle village hall on 20 April 2024

The sessions focused on Housing and Environment with displays and residents were asked to complete a questionnaire. The draft Vision and Objectives were shared for feedback and are currently evolving as the Neighbourhood Plan develops. The Vision seeks to “retain the characteristics of each village to preserve the rural, coastal and heritage setting in an area of outstanding natural beauty” . The objectives include the need to: “Recognise the need for limited future development, in harmony with the local buildings, sustainable and retain the unique characteristics of the three villages. Highlight the value of historical assets and support the conservation of heritage buildings by introducing new uses.”

Comments given in the questionnaire included the issue of the long term treatment of heritage assets such as the two churches and redundant farm buildings. “Whilst these are valued in the community, with dwindling congregations both churches could be redundant within 20 years. Historic farm buildings will also need significant investment to avoid becoming derelict. These issues and associated funding need consideration.” Residents also suggested assets that should be conserved and do not have protection at present. These were: Puncknowle village hall, dry stone walls and the Napoleonic lookout building on The Knoll. The latter is in fact listed.

- Heritage focus group held at The Lemon Tree in Swyre on 19 November 2024



A group of residents who had shown an interest in heritage issues were invited to the focus group – 14 attended. They were asked to mark on maps of the villages any heritage assets not currently protected that they considered to be of value to the community (Fig.16 shows the marked up paper map of Swyre as an example). Their ideas have formed the basis for the list of non-designated heritage assets given in Appendix 1. There was also a discussion of heritage assets at risk and the value of design guides.

## 7.2 Other evidence

Section 13 lists the primary and secondary sources researched for this paper and the people and statutory bodies consulted. Research has included visits to the Dorset History Centre and interviews with residents who have longstanding local knowledge such as the chair of the Parish Council. The local history group has also been involved in compiling the list of non-designated heritage assets.

Fig.16 Swyre map marked up with heritage assets

## 8. Heritage assets

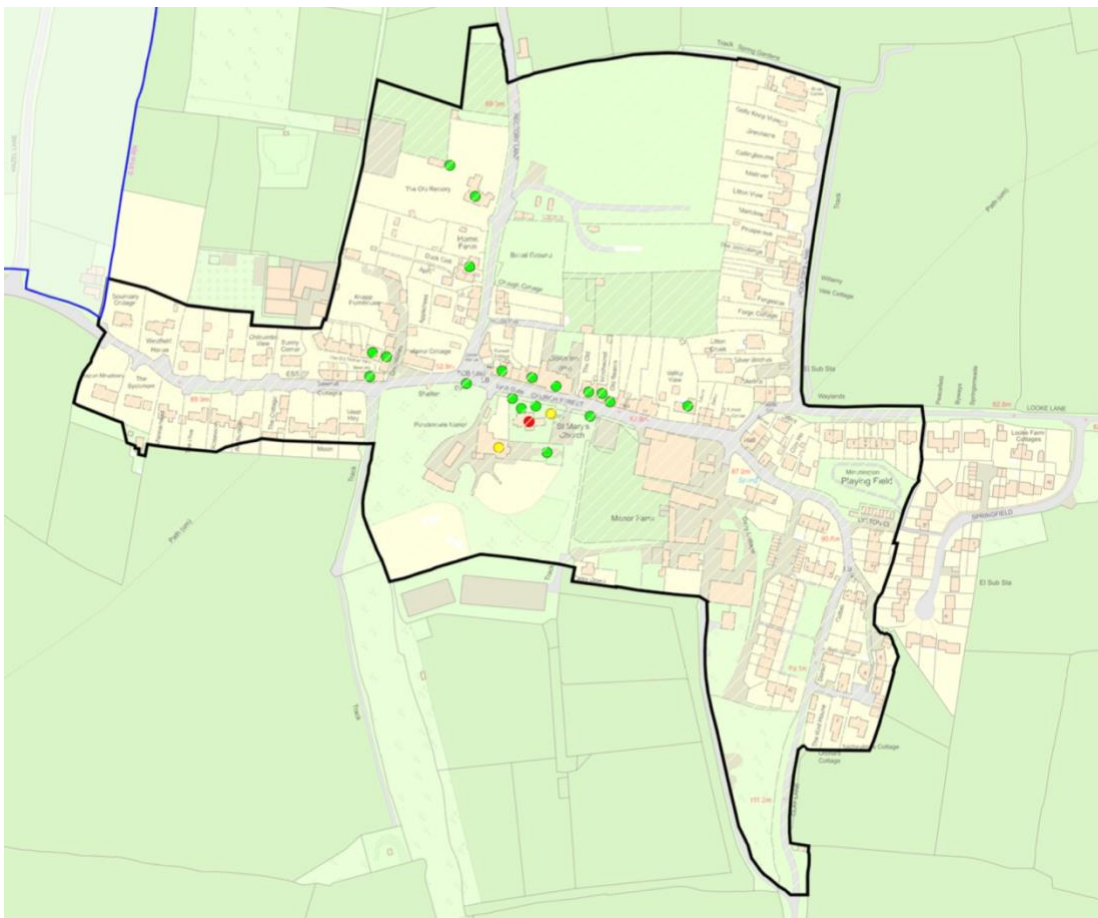


Fig.17 Map of Puncknowle showing Conservation Area and listed buildings

### 8.1 Listed buildings and scheduled ancient monuments

A listed building is one which is of significant historical or architectural interest and is placed on a national register for protection maintained by Historic England. There are three levels of listing – Grade I (most important), Grade II\* and Grade II. There are 54 listed buildings and ancient monuments in the Parish (Figs. 17, 20 and 21). The breakdown is:

Puncknowle: St Mary's church is Grade I, the Manor House, Looke Farm and the village cross in the churchyard are Grade II\* and the remainder Grade II. There is a cluster of houses in Church Street, The Crown Inn, buildings in the Old Timber Yard on Swyre Road and the Old Rectory in Rectory Lane. The lookout building on The Knoll is Grade II as are the three tumuli. The Village Hall is an asset of community value, although not listed.

West Bexington: The Grade II listed buildings are the Manor Hotel and Tamarisk Farmhouse plus farm buildings.(Fig.18)

Swyre: Holy Trinity Church is Grade I, the war memorial, 22-24 Swyre Road and various buildings at Manor Farm are Grade II (Fig.19). Four buildings at Berwick are listed Grade II (Fig.22) as is Modbury farmhouse (Fig.23). In addition to buildings, walls, church monuments, a lime kiln and bowl barrows are also listed.



Fig.18 Listed buildings in West Bexington

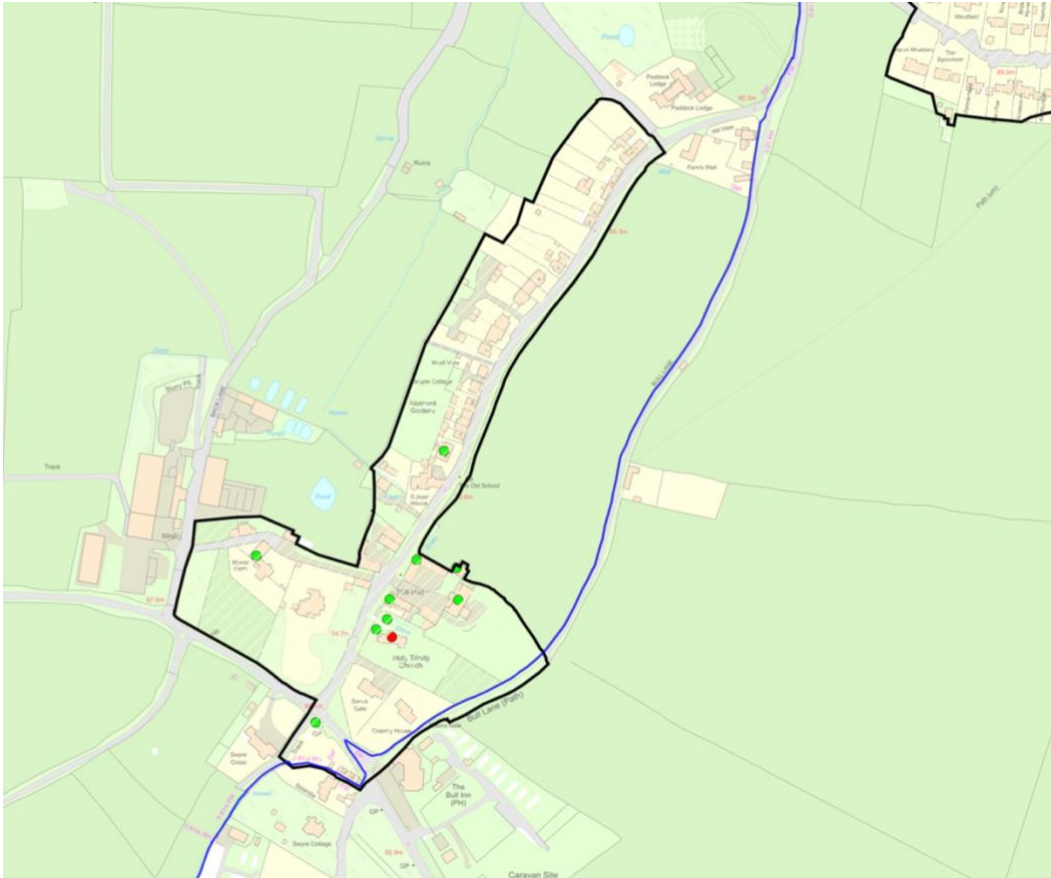


Fig.19 Conservation Area and Listed buildings in Swyre

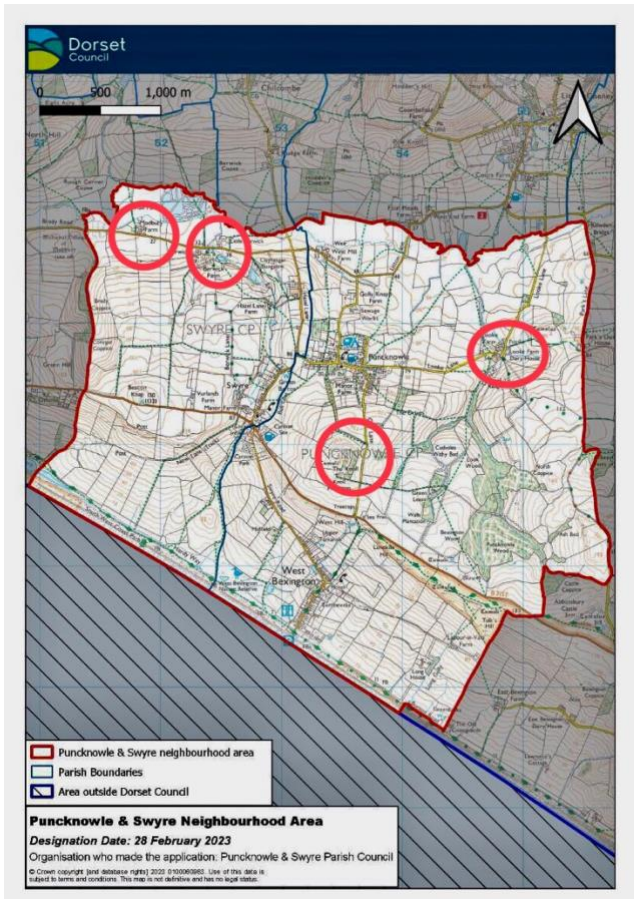


Fig.20 Map of the Neighbourhood Area showing the position of detailed maps in Figs.21-24. The areas are from top left: Modbury, Berwick, Looke Farm and The Knoll.

Fig.21 Listed buildings at Looke Farm.



Fig.22 Listed buildings at The Knoll



Fig.23 Listed buildings at Berwick



Fig.24 Listed buildings at Modbury



## 8.2 Conservation Areas

A Conservation Area is an area designated for its special architectural or historic interest where the character or appearance of a settlement is considered worthy of preservation. Puncknowle has a Conservation Area created in 1971 with an appraisal. An appraisal is an objective analysis of the area, defining its special characteristics to guide future development decisions. The area includes the whole village apart from the Springfield development. It extends to the western end of the village along Swyre Road, Hoopers Lane, partway along Rectory Lane and up Clay Lane. The appraisal lists the key points of quality analysis as:

- “A pleasant landscape setting, adjacent to a World Heritage coastline and within the Dorset AONB, with trees and hedges and a fall to the river valley and a contrasting escarpment edge beyond, to the north.
- Mature trees and tree groups within the village, particularly on Church Street and Rectory Lane, that enhance the setting of historic buildings, integrate modern development and add to the quality of views into and out of the village.
- Fine private gardens that add to the quality of the adjacent public realm.
- 21 listed building entries, including a Grade 1 church and Grade II\* early C17 small Manor House, several other gentry houses and large farmhouses and C18-C19 cottages.

- About 18 unlisted buildings of quality and character, complementing listed buildings and forming parts of several coherent groups of particular interest.
- Distinctive local building materials, notably local Forest Marble and Cornbrash, stone tiles and thatch that, combined with building traditions, give a strong sense of place.
- Interesting details such as cast iron railings, gates, gate piers, boundary walls, signs and plaques.”

The appraisal does not mention Looke Farm despite its Grade II\* listing.

Swyre has a Conservation Area but no appraisal. This means that there may be less clarity on how to manage development so the Neighbourhood Plan will be helpful in listing the heritage assets in the village. Dorset Council could be approached to request an appraisal but whether this would happen is doubtful.

West Bexington has no conservation area. Again the Neighbourhood Plan will be useful in listing non-designated heritage assets to be considered in any future developments.

### 8.3 Non-designated heritage assets and their value to the community

Heritage plays an important part in how our parish is perceived. It is the distinctive heritage of the three villages that make them special. That distinctiveness gives local people a sense of belonging and can help in attracting investment. But the heritage of our villages does not just rest with the listed buildings and monuments. There are other buildings and features that are equally as valued and interesting to the local community. By identifying these non-designated heritage assets their value can be considered in any future development and policies prepared to ensure their conservation is given appropriate weight in decisions. The Neighbourhood Plan may also provide opportunities to bring such assets back into use and help to conserve those that may be at risk. This will help to ensure that the historic environment remains viable for future generations.

### 8.4 Rationale for consideration as a non-designated heritage asset

The list in Appendix 1 was compiled from the following sources:

- Features suggested by the community at the events such as the Heritage focus group meeting
- Buildings and features that are not listed or scheduled ancient monuments but are mentioned in relevant sources listed in Section 13: Source 11 - Puncknowle Conservation Area Appraisal; Sources 7 and 8 - West Dorset 2000 surveys of Puncknowle and Swyre and Sources 9 and 10 – Discovering the Ridgeway 4. West Bexington and 11. Puncknowle.

The assets are shown on maps in Appendix 1. In all cases the Dorset Council criteria for non-designated heritage assets given in Appendix 2 was used as a guideline. This list specifies that assets must be at least 30 years old and divides them into four main types: Buildings, Structures, Gardens and designed landscapes and Sites and places.

## 9. Design

### 9.1 General guidelines for high quality design

Given the range of building types and ages across the Parish there is no one clearly defined style or building material that should form the basis of future design (Fig.25). Each village should be treated individually.

Puncknowle has distinct character areas within the village. In the historic core with its mix of gentry houses and cottages the emphasis should be on retaining the historic massing and character of the buildings. The expansion of the village along Swyre Road, Looke Lane and Hoopers

Lane with its mix of bungalows and well-spaced detached houses has a different aesthetic. The most recent new housing in Litton Close, Napier Close and Springfield contains a mix of terraced and semi-detached houses, closely grouped and of a different character again with some uncharacteristic use of materials such as red brick.

Swyre is a smaller settlement and has less variety and a more limited palette of materials and colours. The modern houses of Green Barton are sympathetic to both the style and colours of the older clusters of terraced houses. There are also a number of farmsteads in the village which have the potential to develop redundant buildings.

West Bexington, being largely developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and a coastal settlement has an entirely different aesthetic. Houses are mainly detached, bungalows or chalet bungalows of varied designs incorporating dormer windows, balconies and large glazed areas to make the most of the sea views. The palette of materials is wider too including render, wood, pvc, artificial slates and red pantiles.

Fig.25 Approximate breakdown of house types and ages in the three villages

Age	Detached bungalow or chalet	Semi-detached bungalow or chalet	Detached house	Semi-detached house	Terraced house
<b>Puncknowle</b>					
20C or 21C	27	4	28	43	16
19C			16	18	8
Pre 19C			6		
<b>Swyre</b>					
20C or 21C	5		9	4	
19C			6	16	5
Pre 19C			3		
<b>West Bexington</b>					
20C or 21C	53	2	15	2	3
19C					

Pre 19C			1	2	
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**Notes:**

1. Of the 53 detached bungalows or chalets in West Bexington, 8 are substantially unaltered from when they were originally built in the 1930s. In addition there are the 14 seaside chalets which once formed part of the Bexington-on-sea holiday camp. Thirteen of these are not permanent dwellings so have not been counted.
2. One of the detached houses in West Bexington is part of Gorselands caravan site and has now been divided into flats.
3. There are a number of barn conversions in Puncknowle and Swyre. These have been counted as 20C when the conversion to a house was done although the building shell maybe considerably older.
4. End of terrace houses have been counted as semi-detached.

But whilst new buildings should look to fit comfortably within their setting, they need not simply mirror what has gone before. In the UK 49% of annual carbon emissions are attributable to how we construct and use buildings. It is more important than ever to take the best of 21<sup>st</sup> century building design skills to ensure that all new developments are truly sustainable in terms of their carbon footprint and use of materials.

The aim to achieve zero carbon buildings needs to be considered at the planning stage. The landscaping and surfacing of the site are also relevant, for example in terms of the nature of the surface, sustainable drainage systems and native planting that can provide both biodiversity and climate benefits.

**9.2 Design Codes**

The community have been very clear that respecting the varied and distinct heritage of each village and the outlying settlements in any future developments is important. In order to analyse the built characteristics of each part of the Neighbourhood Area and guide future development AECOM were asked to prepare a Design Guide. The Guide recommendations should assist the planning department and the Parish Council in deciding the appropriateness of future planning applications.

**9.3 Repurposing of farm buildings**

Changing practices in modern farming mean that old farm buildings may become redundant. The Neighbourhood Area contains a number of farms and some may have buildings which could usefully be repurposed. Members of the Steering Group visited The Barn at Charlton Down where an old industrial steel-framed barn was converted into a green home (Fig.26).

There are a number of guides which give advice on best practice. The Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework (Section 13: Resource 12) describes a 4-stage practical process for assessing and developing farmstead sites:

Stage 1 – Site summary

Assessment of services available, routed through the site, use of site, produce site plan

Stage 2 – Assessment and significance

Landscape setting, existing form and materials

Stage 3 – Need and potential for change

Site access, potential uses, biodiversity issues, flood risk

## Stage 4 – Siting and design issues

Siting of extensions or new buildings and integration with the existing

Other useful guides are published by Historic England and listed in Section 13 Resources 13-15



Fig.26 The Barn as it was (L) and as it is now (R) It has a sealed shell with ground source heat pump and mechanical ventilation

### 10. Draft policies

#### Policy 1 – Local heritage character

The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the buildings and structures listed in Appendix 1 as Non-designated Heritage Assets. Any development should preserve and take opportunities to enhance both listed and non-designated heritage assets and their settings. Proposals which affect a non-designated heritage asset must demonstrate regard to the scale of any impact or harm and the significance of the asset's historical, architectural or cultural value and setting. Proposals which enhance or would lead to a better appreciation and consideration of an asset would be looked on favourably.

#### Policy 2 – Repurposing rural buildings

The repurposing and development of disused or under-utilised farm or rural buildings will be supported where this assists with the diversification and viability of the business concerned or to provide affordable housing under the rural exception sites scheme provided that:

1. Any development respects the rural character of the setting and is in accordance with the Design Guide.
2. There is no adverse impact on highway safety, traffic flows or on road parking.
3. Any impacts on the natural environment are minimised and the proposals demonstrate a biodiversity net gain equal to or exceeding national policy requirements.

### 11. Key Stakeholders

- Dorset Council  
Planning conservation officer Tobias Carlton-Prangnell  
Claire Pinder – Senior Archaeologist
- Historic England
- National Trust
- Puncknowle, Swyre and West Bexington Local History Group
- Puncknowle Village Hall Committee
- Diocese of Salisbury and the Rev. Andrew Rawding, vicar of St Mary's and Holy Trinity churches

## **12. Resources**

### **List of text resources used for Heritage Topic Paper**

1. National Planning and Policy Framework and Guide  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government MHCLG 2024
2. Neighbourhood Planning and the Historic Environment  
Historic England Advice Note 11 (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) 2022 by Guy Robinson
3. Historic England website: <https://historicengland.org.uk>
4. West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2011-2031  
Dorset Council 2015
5. United Kingdom Census 2021  
Office for National Statistics
6. The Bride Valley by CJ Bailey  
Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society 1982
7. Puncknowle – West Dorset 2000 – Survey of the built and natural environment of West Dorset. WDDC
8. Swyre – West Dorset 2000 – Survey of the built and natural environment of West Dorset  
WDDC
9. Discovering the Ridgeway – 11. Puncknowle  
South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership Scheme 2018
10. Discovering the Ridgeway – 4. West Bexington  
South Dorset Ridgeway Landscape Partnership Scheme 2018
11. Puncknowle, Burton Bradstock, Litton Cheney, Winterbourne Abbas & Shipton Gorge  
Conservation Area Appraisal by West Dorset District Council
12. Worcestershire Farmstead Assessment Framework by Worcestershire County Council and  
English Heritage 2014.
13. Adapting traditional farm buildings: best practice guidelines for adaptive reuse  
David Pickles and Jeremy Lake, Historic England 2017
14. The adaptive reuse of traditional farm buildings – Historic England Advice Note 9 2017
15. The maintenance and repair of traditional farm buildings – a guide to good practice  
Historic England 2017
16. Report on green farm buildings visited 2025
17. National Design Guide – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021
18. Brief notes on the history of West Bexington by J Stevens Cox 1973
19. Dorset Council Interim Guidance Note – Sustainability statement and checklist for planning  
applications [www.moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.moderngov.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

### **List of people interviewed or contacted**

1. Sophie Mawdsley – National Trust Assistant Planning Advisor  
Online meeting with SM and JH on 14 January 2025 followed by an email from SM in  
answer to our questions.
2. Meeting with Claire Pinder County Archaeologist at Dorset History Centre on 17 January  
2025
3. Geoff Fry (Chair of Parish Council) interviewed 8 November 2024
4. Visit to The Barn at Charlton Down with JH to meet the owners. The Barn is a green home  
converted from a steel-framed barn.

## **Appendix 1 – Proposed list of Non-designated heritage assets**

**NB This is a draft list only. The building owners have not yet been contacted to obtain their agreement for their property to be included as a non-designated heritage asset.**

Figs. 27-30 (marked up maps to be inserted here when list finalised) to show the non-designated assets listed below.

### **Puncknowle – buildings**

1. Manor Cottage, Swyre Road
2. Drood Cottage, Rectory Lane
3. 1 and 2 Rectory Lane
4. Bride Valley Cottage, Rectory Lane
5. No. 1 Wren Cottage, Rectory Lane
6. Corner House, Rectory Lane
7. Durban and Thornleigh, Church Street
8. Railings and Delve cottages, Church Street
9. Dairy Cottage and house, Church Street
10. Village hall, Church Street
11. Red House, Clay Lane
12. Myrtle Cottage, Looke Lane
13. The Alcove, Hoopers Lane
14. Manor Farmhouse

Most of these houses are mentioned in the appraisal of the Puncknowle Conservation Area as being important local buildings, either individually or as a group.

### **Puncknowle – features**

1. Bus shelter, Church Street
2. Phone box, corner of Rectory Lane
3. Village stocks, Church Street
4. Postbox, Looke Farm
5. Stone stiles by Spring Gardens and Clay Lan
6. Pillboxes, Gorselands caravan site
7. Looke Wood ancient woodland

### **Swyre – buildings**

1. Swyre House, Swyre Road
2. 16-21 Swyre Road
3. The Old School, Swyre Road

### **Swyre – features**

1. Phone box, Swyre Road
2. Stone stiles, Swyre Road
3. Remains of Little Swyre cottage off Hare's Lane
4. Remains of small cottage, Bull Lane
5. Remains of medieval village, Modbury
6. Sluice gates along the river, Modbury
7. Veteran oak tree by Modbury Farm on parish boundary
8. Willow trees on parish boundary at fish farm
9. Lime kiln off New Lane
10. Ash trees off New Lane

### West Bexington – buildings

1. Sunnyside, Swyre Road
2. Conifers, Swyre Road
3. Cottage by the Sea, Swyre Road
4. Lyme View, Swyre Road
5. Kingswood, Swyre Road,
6. The Moat, Swyre Road
7. Littleover, Beach Road
8. Latimer Cottage, Beach Road

These are largely unchanged from their original design in the 1920s or 1930s.

9. Labour-in-Vain farm
10. The Long House

### West Bexington – features

1. Pillbox in field behind Beach Road
2. Pillboxes, tank trap and gun emplacement in various fields off the South West Coast Path
3. Barn in field above Tulks House
4. Ash hedge field boundary and pond network at Labour-in-Vain farm
5. Dry stone walls in fields by Limekiln Hill



Manor  
Farmhouse



Postbox Looke  
Farm



Durban and Thornleigh, Church Street



Bus shelter



Swyre House



Cottages built by the Duke of Bedford



The old schoolhouse - left  
The reading room – below





Stone stiles in Swyre Road



Sunnyside



Conifers



Cottage by the Sea



Lyme View



Kingswood



The Moat



Littleover



Latimer Cottage



Pillbox off Beach Road

## **Appendix 2 – Dorset Council criteria for non-designated heritage assets**

The Dorset Council website lists local heritage asset examples which must be at least 30 years old and are divided into 4 main types. These are: buildings, structures, gardens and designed landscapes and sites and places. Those types which may be found in our parish are listed below:

### **Buildings**

Houses  
Schools  
Churches  
Town or village halls  
Barns or stables

### **Structures**

Phone boxes  
Statues  
Railings  
Headstones  
Shipwrecks  
Chimneys  
Boundary walls  
War memorials  
Pillboxes  
Follies  
Fountains  
Bus shelters  
Finger posts and way markers

### **Gardens and designed landscapes**

Cemeteries and burial grounds  
Private estate gardens  
Memorial gardens  
Ancient or notable trees

### **Sites and places**

Cairns or burial mounds  
Crop marks  
Ruined buildings or buried evidence of them  
Field boundaries  
Enclosures  
Trackways  
Standing stones  
Ponds  
Hillforts  
Deserted medieval settlements  
Field systems or strip lynchets

The heritage assets list we compile will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan. Dorset council are also compiling a Local Heritage List and we may consider some of our assets should be added to this list. By adding assets they become a 'material consideration' in the planning process.

## **Appendix 3 – Draft letter to local landowners regarding proposed non- designated heritage asset listing in the Neighbourhood Plan**

Dear property owner,  
Re: Neighbourhood Plan for the parish of Puncknowle (including West Bexington) and Swyre  
Proposed non-designated heritage asset

As you maybe aware, community representatives on behalf of the Parish Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the parish. The Steering Group is collating evidence to draft the Plan ahead of a formal six week consultation period, before it will be revised and submitted to Dorset Council for examination.

We would like to include your property (as shown on the attached site plan) in a catalogue of non-designated heritage assets in the Plan. A non-designated heritage asset is a building over 30 years old that has not been formally listed or scheduled by Historic England but nevertheless has architectural or historic worth. We feel your property merits inclusion in the list because (reasons).

Including your property in the list does not mean that it is given the same protection as a listed building or that there is currently any requirement placed on you as the owner. It seeks to encourage you and any future owners to conserve and enhance any feature relating to its heritage. In the future should there be any development that would impact the property then its inclusion on a list of heritage assets would be taken into appropriate consideration as part of any planning application process.

Please confirm by (date) if you consent to your property being included in the list of non-designated heritage assets to recognise its heritage value according to the criteria given above. Can you also please confirm that you are the registered owner of the property and that the attached site plan is correct. If you have photos or additional information to support records of its heritage value and contribution to local character that you could supply, that would be much appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Yours truly,

Michèle Vassar

(on behalf of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Puncknowle and Swyre Parish Council)

E: [wbexnp@yahoo.com](mailto:wbexnp@yahoo.com)

T: 01308 897566