

# Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan 2025 - 2041

## Appendix I - Aspirations for Bedmond

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Bedmond is a small village located around one mile (1.6 km) north of Abbots Langley village. It forms one of the 14 distinct settlements within the parish. The village and surrounds have historically been a rural farming area, which formed part of an Estate for many centuries until 1919, when the Estate was sold. A legacy of historical farms, farmland, woods and meadows remains.
- 1.2. The village has an active Residents' Association, who take a keen interest in considering the role and future of the settlement, within the wider parish and district.
- 1.3. This document forms part of the evidence base for the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (ALNP). It sets out the community aspirations for Bedmond, so that these can be integrated into the ALNP and reflected in planning policy and associated actions.
- 1.4. The document has been informed by the following:
  - Feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan surveys to date, including the CommonPlace online consultation, ongoing
  - The Bedmond Residents Association's response to the Three Rivers District Council Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation
  - Aspirations document developed by Jan Smith and Wendy Ball, who are Bedmond residents, 11 December 2021, August 2021
  - Vision and Aspirations Workshop held with Bedmond residents, 3 February 2022
  - Additional comments received April 2022
- 1.5. The report is structured around the themes of the ALNP, to aid read across to the policies and associated actions.

## 2. Bedmond

- 2.1. The ancient and historical Village of Bedmond is reputed to be the birthplace of the only English Pope, Nicholas Breakspear, Pope Adrian IV. It has a history stretching back to Palaeolithic times. Its identity is deeply rooted in its rural and farming history more recently as part of the Serge Hill Estate.
- 2.2. Bedmond has sufficient facilities for its size and continues to serve its local residents well. It has a wide variety of well established and new organisations and groups which run activities and events to engage the community. The Church of the Ascension, Bedmond Village Hall, Bedmond Academy, the Bell Pub, Bedmond Stores, the Sports and Social Club/Playing Fields and local businesses all support the needs of the community and beyond.



*Images show: Bedmond Village Hall, Bedmond local shops and the stained glass window in the Church of the Ascension*

- 2.3. From a landscape perspective, Bedmond is in the Bedmond Plateau and Chilterns Landscape Area. This is characterised by a gently undulating landscape of small to medium-sized arable and pasture creating a coherent and settled appearance defined by its long history of traditional farms. These are punctuated by ancient lanes and woodlands. Twentieth century development is mainly residential ribbon development with long gardens and wide verges. Bedmond has a strong rural character and farming continues to be a major feature of the village's identity.
- 2.4. Bedmond is washed over with Green Belt which provides a landscape in which residents enjoy a wealth of outdoor activities. All of these factors contribute to a strong sense of community. Residents place a high value on their Green Belt and would like it protected from development and for future generations. The overall aspiration is to make the history, heritage, and green openness of Bedmond more accessible to residents and visitors.

### 3. Spatial Strategy: Spatial Strategy and Housing

- 3.1. Bedmond village is located to the north of the centre of the parish, just north of the M25, which runs east-west through the parish. The core of the village is concentrated in the east of the parish, which is where the main facilities such as the Post Office, the village stores, the school, the church and the recreation ground can be found. There are also parts of the village to the very east that fall within the neighbouring City and District of St Albans. To the west, residential development extends along Toms Lane, before reaching the railway line.
- 3.2. Currently, the village is washed over by Green Belt. This is highly valued by the local community, who consider that the village, when considered in its entirety and bearing in mind its open spaces, contribute significantly to the open character of the surrounding landscape, with permeability into it.
- 3.3. The emerging Local Plan for Three Rivers District requires a significant uplift in housing numbers to be delivered to 2038. The district is heavily constrained, with 76% of area of the district located in Green Belt land. Consequently, TRDC commissioned a Green Belt Review to understand whether parcels of Green Belt might be released to enable development. This has explored options to amend Green Belt boundaries, in addition to amending the existing settlement boundaries.
- 3.4. The residents of Bedmond strongly support retaining the washing-over of Green Belt for Bedmond village. As the emerging Local Plan has not yet been adopted, and in fact has yet to reach an advanced stage, the ALNP supports this approach in Policy AL1 (Location and Scale of Development).
- 3.5. Other comments received relating to housing:

| Issue raised   | How to address  |
|--|---|
| Ensuring that housing meets the needs of a range of users. | This can be considered in the Housing Mix policy and within Design. |

#### 4. Local Character, Heritage, and Design

4.1. The following issues and comments have been received through the various consultation methods.

| Issue raised   | How to address  |
|--|---|
| <p>Ensuring that any new development is in-keeping with local character.</p>   | <p>The ALNP provides an opportunity to define what is meant by 'local character' at a neighbourhood level.</p> <p>Pimlico and Bedmond have been identified collectively as a Character Area. See the <a href="#">Abbots Langley Design Guidance and Codes</a> for further information: The associated Policy requires development proposals to use the advice contained in the guide when considering issues such as materials, colour, layout, height, density etc. This will ensure that they are in-keeping with local character, although will not prevent innovative design, for instance where this is delivered to a high quality and promotes sustainable design.</p> |
| <p>Bedmond has a rich history and a large archive of photos which are often displayed at Local events. The site of Breakspear Farm, Holy Well and surrounding Nature Reserve are historically important to Bedmond and its residents. The aspiration is to promote awareness of Bedmond's history by the creation of history boards and a statue/memorial to Nicholas Breakspear/Pope Adrian IV to be placed in a central location accessible to residents and visitors.</p> | <p>Displays of photos and other information related to the history of the village can be included as a non-policy action.</p> <p>Policy AL8 (Village centres) will also touch on public realm improvements and the public art/statue can be supported here, as well as the use of display boards and materials to enable the celebration of local heritage.</p>   |
| <p>Mapping the Archaeology of our Parish. Bedmond has a history stretching back to the Palaeolithic times evidenced by local finds and remains of roman roads.</p> <p>With its close proximity to the major Iron Age/Celtic and Roman settlements at St Albans, the archaeology of the Village needs to be systematically explored, documented and researched.</p>   | <p>Policy AL7 (Conserving buildings and structures important to local character) includes clauses on the conservation and preservation of local heritage assets (including below ground deposits). It is supported by a map which identifies known assets, including archaeological areas.</p> <p>If further mapping needs to be undertaken, this can be included as a non-policy action.</p>   |
| <p>Protection of sites. Mapping sites of importance to ensure that all local historically important sites and buildings are listed and protected.</p>  | <p>Policy AL7 (Conserving buildings and structures important to local character) provides information about how both designated (i.e. listed) and non-designated heritage assets should be considered within planning proposals. It is supported by a map.</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Bedmond High St has listed cottages and buildings such as the old White Hart Public House, the Bell Pub and the unique Church of the Ascension.</p> <p>Explore with residents the possibility and the implications of Bedmond High St becoming a Conservation Area.</p>                                | <p>Currently, it references the Historic Environment Record with regards non-listed assets that should be considered as non-designated heritage assets for the purpose of applying the policy. If there are unlisted assets (buildings/ structures) in Bedmond that you want to explicitly name as a non-designated heritage asset in the ALNP, this can be achieved, if we can demonstrate that it is of local historical importance. At the moment, none have been identified across the Parish, so it's included as an associated action (see note further down).</p> <p>This falls outside the scope of the ALNP, but can be included as a non-policy action.</p> |
| <p>Provide new local history walks and promote existing ones, in partnership with the Abbots Langley Local History Society.</p> <p>Suggestion of a Pope Adrian IV trail, which in turn might attract more visitors to Bedmond.</p>  | <p>This could be included as a non-policy action.</p>   |
| <p>A number of residents support the idea for a permanent memorial, Pope Adrian IV – as the only English Pope, who was born in Bedmond.</p>   | <p>As noted above, this can be included in the villages policy.</p>   |
| <p>The character of Bedmond village could be protected through the identification of a conservation area and by setting out other development management policies.</p>  | <p>A conservation area cannot be designated through the ALNP, so this would need to be identified as a 'non-policy action' and pursued separately. Further information about how to do this can be found on the <a href="#">Historic England website</a>.</p>   |
| <p>Can design include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hedgehog friendly fencing</li> <li>- Bird and bat boxes</li> <li>- Swift boxes</li> <li>- Protecting any water features on site</li> </ul> <p>Houses with roofs and gables should have boxes for birds e.g. sparrows and swallows</p> | <p>Yes, this can be included in policy.</p>   |

**Buildings and Structures identified that could be nominated as non-designated heritage assets:**

- Holy Well – an important historical asset. Site of Breakspear Farm, Holy Well and surrounding Nature Reserve
- Site of Bedmond House/Twychells Farm – listed as a monument with Hertfordshire HER & St Albans UAD
- Long Wood/ the Kings Langley Estate north of the M25 - interest in terms of flint tools and other archaeological finds is designated as archaeological site and Local Wildlife Site.
- The Bell Pub (already listed)
- The Church of the Ascension (already listed)

**5. Of the list above, the ALNP includes the Holy Well as a non-designated heritage asset.**

## 5. Local Economy

5.1. The following issues and comments have been received through the various consultation methods.

| Issue raised  | How to address   |
|---|--|
| <p>The Bell Public House is the last remaining pub in Bedmond. It is the oldest public house in the Parish being built in 1618. It is an important historical feature of the Village as a listed building. It is part of the view of the Old High Street, integrated with the listed cottages on the east side, which is the oldest remaining section of the High St and provides a coherent view of Old Bedmond. It is also popular with residents and must be retained as a public house.</p> | <p>Policy AL17 seeks to protect the loss of public houses and The Bell is explicitly mentioned in the supporting text.</p> |
| <p>Try to enhance the village centre as a local hub for the community – shop, pub, church, café, village hall etc. A location for a range of shops, café, community space etc. to complement the existing ones, whilst providing another location for a modern new premises, would be supported.</p>  | <p>Policy AL8 includes a clause on Bedmond seeking to support its role in delivering a range of roles and functions.</p>   |
| <p>Is there support for a public house/ community meeting space in Pimlico?</p>   | <p>Can be supported through Policy AL17, although will require someone to propose it as a business.</p>                    |

## 6. Natural Environment

6.1. The following issues and comments have been received through the various consultation methods.

| Issue raised   | How to address  |
|--|---|
| <p>Mapping the existing biodiversity of Bedmond and creating a strategy to enhance this. Rewilding appropriate areas if necessary.</p> <p>Mapping of habitats and wildlife corridors including hedgerows for all wildlife and protect these habitats so that wildlife are able to move freely and prevent fragmentation of habitats.</p> <p>Protection of Hedgerows. The restoration of hedgerows for wildlife and also for natural flood control.</p> <p>Mapping and protecting increasingly rare meadow habitats.</p> <p>Mapping the Geology of Bedmond. Mapping, monitoring and protecting the springs, ponds, seasonal bournes and the aquifer. Monitoring the water table to ensure that any problems are dealt with.</p> | <p>Policy AL12 (Green and blue infrastructure) maps out various aspects of the natural environment of the parish.</p> <p>If there are particular areas where biodiversity could be improved (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas), these can be explicitly named in the policy.</p> <p>Included in AL11.</p> |
| <p>Important natural features that are characteristic in Bedmond:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water sources such as Ponds, Springs and Seasonal bournes</li> <li>- Aquifer</li> <li>- Trees – including mature trees dating back to at least 1880</li> <li>- Hedgerows – East Lane, Millhouse Lane, Serge Hill Lane, Farmland behind Church Hill</li> </ul>   | <p>Can be expressly noted in the policy as important features that are not already afforded a level of protection.</p>  |
| <p>Exploring opportunities for growing shared food supplies.</p>   | <p>This would be included as a non-policy action.</p>   |
| <p>Mapping the veteran Trees listed on the Ordnance Survey Map c1880. Ensuring that all veteran and significant trees in Bedmond are mapped and protected.</p>   | <p>There is a section dedicated to trees and woodland (including ancient woodland) in Policy AL12.</p> <p>Mapping may need to be undertaken as a separate community project.</p>  |

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| <p>Bedmond is part of Natural England’s Chiltern Landscape Area 110 and the Bedmond Plateau. The Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundaries are currently under review. Explore opportunities for Bedmond to be included in the Chilterns AONB as it shares similar characteristics and the current Chiltern AONB boundary is not far.</p> | <p>This would be a separate piece of work requiring discussion with the AONB.</p>  |
| <p>Countryside Code. Raising awareness of the Countryside Code with a multi agency approach including education and possible signage and nature interpretation boards in key locations. Educating those accessing the Rights of Way network about nature, wildlife and livestock.</p>   | <p>Non-policy action.</p>  |
| <p>Three Rivers District Council’s Local Plan proposed Site CFS56. This site is an historical meadow habitat with indicator species which would designate it as a wildflower meadow. Meadow habitats are increasingly rare and this site needs protecting for its biodiversity and value to the community.</p>  |  |
| <p>Flower and tree planting. Replacement trees. Planters with appropriate planting under the Breakspear signs in Bedmond would provide a pleasant and welcoming experience for residents and those travelling through the Village.</p>  |  |
| <p>Community land. A village green or area for residents to enjoy for recreation would be good. Should a central space become available on Bedmond High Street or close to the Village centre, create a village green, square or outdoor general meeting space.</p>   |  |
| <p>Farming/land use. Bedmond has a large amount of arable land which has been farmed for centuries. Work with local farmers/landowners to explore joint working on local food production, enhancing and increasing biodiversity and natural flood control.</p>  |  |
| <p>Using phrases such as ‘A breath of fresh air’ and “A space to breathe’ within the Plan (noted in relation to Horsefield and Ovaltine Farm land, but relevant to the wider area).</p>   | <p>These can be woven in, particularly when describing the Local Green Spaces and green/blue infrastructure network.</p> |
| <p>Community planting / guerrilla gardening.</p>  | <p>Can be supported.</p>   |
| <p>Concern about the degradation of farming fields. What might be done to improve them? In</p>  | <p>This could be identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area.</p>  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>particular the Wellcome Trust land is mentioned.<br/>Can it be improved for wildlife?</p>  |  |
| <p>Flooding has been raised by a number of residents. Both in the fields, which are in flood plain, impacts on footpaths and some roads, including Water Lane.</p> <p>Also along the River Gade, the canal side can leak and gets blocked and backed up.</p>  | <p>Potential to include a flood policy, which would seek to ensure that the smaller streams and watercourses (which often fall below the radar of environment agency mapping) are taken into consideration by development proposals.</p> |
| <p>Important wildlife in the parish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wide range of birds in the parish – need to protect these. Including birds of prey – supported by the field pattern.</li> <li>- Foxes</li> <li>- Badgers</li> <li>- Deer, muntjacs</li> <li>- Dormice, fieldmice, shrews</li> <li>- Butterflies, moths, bees pollinators</li> <li>- Invertebrates</li> <li>- Insects</li> </ul> <p>Bedmond has a long established skylark breeding area in the fields on the Welcome Trust Land adjacent to Moor Wood. Skylarks and farming exist side by side.</p> | <p>These can support the biodiversity policy.</p>  |

**Potential spaces to be safeguarded from inappropriate development:**

| <b>Local Space</b>  | <b>Comment</b>   |
|---|--|
| <p>Horsefield – CFS56</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A wild' area</li> <li>• Open space reminiscent of the past</li> <li>• Retain as space for people to visit</li> <li>• Breath of fresh air</li> </ul> <p>This site is an historical meadow habitat with indicator species which would designate it as a wildflower meadow. Meadow habitats are increasingly rare and this site needs protecting for its biodiversity and value to the community.</p> | <p>The site is an historical meadow and could be considered for designation as a Local Green Space in terms of character and also biodiversity. Whilst the site is not publicly accessible, it does have public footpaths running along two sides and the Bedmond Road pavement on one side. The views onto the site are greatly valued by the community.</p> <p>This is one of the sites identified in the Local Plan for potential allocation. The mechanism for challenging the site is the Local Plan process. It is highly unlikely that an Examiner would wish to pre-empt the Local Plan process by designating the space as a Local Green Space.</p> |
| <p>Area of the Ovaltine Farm between Toms Lane and Abbots Langley</p>   | <p>This is too large a space to designate as a Local Green Space.</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 'wild' area</li> <li>• Open space reminiscent of the past</li> <li>• Retain as space for people to visit</li> <li>• Breath of fresh air</li> </ul> | As above.   |
| Primrose Hill Playing Fields  | <p>This would appear to be a good candidate for a Local Green Space designation.</p> <p>Description on the PC website: Primrose Hill has a play area and fields available for walkers only. No football is permitted on these playing fields as the ground is too uneven due to an infestation of moles.</p> <p>It has been included in the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Green Space.</p> |
| Bedmond Playing Fields, Toms Lane   | This has been included in the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Green Space.   |
| The site of Breakspear Farm, Holy Well and nature reserve   | Holy Well has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset in the Submission Version ALNP.  |
| Longspring Wood   | This has been included in the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan as a Local Green Space.   |
| The Spinneys close to Rights of Way 17 and 18, Bedmond  | This has not been included as a Local Green Space.  |
| Moor Wood, Bedmond  | This has not been included as a Local Green Space. It is ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. The whole site is covered by TPOs.   |
| Local Wildlife Site, Toms Lane, Bedmond   | This was a former gravel pit (and possibly contaminated land) owned by TRDC and designated as a Local Wildlife Site.  |
| The Kings Langley Estate north of M25 including Long Wood   | Owned by the Wellcome Trust and farmed. This is too large to be a Local Green Space. Long Wood is a Local Wildlife Site.  |
| Land adjacent to No.40 Church Hill  | This is TRDC land, which has a proposal for a wildlife site but is not yet designated.  |
| Land behind High Street Cottages, Bedmond   | A former residential garden with TPOs. Private, fenced land. This has not been included as a Local Green Space.   |
| Corner of Bell Lane   | This has been included as a Local Green Space.  |

Locally significant views are described in Appendix G of the Neighbourhood Plan. The following buildings and lanes have been identified as contributing to the character of the local area:

**Area: Pimlico**

**Buildings**

|                              |
|------------------------------|
| The Swan Pub and Cottages    |
| Bourzuei (Formerly Roseacre) |
| Pimlico House, Harthall Lane |

**Area: Bedmond**

**Buildings**

|   |
|---|
| Church of the Ascension   |
| The former White Hart Pub   |
| Serge Hill Estate buildings                                       |
| High Street Cottages  |
| The Bell Pub  |
| The former Green Man Pub  |
| East Lane corner – cottages                                       |
| Old houses, Bedmond Road  |
| Site of Breakspear Farm, Holy Well and surrounding Nature Reserve |

**Lanes**

|                |
|----------------|
| Hyde Lane      |
| Harthall Lane  |
| Sergehill Lane |
| Millhouse Lane |
| Toms Lane      |
| East Lane      |
| Bell Lane      |

**Views**

|  |
|--|
| Footpath 18 - View of the Horsefield from Footpath 18 and the Bedmond Road   |
| View of fields across to Harthall Lane from Footpaths 18, 17, 14 and 16      |
| Farmland and Spinneys from Footpaths 18, 17, 14 and 16                       |
| Footpath 18 to Bluebell Drive (CFS75)  |
| Church of the Ascension and former White Hart Pub                            |
| Bedmond Playing Fields, Toms Lane  |
| View from the Bedmond Playing fields towards Abbots Langley from Footpath 22 |
| Footpath 22  |
| Toms Lane, View across fields to Harthall Lane                               |
| Corner of Bell Lane and Bell Lane  |
| Bell Lane  |
| Footpath 55 and 56, Twychells Farm leading to Poppy Fields                   |

**Area: Gade Valley**

**Buildings**

|   |
|---|
| Primrose Hill Cottages, Bell Pub and Old Chapel |
|---|

|                          |
|--------------------------|
| Railway Terrace Cottages |
| Numbers Farm             |
| Old Ovaltine Factory     |
| Railway Bridges          |
| Kings Langley Station    |

**Wildlife Sites:**

Moor Wood, Toms Lane, Bedmond

Local Wildlife Site, Toms Lane, Bedmond


The Land adjacent to No 40 Church Hill has also been proposed as a Local Wildlife Site by Three Rivers District Council.

### **Locally significant views - Bedmond**

The ancient and historical Village of Bedmond lies in the Bedmond Plateau and Chiltern Landscape Area which is characterised by a gently undulating landscape of small to medium-sized arable fields and meadows which gives a coherent and settled appearance defined by its long history of a number of traditional farms. The iconic “Tin Church” (Church of the Ascension), traditional Public House and the charming old High Street cottages at the core of the Village are nestled within this Green Belt landscape of fields, ancient lanes and woodlands which gives easy access to the many footpaths which afford the expansive views in all directions.

The village is surrounded by a wealth of panoramas. The following views are considered to hold particular local importance, being much loved by residents and visitors alike. Many of these views also contribute to the wider heritage and natural environment, representing diverse wildlife habitats and are therefore worthy of protection.

The views considered important here are shown below. Some of these are detailed in Policy AL12 of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

| Ref | Name of view and description and photo  |
|-----|---|
| 1   | <p data-bbox="248 272 1205 304"><u>View of the Poppy Field and Potters Crouch Plantations from Footpath 55</u></p> <p data-bbox="248 352 2033 539">This view has multiple attractive angles. The view from Footpath 55 encompasses the farmland north to Pimlico with the Potters Crouch plantations on the right. The arable field which is also visible from the Bedmond Road occasionally has spectacular seasonal displays of field poppies drawing locals and visitors alike. The elevated view from this area of the Bedmond Road just south of Pimlico gives a stunning view back across this vale of fields towards woodland which stretches from the Bedmond Road to the Potters Crouch plantation enclosing the village of Bedmond.</p> <p data-bbox="248 587 1906 655">The hamlet of Potters Crouch beyond is a conservation area: <a href="http://stalbans.gov.uk">CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT POTTERS CROUCH (stalbans.gov.uk)</a></p>  |
| 2   | <p data-bbox="248 1074 770 1106"><u>View from Footpath 55, Twychells Farm</u></p> <p data-bbox="248 1153 2040 1340">A wild area which was historically Twychells Farm and the site of Bedmond House but now a valuable open stretch of land of trees and meadow where wild life and vegetation can develop naturally and provide a refuge for wildlife. The view is from Footpath 55 which is a delightful path which follows on from Footpath 56 with its entrance on St Albans Lane leading to the Poppy Field (view no 1). Footpath 55 and 56 are very attractive paths shaded by mature mixed hedgerows and bordered by woodland, paddocks and the meadow lands of Twychells Farm.</p>  |



3 View from Footpath 9 to Nash Mills and Highwoodhall Lane, north Pimlico.

Footpath 9 is a pretty winding footpath lined with woods, fields and farmland leading to the panoramic views across open farmland and woodland towards Highwoodhall Lane in the north of Pimlico and sloping gently downhill west towards the valley of the Gade River and settlement of Nash Mills. Several listed buildings surround this site and the wooded area to the right is the local wildlife site of New Plantation.



4 View of the Horsefield, Church Hill from Footpath 18

The field which borders the Bedmond Road and Footpath 18 known locally and affectionately as the Horsefield, is a very attractive undulating historical meadow full of wildflowers, wildlife and majestic Oaks, the very epitome of a pastoral landscape important both for wildlife and the community. It is a fine example of lowland meadow habitat with indicator species, also containing a pond which is evident on old maps and seasonal bournes which form an important wetland resource for wildlife. Footpath 18 which lines the southern

border of the meadow is a shady tree lined and very popular path which affords panoramic and ever-changing views of the Horsefield and gives interest through the seasons.



5 View from Footpath 14 of Farmland and Spinneys

Footpath 18 which borders the Horsefield continues onwards to cross open farmland to join Footpath 14 which together give extensive views across the fields north to Harthall Lane and west to Kings Langley.


Bedmond was historically a farming community and the Village continues to be surrounded by many of the traditional farms and farmland today. The fields north west of Bedmond which slope down towards the Gade Valley historically follow the pattern of the strip field system.

The view from Footpath 14 towards the two Spinneys, one of hornbeam which has beautiful mature trees and provides a peaceful place off the beaten track accessible to the walking public.

The farmland is lined with mature hedgerows and many mature trees including veteran oak trees.

The Spinneys and Hedgerows provide important wildlife habitats and corridors especially as this field borders a Local Wildlife site.




|   |   |
|---|---|
| 6 | <p><u>View from Footpath 18 towards Bedmond</u></p> <p>The view from Footpath 18 across arable land towards the settlement of Bedmond is beautifully encompassed by mature trees and hedgerows serving as a wind and visual break. These also provide important wildlife corridors across the expanse of open land particularly as the adjacent field is a Local Wildlife Site. Footpath 18 and its connecting path, 14 are very popular with walkers.</p>   |
| 7 | <p><u>View of the Church of the Ascension and the former White Hart Public House from the High Street/Church Hill</u></p> <p>The Church of the Ascension, affectionately known locally as the 'Tin Church' is a much loved historically important and unique Grade II listed building and one of the finest surviving examples still in use. It has a prominent position on the corner of Church Hill and Sergehill Lane in a beautiful green setting which comprises mature Yew, Oaks and mixed trees, The 'Tin Church' is a significant and very well known feature of the Village. The Churchyard is managed in accordance with the Living Churchyard Scheme providing a diverse habitat to benefit wildlife and an important wildlife corridor.</p> <p><a href="http://abbotslangley.org.uk">About The Church Of The Ascension   St Lawrence and Church Of The Ascension Bed (abbotslangley.org.uk)</a></p> <p>The former White Hart Public House is situated adjacent to the 'Tin Church' and may have been an ale house from 1733 until relatively recently is a distinctive and important local historical building.</p> |






8 View from Footpath 22 towards Leavesden

The land stretches out from the Bedmond playing fields along the tree and hedge lined Footpath 22 to meet Footpath 19, the Sheppeys Lane footpath and onto the extensive panoramic farmland of the former Ovaltine Farm, now the Kings Langley Estate.



|    |  |
|----|--|
| 9  | <p><u>View from Footpath 22 towards Kings Langley</u></p> <p>A break in the hedgerow bordering Footpath 22 affords a view of the rolling landscape of the historical farmland of the ‘Ovaltine Valley’ now the Kings Langley Estate as it unfolds towards Kings Langley in the west.</p>   |
| 10 | <p><u>View from Footpath 19 (Sheppeys Lane Footpath) north to Bedmond.</u></p> <p>Footpath 19 which is known as Sheppeys Lane footpath includes a section of the Hertfordshire Way. It affords panoramic views of undulating arable fields punctuated with woodland and hedgerows all along the path from the Bedmond Road downhill to the Gade River Valley towards Kings Langley. It is crossed by Footpaths 21 which provides a very pleasant route across the arable fields from Bedmond to Abbots Langley, also providing panoramic views of the same undulating landscape. The multiple footpaths in all directions are very popular with walkers throughout the year and were particularly vital during the COVID-19 Pandemic.</p> <p>The Kings Langley Estate is of historical interest as the former home of the Ovaltine Farm established in 1930. For its history see <a href="#">Kings Langley History Society</a>.</p> <p><u>Sheppeys Lane Footpath: view north across fields to Bedmond High Street</u></p> <p>Sheppeys Lane footpath runs across the expanse of the Kings Langley estate to the south of Bedmond. An attractive view from the start of the footpath near the Bedmond Road looking north affords a view of farmland, meadow and the modern houses at the beginning of Bedmond High Street which lie on the site of the historically important, Breakspear Farm, the birthplace of Nicholas Breakspear, Pope Adrian IV. <a href="http://www.allhs.org.uk/">http://www.allhs.org.uk/</a></p> |

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|           | <p>The view includes the woodland on the site of Breakspear Farm which contains a pond and springs including the historically important Holy Well which attracted pilgrimages until the 1950s and the verdant tree and hedgerow lined entrance to Bedmond from the south and a locally important building is in the vicinity.</p>   |
| <p>11</p> | <p><u>View near the top of Footpath 19 looking west to Kings Langley including Long Wood.</u></p> <p>This view across the Kings Langley estate near the top of Footpath 19 (Sheppeys Lane Footpath) looks west to Kings Langley offers extensive panoramic views of farmland punctuated by woodland including the ancient woodland and Local Wildlife Site of Long Wood. The site also contains a site of archaeological interest and there have been ancient finds across this landscape.</p> <p>Footpath 19 is also the Hertfordshire Way which is part of a network of footpaths that serve walkers access across open land with extensive views of wooded areas and farmland made interesting by the changing variety of crops bordered by wildflowers and veteran oak trees and a resident population of skylarks.</p>  |
| <p>12</p> | <p><u>View near the bottom of Footpath 19 looking towards Toms Lane, Bedmond and Kings Langley.</u></p> <p>The views across open undulating farmland to the settlement of Toms Lane, Bedmond, to the right and Kings Langley to the left which are very popular with walkers and joggers.</p>   |

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| 13 | <p><u>View from the permissive path to Numbers Farm and Toms Lane.</u><br/>An impressive view of the very attractive collection of listed buildings of Numbers Farm which sits on an elevated site overlooking the Gade Valley from the permissive path which runs along the bottom of the hill and all surrounded by the farmland of the former Ovaltine Dairy Farm now the Kings Langley Estate.</p>  |  |
| 14 | <p><u>View from the High Street of the corner of Bell Lane and Bell Lane</u><br/>A delightful little area of grass and mature trees is situated on the corner of an unmade road, Bell Lane with places to sit giving a feel of a small village green right adjacent to the old Bell Public House.</p>  |  |



15 View of Strawberry Field, Bell Lane

A lovely open meadow with some trees adjoining a woodland footpath which links Bell Lane to Millhouse Lane. It is situated adjacent to the ancient woodland of Piecorner Wood and the wooded area behind the listed old houses of the High Street.



16 View from Long Spring Wood to Abbots Langley

Long Spring Wood is a small pretty woodland owned as a Local Wildlife Site by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust which lies on the edge of the Kings Langley Estate [Longspring Wood | Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust \(hertswildlifetrust.org.uk\)](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk). The back of the wood gives wide and open views across the land to Abbots Langley.



17 View of Bedmond Road looking north towards Pimlico.

A road with views all along its length of open fields on both sides which change colour with the seasons, some stretching to the horizon with scattered dwellings with mature gardens. The hedgerow and tree lined entrance to Bedmond gives a rural character and pleasant experience on entering the Village.



18 View of Bedmond Road looking north towards Bedmond

This view includes the attractive wooded, tree and established hedgerow lined entrance to Bedmond with glimpse of fields on either side, which provide a rural feel on entering the Village along the Bedmond Road from Abbots Langley.



19 View of Millhouse Lane.

An attractive Lane with characterful trees bordered by several woods and the ancient woodland and Local Wildlife site of Piecorner Wood. The winding lane continues on to farmland and provides access to multiple footpaths through varied landscapes much enjoyed by walkers passing some of the historical Estate farms.



20

View of Sergehill Lane/St Albans Lane.

A very attractive mixed deciduous hedge and tree lined lane which gives interest throughout the seasons and historically linked the village of Bedmond with the Serge Hill Estate which owned the Village from approx. 1700s to 1919.



21 View of Cottages and the Bell Public House, Bedmond High Street.

This view consists of the old High Street including the Bell Public House which is the oldest Public House in the Parish dating from 1618 and a mixture of houses in various styles which have developed over many years.

The terrace of cottages on the east side of the High Street (no's 22 – 52) are probably some of the oldest houses in the village and are good examples of well preserved vernacular cottages which are listed and locally important buildings. Many were part of the workers cottages attached to the nearby Serge Hill Estate which owned the Village and some of the surrounding traditional farms until 1919. Number 25 is a good example of a regency cottage and originally had a handsome garden laid out with specimen trees and plants.



Photos credit: C Gardner

22. View from Footpath 34 (St Stephens Bridleway O4) towards East Lane and Leavesden Country Park.

A very attractive ancient Lane with restricted traffic access and very popular with walkers throughout the seasons, which connects with the history and leisure facilities of Leavesden Country Park and other footpaths through farmland. The Lane is bordered by old and interesting trees, mixed hedgerows, farmland, meadows and the Local Wildlife Site of Great Notley. A variety of attractive old cottages and a former Public House, The Green Man are situated at and near the entrance to the Lane.



23. View of Longspring Wood, Toms Lane.

The site is located behind houses in Toms Lane and borders gardens to the East and West and the Kings Langley Estate to the south. It is a peaceful location in which to enjoy the circular path around the woods and affords extensive views across the Green Belt land of the Kings Langley Estate looking south towards Abbots Langley.

The site is important for wildlife and designated as a Local Wildlife Site managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Information from their website: [Longspring Wood | Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust \(hertswildlifetrust.org.uk\)](https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk)



## 7. Leisure and Community

7.1. The following issues and comments have been received through the various consultation methods.

| Issue raised by a member of the community  | How to address  |
|--|---|
| <p>Desire for a café to be provided in Bedmond.</p> <p>Need to explore options to have a cafe in Bedmond such as using existing venues to provide a Cafe facility/meeting place during the day.</p> <p>Internet Cafe and quiet place for people working from home to work with others.</p>   | <p>Policy AL15 sets out support for new, expanded, and/or shared community facilities. The policy is most helpful where it is specific.</p> <p>We can mention specific projects in the policy, which would then be supported (subject to other policies) should they come forward in proposals.</p> <p>An associated action would be to explore with current venue providers scope to deliver this.</p> |
| <p>More public seating in key locations in Bedmond.</p> <p>Seats/benches could be located by the Bus Stops to provide more comfortable seating waiting for the Bus, and in key locations around the Village to provide rest for walkers.</p> <p>The Bus Stop at Church Hill going North has no seating or a shelter despite being opposite Newlands Mobile Home site which has approx. 70 residences.</p>  | <p>This can be explicitly mentioned in Policy AL22 in respect of bus stops.</p> <p>It could also be identified, more generally, in the section setting out priorities for infrastructure investment.</p>  |
| <p>The COVID Pandemic has made the necessity for outdoor meeting spaces essential. Find ways to increase the versatility of outdoor spaces and add necessary utilities and facilities for potential use as performance areas, outdoor cinema, group meeting places etc.</p>  | <p>This can be explicitly mentioned in Policy AL15 and AL8 (village centres)</p>  |
| <p>Extending the village hall to provide additional facilities including shared office hub and homeworking centre. This could use the space currently available at the end of the car park.</p> <p>Potential to consider the French Mediatec System as an example of good practice: shared space with library facility, staffed by small team who rotate round sites in other small villages. Space is equipped with 2/4 computers and one linked printer. Staff assist drop-in visitors (no charge no appointment) who don't have computers etc or who need to produce docs</p> | <p>This is helpful to detail to include in a policy but would need to be discussed with the village hall committee.</p>   |

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| professionally.<br>Reading space provided - current newspapers provided.  |  |
| Find a suitable space for a communal garden for growing vegetables etc.<br>Space for allotments and community growing areas.  | Including detail in the allotments policy.   |
| More community gatherings – bridge, craft sessions, speakers, social events – make better use of the Church and Village Hall.   | This could provide useful supporting text in relation to expanding the village hall and providing additional shared community spaces (including outdoor ones). Also suited to a non-policy action. |
| Need to encourage greater civic pride – e.g. less littering. Better road cleaning.  | Non-policy action also partially falls to the local authority and highways authority.  |
| Primrose Hill Playing Field Project   | Can be included in the Plan.   |
| Events making use of the playing fields.  | This can be supported.   |
| Making optimum use of what already exists for community benefit – e.g. the sports and social club needs to be more integrated into the community. Potential for a café during the day with outdoor seating. | Noted.<br>This can be mentioned within Policy AL15.  |
| Place seating in strategic locations around the village, including one or two on the little green next to The Bell.   | Noted as an action.  |
| Explore the possibility of outdoor gym equipment on the Playing Fields.   | Noted as an action.  |

## 8. Transport and Movement

8.1. The following issues and comments have been received through the various consultation methods.

| Issue raised   | How to address   |
|--|--|
| <p>Accommodating electric charging points for dwellings without drives or hard standing areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Space around the back of bluebell drive</li> <li>- Car sales</li> <li>- Newlands mobile home site</li> <li>- The Bell</li> <li>- Sports and Social Club</li> <li>- Bedmond Stores</li> <li>- Layby near to the Breaskpear plaque along Toms Lane</li> </ul>  | <p>This is included in Policy AL5 (Design of Development), which requires development proposals to incorporate electric vehicle charging points (both cars and bikes).</p> <p>Policy AL22 includes a requirement for public parking to provide charging points. Particular locations in the parish can be identified.</p> <p>We also promote the installation of such facilities, where this can be accessed by the local community.</p> |
| <p>The Rights of Way network in Bedmond is very extensive with many walks in all directions and on the Kings Langley Estate including the Hertfordshire Way.</p> <p>Most residents live next to or very near a footpath.</p> <p>Monitoring and managing the Rights of Way to ensure they are kept open and well managed.</p> <p>Working with the Local Authorities, landowners, Rights of Way volunteers, Footpath Wardens, residents and walkers to prevent and manage problems such as fly tipping, littering, overgrown vegetation, dog fouling, dogs causing problems with livestock and ensuring wildlife and livestock are protected.</p> <p>Ensure paths are well signed.</p> | <p>These are mapped to support an active travel strategy.</p> <p>New development must connect to an existing pavement or right of way.</p> <p>This is a non-policy community action.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>Included in the active travel policy and as an associated action.</p>   |
| <p>The ever-increasing volume, speed and noise of traffic through Bedmond is a problem which blights the Village. Crossing the Bedmond Road at points along the High St and Church Hill down to the Newlands Mobile Home Park is becoming increasingly difficult and unpleasant experience. To improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life for residents in reducing noise and air</p>   | <p>Much of this sits outside the scope of the ALNP, however, the Active Travel policy will help to ensure that shorter journeys can be undertaken by means other than by car.</p> <p>Traffic calming can be investigated as a non-policy action.</p>   |

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| <p>pollution and making the roads safer to cross to access the Village facilities, it is necessary to explore a range of traffic calming measures including 20mph through Bedmond, possibly Quiet Lanes (which balance the needs of cars with pedestrians, cyclists and horseriders) for Serge Hill Lane and Millhouse Lane especially as these lanes are used by residents, popular with walkers and have no pavements, options for Toms Lane and more pedestrian crossings and refuges (traffic islands). This needs to be coordinated and integrated so as not to cause problems on surrounding roads and areas.</p>   |   |
| <p>Bedmond is generally well served by one North - South bus connection with stops along the Bedmond Road to provide access to Watford and Hemel Hempstead. This bus is hourly after around 7pm which makes evening travel more restrictive. Toms Lane has a very limited bus service with one bus a day.</p> <p>Provision of East – West bus connections would be beneficial to provide improved connectivity between Bedmond, Abbots Langley and Kings Langley and also to St Albans. Improved access to Abbots Langley Village and Kings Langley centres including Kings Langley Station would be beneficial generally for better access to the GP Surgery and other services especially for those with mobility issues, disabilities and those reliant on public transport as the bus stop is situated some distance from the centre of Abbots Langley on the Bedmond Road.</p> <p>Improvements to public transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better east-west connections to access St Albans and Kings Langley</li> <li>- Regular circular bus routes</li> <li>- Better connection to Abbots Langley Village centre to access healthcare and other facilities</li> <li>- Regular bus along Toms Lane needed</li> <li>- Bus access to Kings Langley Railway Station</li> </ul> | <p>Public transport again falls outside the remit of the ALNP, however Policy AL22 seeks to address some of this through developer contributions and the Bedmond situation has been added to the supporting text.</p> |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Better evening service – the Bedmond bus is hourly from 7pm</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p>To maintain and promote East Lane as a route for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Also Bedmond Lane, Serge Hill, Hyde Lane and Harthall Lane.</p>  | <p>Policy AL21 of the ALNP seeks to promote active travel in the parish. It is supported by a map that will set out the public rights of way and key movement routes. It will also show where specific improvements can be made. It could lead to a separate but associated project for the parish to produce a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP).</p> |
| <p>We need to improve the cycle network.</p>   | <p>It would be helpful to understand what the issues are and where improvements can be made. At the very least the ALNP can support this and an associated action could be the CWIP as noted above.</p>  |
| <p>Speeding traffic is a problem, in particular along Toms Lane.</p>   | <p>We cannot address speeding through planning policy, however we are seeking to reduce car usage locally by promoting active travel for shorter journeys. Traffic controls and enforcement would need to be considered as part of the non-policy actions.</p>   |
| <p>Safeguarding ancient lanes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- East Lane, Bedmond</li> <li>- Bell Lane (unmade road, bridlepath)</li> <li>- Milhouse Lane</li> <li>- Serge Hill Lane</li> </ul> | <p>For discussion with the Highways Authority.</p>   |

# **Appendix A:**

## **Three Rivers District Council Draft Local Plan 2021 Regulation 18 Consultation**

### **Statement by Jed Griffiths MA DipTP FRTPI On Behalf of Bedmond Residents' Association**

**August 2021**

## Introduction

1. This statement has been prepared by Jed Griffiths MA DipTP FRTPI on behalf of the Bedmond Residents' Association. It has been compiled in response to a consultation by Three Rivers District Council on a draft Local Plan under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012.
2. The Association notes that the consultation document is arranged in two parts. Comments on Part 1 Preferred Policy Options have been prepared separately by the Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association, of which Bedmond Residents' Association is a member. This statement focuses on Part 2 Sites for Potential Allocation, and the specific proposals for the village of Bedmond and the surrounding area. The first section is concerned with the proposal to remove the village from the Green Belt. The second responds to the proposed allocation of three sites for housing on the edge of the existing settlement. Specific questions in the consultation document are listed, where appropriate, under each sub-heading.

## Green Belt

Question 77: Do you agree with the revised Green Belt boundary to inset Bedmond and the reasons why? If not, please explain why.

3. Chapter 9 of the Part 2 consultation document sets out a proposal to revise Green Belt boundaries and to "inset" the village of Bedmond within the Green Belt. Reference is made to paragraph 140 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) and Stages 1 and 2 of the Three Rivers Green Belt Review. As stated in paragraphs 9.5 and 9.6 of the consultation document, the 2019 NPPF, now superseded by the 2021 version, required an analysis of settlements within the Green Belt to determine whether they should remain "washed over" by the Green Belt, in terms of helping to maintain its openness. If it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of its contribution to the openness of the Green Belt, then it should remain in the Green Belt. If the character of the village needs to be protected for other reasons, then there are other means which can be used, and the village should be excluded from the Green Belt. For the reasons set out in this statement, the Association firmly believes that the "washed over" status of Bedmond should not be changed, as it does make a significant contribution to the openness of the Green Belt.
4. The consultation document refers to the 2017 Stage 1 Green Belt Review for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough, which considered that the village of Bedmond "could be inset from the Green Belt by virtue of its size and density." The Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment 2019 contained a more detailed analysis of the "washed

over” settlement which examined the extent to which the release of different parcels of land would reduce the contribution to Green Belt purposes. As a result, the Part 2 consultation document now proposes that Bedmond should be inset from the Green Belt, as shown on the map on page 92.

5. Details of the results for Bedmond are shown on pages 119 – 139 of the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment. Nine areas (BM1 – BM9/AL10) are assessed against the harm which development would cause to the stated purposes of the Green Belt. The results are summarised in map form on page 119 of the Assessment. Not surprisingly, the two areas shown as “low” are Parcels BM1 and BM4, which are already developed. At the centre of the village, Parcel BM1 forms the bulk of the area which is proposed to be inset from the Green Belt.
6. In the Association’s view, the area of Parcel BM1 is too small to justify the proposal to inset Bedmond from the Green Belt. With the exception of Parcel BM4, it is acknowledged that the other seven parcels in and around the village do make a contribution to the openness of the Green Belt and the three purposes listed in the study. In adopting the “fine-grained” approach to the analysis, the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment fails to acknowledge the bigger picture and the strategic contribution that Bedmond and the surrounding area makes to the protection of the Green Belt between Abbots Langley and Hemel Hempstead. In this respect, it is clearly contradictory to the strategic analysis of the Green Belt, as set out in the 2017 Green Belt Review.
7. The significant contribution which Bedmond and the surrounding area makes to Green Belt purposes is clearly depicted on Figure 2 of the Stage 1 Review, and elaborated in the more detailed analysis in Appendix B4. Assessment of Parcels N7 – N11 concludes that these parcels all make a significant contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. It should be noted that the village of Bedmond is included in this analysis, being split between Parcels N7 and N11 along the Bedmond Road.
8. In Chapter 4 and Appendix C of the Stage 1 Review, there is a consideration of the Green Belt status of three villages within the Green Belt – Heronsgate, Sarratt, and Bedmond. In the settlement analysis, summarised in Table 4.1 of the report, only Bedmond is recommended to be inset from the Green Belt. In the detailed assessment in Appendix C, it is concluded by the consultants that the definition of a village envelope “could help to better define the role and longer term character of the village.”

9. It is also argued in Appendix C that Bedmond has a weak connection with its Green Belt. The Association cannot understand this conclusion. The core of the village has a mixture of wide green verges, large front gardens, a green open space, many trees, green lanes and is surrounded by open spaces and fields which contribute to a sense of openness and show the strong connection of the settlement to the Green Belt. Bedmond is a hilltop village – its residents and visitors generally enjoy extensive vistas of the surrounding Green Belt. Residents generally live close to an extensive network of footpaths, ancient lanes, and bridleways which facilitate access to the countryside. The Rights of Way network provides many benefits to the health and well-being of residents, and has seen increased usage during the Covid pandemic.
  
10. The map of Bedmond in Appendix C is incomplete as it does not include the eastern part of the village which lies within the City & District of St. Albans. It also excludes part of Toms Lane to the west. Compared to Sarratt and Heronsgate, which are depicted as entire settlements, the map does not give an accurate representation of Bedmond. By contrast, the strong relationship with the Green Belt can be seen from the appropriate Google Earth map. Apart from the large Green at Sarratt, there is very little difference between the two villages. In the section of the assessment of Bedmond entitled Presence of Open Space, it is wrongly stated there is “no formal open space”. In fact, the map does show the Bedmond Playing Fields, which are designated open space.
  
11. There are a number of other open areas which are important, including the open fields behind Bluebell Drive and those leading off from multiple footpaths around the core of the Village including those accessing the Kings Langley estate. Bedmond Road North and South have fields on both sides. From Serge Hill Lane, Millhouse Lane and East Lane, all ancient lanes with hedgerows, woodland and open fields are directly accessible from the High St.
  
12. The Association strongly disputes the assessment in Appendix C and the recommendations which have been carried through to the Stage 2 Green Belt Review and the Part 2 Site Allocations document. Although the centre of the village is of “relatively high density”, it is a small settlement – the 2011 Census recorded a population of 930 persons, compared to the population of Sarratt of 918 persons.
  
13. The NPPF 2021, at paragraph 142, states as follows:

*“When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries, the need to promote sustainable patterns of development should be taken into account. Strategic policy-*

*making authorities should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channelling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt...”*

14. In the Association’s view, it is clear from the Part 2 Site Allocations document that the addition of the three proposed housing sites would lead to an expansion of the settlement boundary which is shown on Page 92. From the NPPF, it is also beyond doubt that the policy status of Bedmond would be changed radically from a “washed over” settlement, where “limited infilling” may be permitted, to an inset village, within which there would be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In future reviews of the development plan, the village would be a focus for housing development, rather than an integral part of the Green Belt gap between Abbots Langley and Hemel Hempstead.
15. The area around Bedmond has been recognised for its high landscape quality. In Natural England’s National Character report it is located within the Chilterns Character Area 110, as it displays similar landscape features to the Chilterns. In the existing Three Rivers Local Plan, relevant policies are found in Policy DM7.
16. In the more detailed Hertfordshire Landscape Assessment, Bedmond is within Area 009 the Bedmond Plateau, which is described as “a gently undulating plateau area of small to medium-sized fields.” In terms of its visual and sensory perception, with the exception of the M25 - the area is generally well-concealed due to the elevated landform. It has a “coherent and unified character” as described in the Character Assessment.
17. In terms of its geography, Bedmond is on the edge of Three Rivers District – the administrative boundary with the City and District of St. Albans abuts the eastern side of the village. Historically, Bedmond has very strong connections with St. Albans. In the existing Local Plan for St. Albans, adopted in 1994, the rural area to the east of the village is also within the Green Belt. There have been several unsuccessful attempts to replace the Local Plan – the most recent review of 2018 was withdrawn after it failed to satisfy the Inspectors at the early stages of its examination. The City & District Council have now embarked on the preparation of a new Local Plan, which will have regard to the emerging South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan.
18. Part of the evidence base supporting the 2018 submission included a Green Belt Review for St. Albans, Welwyn Hatfield, and Dacorum, prepared by the consultants SKM Enviros in 2013. In the review, the consultants divided the study area into

Green Belt parcels, which were analysed against the purposes of the Green Belt. It was concluded that the area to the east of Bedmond (parcel 15) made a strong contribution to the purposes of the Green Belt. Consequently, it was not proposed for development in the 2018 submission Local Plan. It is recognised for its strong rural character, centred on the hamlet of Potters Crouch, and is part of an important tract of countryside to the west of St. Albans.

19. Historically, Bedmond has very strong connections with St. Albans. The village including surrounding farms were part of the Serge Hill estate. Due to the proximity of the boundary with St Albans District Council, the Association feels that insetting reinforces the division caused by the existing boundary between the authorities and would be divisive to the community.
20. Should the village become a focus for development, the Association is concerned that there would be an unacceptable strain on the road network, local services and facilities. Drainage and sewage systems are currently at capacity. Electricity pylons form part of an ageing network, which is in need of renewal. Bedmond is not well-served by public transport.
21. The argument for keeping Bedmond within the Green Belt is closely related to the characteristics of the three sites proposed for allocation. As described in the next section, each site possesses biodiversity, historical, and landscape values which should not be lost when less sensitive sites can be found elsewhere in the District. All three sites are on previously undeveloped land. They are composed of meadow and pastures, which contain critical habitats for flora and fauna and are an important part of the history of the village as a rural and farming community.
22. Bedmond is one of the communities covered by the emerging Abbots Langley Parish Neighbourhood Plan, the draft of which is, at the time of writing, out for public consultation. An objective of the Neighbourhood Plan Vision is “Protecting both the historical and environmental assets of the Parish, particularly its biodiversity, open spaces, and Metropolitan Green Belt.” In terms of the planning policy context for Bedmond, the plan states as follows:

*“Local residents believe that no major future new housing should be planned in the Parish until the capacity of its local public services associated with education, local health/social services and local transport networks are increased to meet adequately the current and any planned future demand. The local community place a high value on the area’s designated open spaces and Metropolitan*

*Green Belt land within the Parish. They do not want this land to be lost to development. However, there are undeveloped sites under consideration by the District Council for new housing in Abbots Langley that are located within designated Metropolitan Green belt land. Also, development in the Parish must take into account the impact of Climate Change, Brexit, and Covid-19 and make investment for the required adjustment in lifestyles and enhancing biodiversity.”*

## **Housing Sites**

### **Site CFS10: Land between Millhouse Lane and Bell Lane**

***Question 13: Do you agree that Site CFS10 is an appropriate development site? If not, please outline your reasons.***

23. The Association notes that this 1.2 hectare site is proposed for the development of specialised housing for the elderly, with a dwelling capacity estimated at 34 units. Located in the Green Belt on the eastern edge of the village, the site is currently open mown grassland in the ownership of the site promoter. Historical maps of Bedmond show the land as an open paddock, which in the past it has been used for the grazing of animals. Although there is housing adjoining the south western boundary of the site, and on the south side of Bell Lane, the land is surrounded predominantly by trees and woodland. To the north, Millhouse Lane defines the administrative boundary between the Districts of Three Rivers and St. Albans.
24. In the Stage 1 Green Belt Review (Appendix B4), the site was included in assessment parcel N11, which stated that *“Strategically, the land is part of the open countryside between Kings Langley/Watford and Hemel Hempstead.”* In the detailed analysis, the area was described as making a “significant contribution” to the Green Belt purpose of preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. In terms of protecting the countryside from encroachment, however, the contribution was ranked lower. Nevertheless, the overall assessment of the parcel to Green Belt purposes was a “significant contribution.”
25. By contrast, the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment (Appendix 1) assessed the harm to the Green Belt of releasing the wider parcel BM3, in which the site is located, as “moderate”. Although the impact on Purpose 3 (Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment) was rated as “Moderate-Relatively significant”, there was a “Limited-No contribution” to Purpose 2 (Merging of towns). The latter view was in direct contradiction to the assessment result in Stage 1. The Association

rejects the Stage 2 rating of “moderate” for parcel BM3, which should be higher. It follows that the proposed allocation of site CFS10 would clearly be contrary to the purposes of the Green Belt, in that it would encroach on the area of attractive wooded countryside to the east of the village. As acknowledged in the assessment of parcel BM3, its boundaries “to the east and north are all relatively well-defined by protected ancient woodland or other tree cover.” Despite the residential development to the south, the site is integral to the rural character of the area to the east of the village core.

26. Development of the site would be contrary to the aims of the NPPF 2021 which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment. In the view of the Association, the proposed development would lead to a severe deterioration of the protected trees and woodlands in the vicinity of the site, particularly Piecorner Wood, which is an Ancient Woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. The benefits of the development would not outweigh the damage to woodland habitats and the range of protected species of flora and fauna. To the north of the site, Millhouse Lane is bounded by ancient hedgerows which are also of conservation value. To the west, in close proximity to the site, there are the listed houses and locally-important buildings on the old part of the High Street. Adjacent land on the western border also contains protected trees.
27. Access to the site is proposed from Bell Lane, which is an unadopted and unmade road in very poor condition. Over the past twenty years, there has been an increase in business activity at the east end of the lane. This has led to a substantial amount of commercial traffic, which has caused considerable damage to the carriageway.
28. Historical maps of the area show that Bell Lane originated as a track leading to Ninnings Farm. In the current Hertfordshire Definitive Map of Footpaths, it is classified as a Statutory Bridleway, the status of which is protected in law. The proposed development would almost double the number of dwellings with access to Bell Lane. The consequent increase in traffic, compounded with the volume of visitors and service movements, would be well in excess of the capacity of Bell Lane.
29. In the site assessment, the Council acknowledge that Bell Lane should be upgraded, but the consequences of removing its legal status as a Bridle Way are very substantial. There are very significant queries too about connecting Rights of Way and the ownership of the lane which falls into two parts –the old Ninnings Drive at the east end, and Bell Lane at the west, connecting to the High Street. The legal and

technical difficulties of upgrading the lane would have a considerable harmful effect on local residents, who would still need to maintain it in the future.

30. The development would also affect users of a public footpath on the northern edge of the site, connected to Millhouse Lane, which leads to Millhouse Farm. At the extreme north-west corner of the site there is a gateway which has been unused for many years. Its suitability as an access point is questionable, however, as it is adjacent to a sharp bend in Millhouse Lane.

#### **Site CFS56: Church Hill**

***Question 14: Do you agree that Site CFS56 is an appropriate site for development? If not, please outline your reasons.***

31. This large 2.9 hectare site is located in the Green Belt beyond the north western edge of the village, to the west of Church Hill. It is in close proximity to listed buildings. Visually, it is a very open and undulating area, which slopes away from the edge of the village to the north. Historical records show that it was formerly part of the Serge Hill Estate, which owned most of Bedmond and the surrounding area until it was sold in 1919. Known locally as “the Horse Field”, it has been used for at least 50 years until the present day for the grazing of animals.
32. In the Stage 1 Green Belt Review (Appendix B4), the site was included in a large assessment parcel (N8), running from the Bedmond Road westwards to the Gade Valley. Although the parcel was stated generally to have an urban fringe character, it was considered overall to make a “significant” contribution to Green Belt purposes.
33. In 2019, the Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment considered the site as a separate parcel (BM6). Although its contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment was “relatively significant”, there was “limited-no contribution” to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. The overall harm to the Green Belt of releasing the land was stated as “moderate”. The Association fundamentally disagrees with this conclusion and believes that the site should be rated as “high”.
34. Development of this very prominent site would clearly be contrary to the overall aim of the Green Belt, which is to maintain its openness. It would also be harmful in terms of two key purposes of the Green Belt. First, it would severely encroach onto the open countryside beyond the village to the north. Second, housing expansion in this location would be detrimental to the purpose of protecting the Green Belt gap

between Abbots Langley and Hemel Hempstead. Contrary to the Stage 2 Review, development would have a significant impact on the adjacent Green Belt.

35. The Association believes that development of the site would have a severe effect on the quality of the landscape. In the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment, the land is within Area 009 the Bedmond Plateau. It is described as “a gently undulating plateau area of small to medium-sized fields.” In terms of its visual and sensory perception, with the exception of the M25, the area is generally well-concealed due to the elevated landform. It has a “coherent and unified character” as described in the Character Assessment.
36. The Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2019 describes the site as undulating grassland, with established vegetation on all boundaries. It reports that the area would be indicated as “higher sensitivity” but for some built development in adjacent areas. Nevertheless, the Association notes the references to the extensive public views into the site, which confirm its significance in landscape terms.
37. There are a number of protected trees in and around the site which contribute considerably to its rural character (Three Rivers Tree Protection Order 901). Development of the site would result in the removal of a number of these trees which form an attractive part of the village setting. A public right of way (Footpath 18), which runs along the southern boundary of the site, would also be affected. The mature veteran trees appear to be the last remaining trees depicted on a Victorian Ordnance Survey Map c1880 and as such need to be protected. The mature trees and other groups are part of a panorama of a pastoral landscape, with a constant unchanging view over time. The Association firmly believes that this continuity is much valued by the local community and needs to be protected for future generations.
38. The Abbots Langley Parish Tithe Map c1839 of Bedmond indicates that the site was an historical meadow. Within living memory, it has only ever been used for grazing and not cultivated. The evidence is also shown by the indicator species found there. In terms of its current biodiversity, a recent study by the Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC) has confirmed that the presence on the site of eleven grassland indicator species could be indicative of lowland meadow, a priority habitat listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. It would therefore be considered of principal importance for biodiversity. As the UK has lost 97% of its herb-rich meadows since the 1930s, the site should continue to be protected for its biodiversity. In the view of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, this site should be

treated as a Local Wildlife Site as the impacts would be significant in terms of the NPPF and Local Plan policies. In terms of Section 14 of the NERC Act 2006, there is an obligation to avoid development of the site. If that is not possible, then there should be compensation by the development of other sites as similar habitats.

39. Victorian Ordnance Survey maps show that on the south east corner of the site stood dwellings dating back to the sixteenth century which were replaced by modern housing in the 1970s. On the southern edge of the area, bordering Footpath 18, there are a number of mounds and undulations in the ground which could be of archaeological interest. Historical records, including the papers relating to the sale of the Serge Hill Estate in 1919, clearly show that this site was once part of the village.
  
40. There is no private access road to the site. It is assumed that access to the site would be directly from Church Hill, which is a busy C-class road linking Hemel Hempstead with Abbots Langley and the Watford area. Northbound traffic descends a steep hill from the centre of the village on a blind bend where there are issues of speeding beyond the 30 mph limit, as vehicles accelerate on leaving the village. There is a boundary gate on the western side of Church Hill, but it would be difficult, if not impossible, to establish the necessary 70 metre visibility splays at that location or at any point along the site boundary. Traffic between Hemel Hempstead and the Watford area along the Bedmond Road has increased considerably in recent years. Additional vehicular movements associated with over 70 dwellings would cause considerable conflicts on Church Hill, where local residents have been campaigning against speeding traffic for over 15 years. These problems are exacerbated by drivers using the village roads as a “rat run” to avoid congestion on the M1 or M25.
  
41. Problems of surface water flooding on the site have been acknowledged by the Council. Within the site there is a spring which is part of the springline or series of such springs which effectively circle the centre of the village. There are potentially three springs in the field. One flows down from the western edge to create and maintain the flow of water to a pond. The pond is recorded on historical maps and sometimes overflows to form a second pond. At times of heavy rainfall, water flows through the centre to collect as a pool in the north-east corner of the site to join another potential spring. On occasions this has also contributed to the flooding of the road at the bottom of Church Hill. The middle part of the field is always boggy over a large area. The slope of the land often accumulates surface water run-off from surrounding fields; there is also a watercourse in the field which could be classified as a seasonal bourne. These complex issues would need to be taken into consideration in any development proposal. Foundations to houses could impede the normal groundwater flows and cause localised flooding and excessive damp

within properties. There may also be impact on ground instability. Given the effects of climate change and the prospect of more extreme weather conditions, it is difficult to envisage how these problems could be overcome.

42. In the context of this site and others in Bedmond, there is a wider issue concerning water resources and water quality, which have not been considered fully by the Council and its consultants. There is a perched aquifer beneath the village. An original well, which would have served the houses on the southern edge of the site, still exists in one of the Church Hill gardens and takes water from the aquifer. Protecting the aquifer is of critical importance – if the impermeable layer were to be damaged during construction, it could result in subsidence problems for local properties. Damage to the aquifer could also have unforeseen consequences for the natural environment. The aquifer is a valuable water resource and should not be disturbed or damaged by development. According to the Environment Agency document Approach to Groundwater Protection (February 2018), Policy N8 states that “The Environment Agency will normally object in principle to any planning application for any development that may physically disturb an aquifer.”
43. Site CFS56 has a diverse habitat which also includes the wetland area – it supports a wide range of flora and fauna, including protected species. It supports many resident and visiting birds. It is in close proximity to a Local Wildlife Site and to Piecorner Wood which is an ancient woodland and a Local Wildlife Site. Together these areas form part of an important wildlife corridor which extends from the St. Albans Verulam Estate to Kings Langley and beyond, which should be conserved and protected.

#### **Site ACFS9e: Land West of Bedmond Road**

***Question15: Do you agree that Site ACFS9e is an appropriate development site? If not, please explain your reasons.***

44. This prominent one hectare site is located in the Green Belt beyond the southern edge of the village, on the west side of Bedmond Road. It is an open and sloping area, which until recently has been used for the grazing of a horse. In the summer of 2021, it was unused and covered with long grass.
45. In the Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment, the site was included as part of the much larger assessment parcel N7, extending westwards from Bedmond Road to the edge of Kings Langley. Notwithstanding some urban development, it was described as retaining characteristics of open countryside. Its overall contribution to Green Belt purposes was assessed as “significant.”

46. The Stage 2 Green Belt Review included the site in a smaller parcel (BM7) and assessed the overall harm to the Green Belt as “moderate-high”. Although its contribution to safeguarding the countryside from encroachment was “relatively significant”, it had a “limited-no contribution” to preventing neighbouring towns from merging into one another. This conclusion is contrary to the assessments of other parcels, both in the Stage 1 and 2 Reviews, which refer to the importance of the gap between Hemel Hempstead and Abbots Langley/Watford.
47. Accordingly, the Association considers that the site should have a “high” rating, as its development for housing would clearly be contrary to the overall aim of the NPPF 2021 which seeks to protect the openness of the Green Belt. In addition, the development would also contravene two key purposes of the Green Belt. First, it would encroach on an area of open countryside to the south and west of the village. Second, as an extension to the existing village envelope, it would compromise the Green Belt gap between Hemel Hempstead and Abbots Langley.
48. There are a number of protected trees in and around the site, especially on its western edges. Removal of trees on the site would be detrimental to its rural character. Woodland areas to the west and north-west are important wildlife habitats.
49. Beyond the north western edge of the site is the Holy Well, which was in the grounds of the former Breakspeare Farm, now within the boundary of the Bedmond Academy. Breakspeare Farm was significant as the birthplace of Nicholas Breakspeare, the only English Pope Adrian IV (1100-1154). The waters were thought to have healing properties for eye diseases and the Holy Well was a place of pilgrimage from the mediaeval period until the 1950s. The area contains a range of wetland and woodland species which need protection. The site is also in close proximity to locally important buildings. Development of the site would be harmful to the biodiversity and the historical setting of the area as a whole.
50. As with site CFS56, the site is affected by a spring which is part of a springline or series of such springs which effectively circle the centre of the village - similar issues could also apply. There is often surface water flooding on the proposed development site, which is associated with the spring at the Holy Well. The spring runs all year round and primarily feeds a pond beyond the northwest corner of the field, but also flows naturally downhill to form a stream on the southern boundary of the site. There is considerable below ground water in addition to surface water on the site,

arising from the spring, which can be seen on Land Registry title documents, which means that the land is virtually marsh land for most of the year.

51. As with the other proposed allocations at Bedmond, this site is located in Landscape Character Area 009 the Bedmond Plateau (see paragraph 15 above). Housing development would seriously affect its “coherent and unified character.”
52. Access to the site would be from Bedmond Road, which is the main route between Hemel Hempstead and Abbots Langley. From the south, the road ascends steeply on a sharp bend towards the village. At this location, where the speed limit changes from 40 mph along the Bedmond Road to 30mph on entering the village, speeding is a problem. It is considered that the additional traffic movements associated with 48 dwellings would cause considerable conflict and road safety problems, especially at peak hours.

### **Summary**

53. This statement contains the response of the Bedmond Residents’ Association in respect of the Three Rivers New Local Plan consultation Part 2: Sites for Potential Allocation. The first part of the statement, headed Green Belt (paragraphs 3-22), addresses Question 77 of the consultation document “Do you agree with the revised Green Belt boundary to inset Bedmond and the reason why?” In common with CPRE Hertfordshire and other representors, the Association fundamentally objects to the proposed change for the reasons set out above.
54. The second part (paragraphs 23-52) is concerned with the three sites proposed for housing allocations in the consultation document – sites CFS10, CFS56, and ACFS9e. For the reasons expressed under each site heading, the Association strongly believes that none of them are appropriate for development. If any of the sites were to be included in the Submission Local Plan, the Association would register its objections.
55. In the view of the Association, the way forward for Bedmond should continue to be as a “washed over” settlement within the Green Belt. Future development should be assessed against its local housing needs, which should be determined in the context of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan.

Jed Griffiths MA DipTP FRTPI

Hertford

August 2021

## Appendix

### Paragraph 9: Bedmond Green Belt



View from entrance to Footpath 18 looking at Church Hill, Serge Hill Lane, Chapel Way and Bedmond High Street



High Street and Church Hill looking north



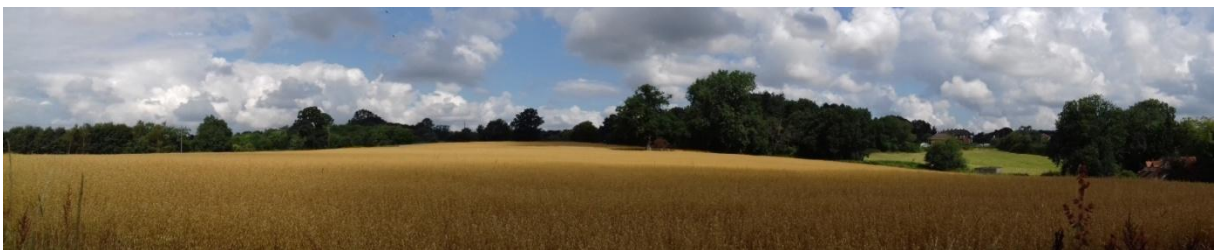
Fields behind Bluebell Drive



View from Footpath 18 looking towards Church Hill



Toms Lane looking north with Bedmond Playing fields – open space



View from Sheppeys Lane Footpath looking north towards Bedmond



Serge Hill Lane

Bedmond Road north looking south

**Site CFS10**

Paragraph 26: Proximity to Piecorner Wood, Ancient Woodland

Paragraph 27: Access



**Site CFS56**

Paragraphs 38: Meadow Habitat



Paragraph 40: Access

Paragraph 41: Surface Water Flooding



**Site ACFS9e**

Paragraph 44 (The green field is ACFS9e)



Paragraph 52: Access

(Bedmond Road looking south with Site ACFS9e on the right)

