

Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Plan V1.2

Working Draft Document

14/10/2025
Version 1.2

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Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Plan (2025–2040)

Introduction and Village Context

Great Gonerby is a village and civil parish in South Kesteven District, Lincolnshire, situated on a hilltop less than one mile north of the town of Grantham. The village overlooks the Vale of Belvoir to the west, the Belton Estate to the East and is bounded by Gonerby Hill to the south and Newark Hill to the north.

Great Gonerby developed as a farming settlement with historical roots dating back to Viking times (its name derives from a Viking chief “Gunvar” with “by” being the Norse word for village).

Today it remains a distinct community separated from Grantham by open fields (only a few hundred yards of countryside prevent coalescence), helping it retain a village identity despite its proximity to the urban area.

Population and Housing:

According to the **2021** Census, Great Gonerby parish has around **2,216 residents** living in approximately **1,000 households**. The population has grown only slightly from about **2,200** in **2011**.

The community's age profile leans towards the older: nearly **29% of residents are aged 65 or above**, significantly higher than national averages, while about **18%** are **under 18**. This older demographic highlights the need for housing suitable for downsizing seniors as well as for young families.

The village housing stock consists primarily of detached and semi-detached houses (with a smaller number of bungalows and terraces) reflecting its development as a traditional village. Home ownership is common, and there is a low proportion of flats compared to urban areas.

In total, Great Gonerby contains roughly **825–1,000 dwellings** (several new housing developments since 2011 have increased the housing stock to the current figure).

These homes are concentrated in the village proper (the built-up area had ~1,880 residents in 2021), with the remaining population in surrounding hamlets and rural outposts such as Gonerby Moor.

A new housing site “**Land off Church Lane**” has been identified for ~86 homes in the emerging Local Plan, but this is **strongly resisted by the local community**. Instead, larger development to the north of the village which benefits and includes a viable solution to the road junction issues at this location, is broadly supported. This and other smaller sites identified in the Development Plan (see Appendix 1), indicate the level of growth planned during the 2025–2040 period.

Managing development to meet local needs while preserving village character is therefore a key challenge.

Landscape and Environment:

Great Gonerby enjoys a scenic rural setting.

At approximately 100 metres elevation on a ridge, the village offers views over surrounding countryside. Notably, there are important vistas westward across the Vale of Belvoir and southward toward Grantham, as well as East towards the Belton House a National Trust Estate.

The parish covers about 10.9 km² of mostly agricultural land, with some small woodlands (around 72 hectares, ~2% of land) and very limited surface water (~0.09%).



The countryside includes arable fields bounded by hedgerows and a network of public footpaths and bridleways that connect the village to adjacent areas. These green links and open spaces are highly valued for recreation and wildlife. Local biodiversity features include mature trees, hedgerow corridors, and nearby nature assets; the parish's rural habitat supports farmland bird species and other wildlife.

The community is conscious of environmental sustainability – tree planting, conserving hedgerows, and protecting wildlife areas are priorities.

Being on elevated ground, the village itself is not flood-prone, but **surface water runoff** down the hillsides and along local brooks requires attention to mitigate any flood risk downstream.

Great Gonerby's environment will be safeguarded by identifying **Local Green Spaces** and maintaining the **Green Infrastructure** network through this Plan.

Heritage and Character:

Great Gonerby has a rich historical character, with a designated **Conservation Area** (established 1992) covering the historic village core around High Street and Green Street. Many buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries, built of local limestone or brick, giving the village a distinct architectural character.

The most prominent landmark is the **parish church of St. Sebastian**; a Grade I listed medieval church (mainly 13th–15th century) that anchors the village skyline.

St. Sebastian's Church (pictured) stands alongside the village school on High Street and exemplifies Great Gonerby's built heritage.



There are several other **listed buildings** in the parish, including historic houses and farmsteads (e.g. along High Street, Green Street, Pond Street, and Long Street).

The High Street is the old Great North Road, the steep inclines to the north and south made for slow-going for the old stage coaches, making Great Gonerby a favourite spot for highwayman until the inclines were eased with cuttings and embankments in the 19th century. There is a replica gibbet at the highest point of the High Street where convicted highwaymen were left as a deterrent to others.

The **Recruiting Sergeant Pub** is one of only two such named in the country, stemming from Oliver Cromwell's recorded visit to the village to recruit for his 'New Model Army' in 1643 after his defeat of the Royalists at Belton and Gonerby Moor.

The village's historic environment is cherished by residents.

Preserving this heritage and the village's rural character is a core goal of the Neighbourhood Plan.

New developments will be expected to respect local design traditions, scale, and setting, ensuring that Great Gonerby's distinct sense of place is maintained.

Community Facilities and Infrastructure:

Despite its modest size, Great Gonerby benefits from a range of local amenities that serve daily needs and foster community life.

Key facilities include:

St Sebastian's Church of England Primary School (and associated pre-school/playgroup),



Village Shop & Post Office, and the historic **Recruiting Sergeant pub**.

The village also has a **Memorial Hall** (village hall) and an active **Social Club**, which together host events, meetings, and social activities.

Outdoor recreation is provided for at the **playing field and recreation ground** behind the Memorial Hall, which features an equipped children's play area and a **floodlit multi-sport court**.

There are also several public open spaces and small green amenity areas within the village.

These local facilities are highly valued; a recent survey indicated strong usage of the shop, pub, school, and recreation areas by residents

(underscoring their importance to village life).

Great Gonerby Memorial Hall is a focal point for community gatherings, and it overlooks the recreation ground that provides green space for sports and leisure.

Ensuring the **long-term viability of these amenities** – and improving them where possible – is a priority for the Plan.

The community would like to see enhancements such as updated play equipment, extended hall facilities, and potentially new services (e.g. a Health Centre/GP surgery, café or additional local retail) to meet evolving needs.

Great Gonerby Pre-School would benefit from expansion due to the number of early years children. A new purpose-built pre-school with adequate parking would not only support the desired growth of housing to the north, but it would also support families with more availability for working parents. In turn, this would allow Great Gonerby Memorial Hall (currently used) to be utilized for more much-needed community groups during daylight hours.

Transport and Connectivity:

Great Gonerby is well-connected by road, lying just west of the A1 trunk road (via Gonerby Moor junction) and along the former Great North Road (B1174) which links to Grantham.

The village's proximity to Grantham (a 5-minute drive to the town centre) means many residents commute or travel there for work, shopping and secondary schooling.

However, local concerns remain about **traffic volume and speed** on village roads, especially High Street and Grantham Road which can get busy as through-routes, because there are only 3 access routes into and out of the village: Newark Hill to the north, Grantham Road to the south and Belton Lane to the East.

There is particular concern around the junction of **Belton Lane and Newark Hill** which has been identified by Lincolnshire Highways as '**over-capacity**'. The topography of the junction means that options to improve it are both costly and limited.

Parking near the school and shop is also an issue at peak times.

A regular **bus service** links Great Gonerby to Grantham and Newark, offering an hourly connection on weekdays.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports improvements to **sustainable transport**, including better footpaths, cycle links (for example, safer routes into Grantham), and traffic calming measures in the village.

Digital connectivity in Great Gonerby is mixed; broadband coverage is generally good (most areas have superfast access), but mobile signal strength is variable. Enhanced fibre broadband and 5G mobile coverage are seen as important infrastructure needs to support home working and local businesses.

A Vision for Great Gonerby in 2040

Vision:

*"In 2040, Great Gonerby remains a thriving hilltop village that balances growth with its cherished rural character, ensuring a high quality of life for residents of all ages. The village will be a **sustainable and inclusive community** – one that respects its heritage and natural surroundings while embracing improvements in housing, facilities, and green infrastructure. Great Gonerby will maintain its **distinct identity** and separation from Grantham, offering an attractive, eco-friendly place to live, work and visit, with a strong community spirit."*



This vision paints a future where development over the next 15 years addresses local needs (such as housing for young families and older downsizers, improved amenities, and local employment opportunities) **without eroding what makes Great Gonerby special** – its village atmosphere, historic character, and beautiful landscape setting. The vision aligns with the strategic aims of the South Kesteven Local Plan while focusing on what local people value: a close-knit, resilient community and a green, safe environment.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

To achieve the Vision, the following **objectives** are set for the Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Plan. These objectives, developed from community input, provide direction for the planning policies and community actions:

- **Distinct Village Identity:**

Protect Great Gonerby's separate identity by preventing coalescence with Grantham, maintaining a clear green gap and the open views that distinguish the village. Preserve the rural setting on all sides so that Great Gonerby does not become a suburb of Grantham.

- **Sustainable Development:**

Promote development that contributes to a **healthy, safe, and sustainable environment**. New proposals should support walking, cycling and public transport use, help reduce carbon emissions in line with the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, increase biodiversity, and minimize resource consumption and waste.

- **Good Design and Character:**

Ensure all new buildings and alterations exhibit **high-quality design** that respects Great Gonerby's character. Development should complement the village's vernacular architecture (materials, scale, form) and **enhance the appearance** of the area, especially within or near the Conservation Area and heritage assets.

- **Housing to Meet Local Needs:**

Enable **appropriate housing growth** that meets local needs without overdevelopment. Support a mix of housing – including affordable homes, smaller homes for young people or elderly downsizers, and specialist elderly accommodation – On sites which do not unduly impact the existing Green Spaces within the curtilage of the village.

- **Local Employment:**

Great Gonerby supports the need for commercial limited and desirable employment development within the parish to accommodate the growth of the community relative to the Development Plan.

- **Traffic and Transport Management:**

Address traffic and parking issues by improving road safety and promoting sustainable transport. Seek traffic calming where needed (e.g. on High Street/B1174), and appropriate/feasible solutions for the Newark Hill/Belton Lane junction. Better parking solutions are needed for residents and at the school, and improved footpath and cycleway links (especially towards Grantham and nearby villages).

- **Community Facilities and Services:**

Safeguard and enhance community facilities, ensuring the village's school, hall, shop, pub, recreation ground and other amenities continue to thrive. Support provision of new or improved facilities (such as play areas, sports, healthcare, pre-school and meeting places) to serve the community's needs through 2040.

- **Heritage and Village Character:**

Celebrate and conserve Great Gonerby's heritage. Protect historic buildings, the St Sebastian's Church and its surrounding area, and the character of the Conservation Area. Promote awareness of local history and ensure that any new development in historic areas is sensitive and complementary, for example around the Flagpole/Pinfold area.

- **Green Spaces and Natural Environment:**

Preserve green spaces and promote biodiversity. Protect important open spaces (playing field, village greens, privately owned paddocks in the central area etc.) by designating them as Local Green Spaces. Maintain the network of footpaths and countryside access. Enhance tree planting, hedgerows and wildlife habitats, aiming for biodiversity net gain in new development.

- **Climate Change and Resilience:**

Improve the village's **resilience to climate change** effects such as extreme weather and flooding. Encourage sustainable drainage, renewable energy use, **energy-efficient building design**, and community-led climate initiatives (e.g. tree planting or community energy schemes) to ensure Great Gonerby is environmentally responsible and prepared for the future.

- **Broadband and Digital Connectivity:**

Support **better digital infrastructure** – high-speed broadband and reliable mobile coverage – to meet modern needs for home working, education, and business, helping the community stay connected and economically competitive.

- **Utilities Infrastructure:**

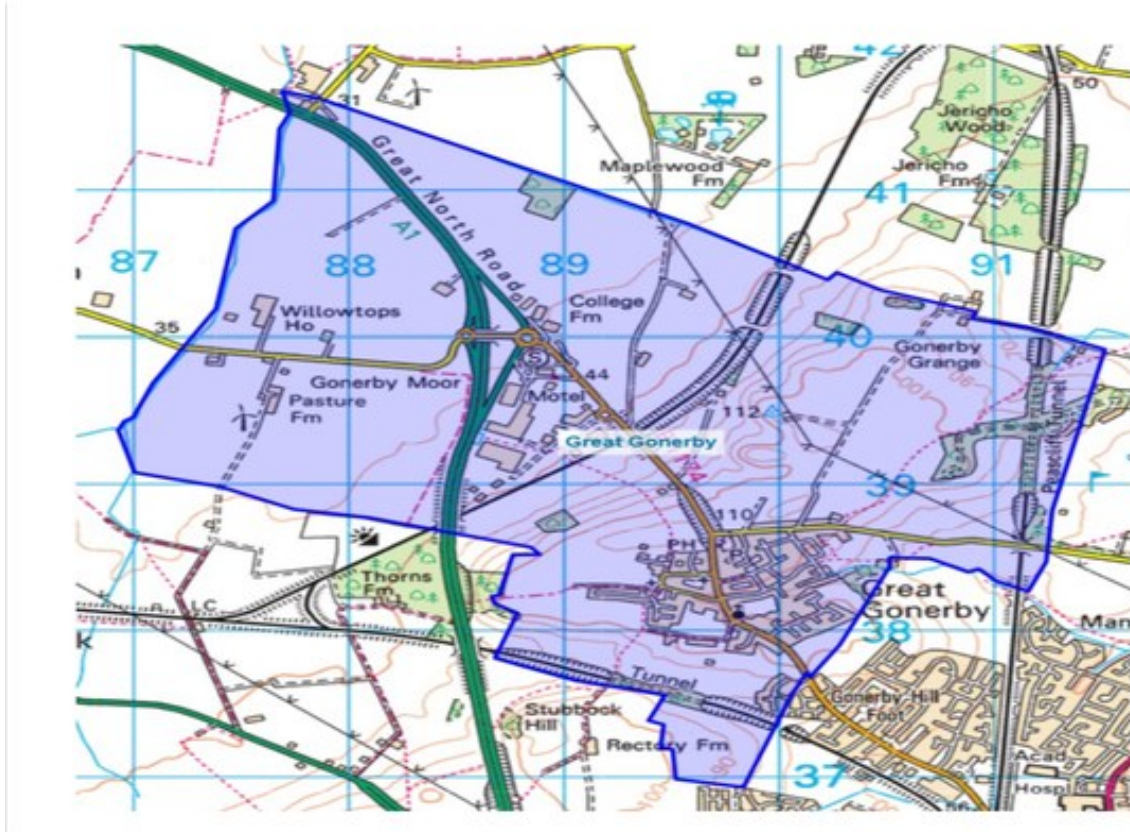
There is concern about the impact of new developments on water supply, being at top of a hill means that water pressure is already on the low side so any new development must take account of this and put mitigation in place in collaboration with Anglian Water

These objectives collectively guide the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan. They reflect local priorities gathered through consultation and evidence, ranging from preserving the village's unique character to addressing practical issues like traffic and facility provision. Each objective links back to the core vision of a balanced, sustainable future for Great Gonerby.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The following planning policies (**Policies 1–8**) form the statutory heart of the Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Plan.

They are organized into thematic areas: **Sustainable Development; Good Design; Housing; Community Facilities; Heritage; Important Views; Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity; and Renewable Energy.**



These policies, once made, will be used to help determine planning applications in the Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Area through to 2040. Each policy is presented with a justification based on local context and evidence, followed by the policy wording (in bold). Developers and decision-makers should read the policies in conjunction with the South Kesteven Local Plan and national policy.

Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Context and Justification:

Great Gonerby seeks to accommodate change in a sustainable manner that benefits the community and environment. This means supporting development that improves local quality of life while minimizing negative impacts. Given the village's close relationship with Grantham, it is important that growth here complements the services and infrastructure of the town without undermining the village's sustainability. Community feedback highlighted desires for safe, walkable streets and local access to services, as well as concern for climate change. In practical terms, sustainable development in Great Gonerby includes providing housing to meet local needs, opportunities for local employment or home working, and infrastructure like green energy and improved broadband. It also requires that new development be located and designed to encourage walking/cycling (for example, within easy reach of the village centre or bus stops) and that it contributes to environmental targets (such as biodiversity gain and energy efficiency). This policy aligns with Local Plan strategic policies on sustainable development, climate change, and infrastructure.

Policy 1: Supporting Sustainable Development in Great Gonerby

Development proposals will be supported where they demonstrably contribute to a healthy, safe, and sustainable village environment. To be supported, proposals should:

- (1) Provide social or economic benefits for the local community (for example, meeting identified local housing needs or creating local employment opportunities) while avoiding overburdening existing infrastructure;*
- (2) Encourage modes of transport other than the private car – through safe footpaths, cycleways, or proximity to public transport – thereby reducing traffic impacts and air pollution;*
- (3) Incorporate **high standards of energy efficiency** and climate resilience (such as sustainable design and construction, renewable energy use, and appropriate drainage to manage surface water);*
- (4) Protect and enhance local **green infrastructure** and biodiversity, achieving a **net gain** for wildlife where possible (for instance, by planting trees, preserving hedgerows, or creating habitat within landscaping); and*
- (5) Minimize waste and resource use during construction and operation (e.g. by using sustainable materials and providing for waste recycling).*

Development that meets these sustainability principles – including new housing, business or community facilities – will be viewed favourably, subject to compliance with all other relevant Plan policies.

Plain English Policy Summary:

New developments in Great Gonerby will be supported if they help create a **healthy, safe, and sustainable village**. To gain support, proposals should:

1. **Benefit the Local Community**

- Meet local housing needs
- Provide local jobs
- Avoid putting too much pressure on existing services and infrastructure

2. **Support Greener Travel**

- Include safe walking and cycling routes
- Be close to public transport
- Help reduce car use, traffic, and air pollution

3. **Be Climate- and Energy-Conscious**

- Use sustainable design and materials
- Include energy-efficient buildings and renewable energy
- Manage surface water well (e.g. using good drainage)

4. **Protect Nature and Green Spaces**

- Improve local green spaces and wildlife habitats
- Plant trees and preserve hedgerows
- Aim for a net gain in biodiversity

5. **Use Resources Wisely**

- Cut waste and reduce resource use during building and operation
- Provide facilities for recycling

Proposals that follow these sustainability principles – whether housing, businesses, or community spaces – will be welcomed, as long as they also meet other policies in the Plan.

Reasoned justification:

This policy sets out a positive approach to development that aligns with Great Gonerby's ambition to be an **eco-friendly, thriving village**.

It encourages proposals that address local needs (such as housing or services) in ways that also promote environmental sustainability and health.

By requiring active travel options and energy efficiency, the policy supports South Kesteven's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 and responds to the climate emergency.

Protecting green infrastructure in development schemes will help maintain the parish's rural setting and wildlife corridors.

Overall, Policy 1 provides a framework for **balanced growth** – allowing Great Gonerby to evolve and meet 21st-century challenges while safeguarding the qualities that villagers value.

Policy 2: Delivering Good Design

Context and Justification:

Community consultations have emphasized that the **design of new development** in Great Gonerby must respect the village's established character and high-quality built environment.

The Conservation Area and the many traditional buildings set a benchmark for style and materials (e.g. stone or brick walls, pantile or slate roofs, vertically proportioned windows). There is a concern that insensitive design – whether in infill housing, extensions, or larger developments – could erode the visual appeal and coherence of the village.

This policy therefore encourages developers to follow design best practices and any local design guidance.

Although Great Gonerby does not yet have a formal **Design Code**, the Parish Council looks to work with any potential developers to implement design guidelines drawing on the character of the village.

Key design considerations include: layout that integrates well with existing streets, building scale that is in keeping (generally low-rise, individual houses rather than large blocks), use of appropriate materials, and providing adequate landscaping (green frontages, tree planting) and parking that does not dominate.

Developments should also incorporate sustainable design elements (energy efficiency, renewable energy, rainwater harvesting, etc.) in a way that complements the traditional aesthetic.

Policy 2: High-Quality and Contextual Design

All development in Great Gonerby parish must achieve a high standard of design that reinforces local distinctiveness.

Proposals should demonstrate (via plans and, where required, Design & Access Statements) **how they respond to the following design principles:**

(a) Contextual Integration:

*The development should **complement the character** of surrounding buildings and the village as a whole in terms of scale, height, layout, and materials. Traditional features common in Great Gonerby (such as locally used brick/stone, pitched roofs, chimney details, and vertically aligned windows) should be reflected where appropriate, especially within the historic core.*

(b) Design Quality:

*Innovative or contemporary design is supported where it is of high quality and **harmonizes with its setting**. Standardized or “anywhere” designs that fail to take opportunities to enhance local character will be resisted.*

(c) Public Realm and Safety:

Proposals should create safe, attractive public spaces and streets. This includes providing natural surveillance (e.g. windows facing the street and open spaces), adequate street lighting (sensitive to dark-sky considerations), and accessible pedestrian routes.

(d) Amenities and Landscaping:

Sufficient private or shared outdoor amenity space should be provided (gardens for houses, or communal green space for any higher-density schemes).

Landscaping schemes must retain mature trees and hedgerows where possible and include new planting to soften development edges. Boundary treatments should be in keeping (for example, stone or brick walls, or native hedging, rather than close-board fencing in prominent locations).

(e) Sustainable Design:

Incorporation of eco-friendly features (such as solar panels, EV charging points, permeable paving, rain gardens) is strongly encouraged, but such features should be designed and sited to minimize visual impact on the street scene or heritage assets.

Development proposals that meet the above principles and reflect the guidance of any adopted local Design Codes will be supported.

Planning applications that do not adequately address local design context or that would cause significant harm to village character may be refused.

Plain English Policy Summary:

All new development in Great Gonerby must be **well-designed and reflect the village's character**. Proposals will be supported if they follow these key principles:

1. Fit with the Local Area (Contextual Integration)

- Match the look and feel of nearby buildings (scale, height, layout, and materials)
- Use traditional features like local brick or stone, pitched roofs, chimneys, and vertical windows – especially in the historic centre

2. Good Design – Not Generic

- Creative and modern designs are welcome, as long as they fit the surroundings
- “One-size-fits-all” or “anywhere” designs that ignore local character will be resisted

3. Safe and Attractive Public Spaces

- Streets and open spaces should feel safe and be overlooked by homes (natural surveillance)
- Include lighting that's effective but respects dark skies
- Make it easy and pleasant for people to walk

4. Green Spaces and Landscaping

- Provide private gardens or shared outdoor space
- Keep existing trees and hedges where possible, and add new planting
- Use boundary features that suit the village (e.g. stone walls or hedges – not tall timber fencing in visible places)

5. **Eco-Friendly Design**

- *Include green features like solar panels, EV charging, permeable paving, and rain gardens*
- *Make sure these are well-designed and don't spoil the look of the area or affect heritage assets*

Applications that follow these principles – and any local design codes – will be welcomed. Poorly designed proposals that don't suit Great Gonerby's character may be refused.

Reasoned justification:

By insisting on **context-driven, high-quality design**, this policy aims to ensure that Great Gonerby grows in a way that **"fits in"** and even improves the look and feel of the village.

Whether it's a single house infill or a larger allocation site, attention to vernacular detailing and human-scale design will maintain the charm and attractiveness of the village.

The principles above echo the community's desire to keep Great Gonerby's identity, rather than becoming a generic modern estate. At the same time, the policy supports sustainable and innovative architecture – recognizing that modern building techniques can be harmonious with old villages if thoughtfully executed. This balanced approach will guide developers to produce designs that people in Great Gonerby can be proud of in the years to come.

Policy 3: Housing Development

Context and Evidence:

Great Gonerby is identified for limited housing growth to meet local needs up to 2040.

The South Kesteven Local Plan (and its emerging review) places Great Gonerby in the settlement hierarchy such that some development is appropriate, given its range of facilities and proximity to Grantham.



Indeed, a new housing allocation for ~86 homes off Church Lane is proposed: SKPR241 in Local Plan, but is currently **subject to objections by GGPC** and local opposition. Alternative housing allocation sites have been proposed by GGPC in a Development Plan detailed below (see Appendix 1) in response to the Local Plan consultation. These alternatives more than meet the district's housing targets.

The community supports new housing **only if it is of the right type and scale and in the right location**: there is demand for affordable homes for young families,

starter homes, and downsizing options (like bungalows or cottages for older residents), as well as a limited number of executive/family homes.

Large, speculative housing estates that would extend the village substantially are not supported; instead, a gradual increase through moderate scale sites identified in the Development Plan, which include secondary benefits to the village such as providing traffic management solutions, are preferred.

The **developed footprint** of Great Gonerby (the existing built-up area of the village) is well-defined, and development outside this footprint to the south should be avoided to prevent coalescence with Grantham. The creation of a protected green zone between the northern edge of Grantham and the southern edge of the village footprint would prevent such a merging. Well-planned, moderate expansion at the edge of the village to the north, and smaller plots to the west are achievable without significant disruption of the village footprint.

This policy sets criteria for housing development location and type, in line with community wishes and higher-level policy.

Policy 3: Meeting Great Gonerby's Housing Needs

New housing development in Great Gonerby parish will be supported where it contributes to the identified local housing needs and is sited in an appropriate location.

The priorities for housing type are:

- (i) Affordable housing (social-rented, affordable-rent or shared ownership homes) for people with a local connection, to address local affordability challenges;
- (ii) Smaller market homes (2-3 bedrooms, including bungalows or accessible homes) suitable for young families, first-time buyers, and older downsizers;

- (iii) *Specialist housing for the elderly (such as sheltered or supported housing) to allow aging residents to remain in the village.*

All new housing proposals should demonstrate how they address these priorities. In terms of location, **the following sequential approach applies:**

1) Edge-of-settlement development:

Proposals on the northern **edge of the village** (beyond the current footprint) are the preferred option as defined in the Development Plan, but only if they are well-planned, modest in scale and immediately adjoining the built area, and if they demonstrate additional community benefits (for example, traffic management solutions).* **Development in open countryside (isolated from the village) will not be supported** unless exceptional circumstances are proven, in line with local and national policy.

2) Specific Criteria housing:

a site has been identified on the Development Plan at the west edge of the village for **appropriate housing for older residents**. This would be supported, provided all other Policies herein are met and the proposals respect neighbouring amenity, character and the Design Code.

3) Infill development:

within the existing built-up footprint of Great Gonerby village (i.e. sites surrounded by existing development) will be considered, provided it is small in scale (eg a single dwelling in a large garden) and respects neighbouring amenity, character and the Design Code.

The currently allocated site off Church Lane identified in the Local Plan (approximately 86 dwellings) is not supported, as it contravenes Policies 5, 6 and 7 in terms of Heritage and Local Character, Important Views and Local Green Spaces.

A Green Zone should be created between the northern edge of Grantham and the southern edge of the village footprint to prevent merging and maintain the village's separation from the town.

Furthermore, *all housing proposals should comply with other Plan policies*, particularly on design, infrastructure, and environment.

Adequate off-street parking (typically 2 spaces per dwelling for family homes), safe access, and no severe impact on the capacity of Great Gonerby's minor road network will be required in order to be acceptable.

Plain English Policy Summary:

New housing in Great Gonerby will be supported **if it meets local needs and is in the right place.**

Top Priorities for Housing Types:

1. Affordable Homes

- For people with local connections
- Includes social rent, affordable rent, and shared ownership

2. Smaller Market Homes

- 2/3 bedroom houses, bungalows, and accessible homes
- Suitable for first-time buyers, young families, and older people looking to downsize

3. Housing for Older People

- Sheltered or supported housing to help elderly residents stay in the village

All proposals must explain how they meet these priorities.

Preferred Housing Locations (in order):

1. Edge-of-Village Development

- Only moderate scale well-planned developments to the north of the village edge
- Must bring clear community benefits (e.g. affordable housing or public open space or infrastructure improvements)

2. Western side of village

- Moderate scale 'retirement home' development
- Suitable for older residents

3. Infill within the village

- Small-scale individual housing in large gardens
- Must respect neighbours and village character

The currently allocated site at Church Lane is not supported.

No support for isolated countryside housing, unless national policy allows it in exceptional cases.

Other Requirements:

- Must follow all other Neighbourhood Plan policies (especially on design, environment, and infrastructure)
- Include **off-street parking** (normally 2 spaces for family homes)
- Safe road access and **no serious traffic impacts** on local roads

Reasoned justification:

This policy ensures housing growth in Great Gonerby is **tailored to local needs and context**, rather than developer-led estate building. By emphasizing limited moderate development on the edge of the existing footprint it helps preserve the **village's compact form**, its highly valued green infrastructure and countryside setting.

The prioritization of certain housing types responds to evidence that younger households and some older people struggle to find suitable homes in the village (e.g. due to affordability or lack of downsizing options) – a trend seen across South Kesteven's villages.

Focusing on smaller and affordable units should also help maintain a balanced demographic, so the village does not skew ever older. The prohibition of general sprawl to the south protects the landscape and prevents merging with nearby settlements.

Overall, Policy 3 facilitates **appropriate, proportionate growth**:

Great Gonerby can expand by roughly 500 homes over 15 years by utilising the sites identified in the Development Plan, ensuring new residents can be integrated and infrastructure can adapt. This aligns with the community's vision of a *“thriving village that balances growth with rural character”* (Vision statement).

Policy 4: Community Facilities

Context and Rationale:

The facilities in Great Gonerby – school, hall, shop/post office, pub, social club church, recreation ground, etc. – are the **lifeblood of the community**.

They provide education, social, recreational, and daily convenience functions without needing to travel to Grantham. Protecting these from loss or change of use is therefore a priority, as once lost, such facilities are hard to replace in a village setting.

Recent years have seen challenges for rural amenities (for instance, pubs and shops nationwide struggling).



In Great Gonerby, the community is determined to keep its facilities viable. The Memorial Hall has undergone improvements and hosts many activities; the primary school is near capacity, reflecting its importance to local families; the village shop/post office is well-used especially by elderly residents and those without easy transport. The pub (Recruiting Sergeant) recently expanded, demonstrates its value not just for dining/drinks but as a social hub. The Social Club also hosts local activities, groups and social functions and incorporates a bowling green and mirrors the pub as an important social hub for the village population. In planning terms, any proposal that would result in the loss of these key services should be rigorously tested against viability and replacement criteria.

Conversely, **new facilities or enhancements** (like a new healthcare drop-in clinic, expansion of sports facilities, or a community café, hairdressers or other local businesses) would be welcomed, provided they are appropriately located.

This policy identifies the important facilities and sets policy tests to guard them, mirroring the approach used in the Barrowby Plan and allowed by national policy for guarding community assets.

Policy 4: Protecting and Enhancing Community Facilities

*The following facilities in Great Gonerby Parish are identified as **key community facilities**:*

St Sebastian's Primary School (and pre-school),
St Sebastian's Church,
Great Gonerby Memorial Hall,
Great Gonerby Social Club,
Village Shop
Post Office,
Recruiting Sergeant Pub,
Village Playing Field and Children's Play Area,
Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).

Development proposals that would result in the loss of any of these facilities (through change of use, redevelopment, or long-term closure) will only be supported if:

- (i) It is clearly demonstrated that the facility is no longer **economically viable** or **needed** for any community use. This should include at least 12 months of active marketing for sale/let as a going concern (for commercial facilities like the pub or shop) or evidence of lack of demand (for halls/venues), at a realistic price and without unreasonable conditions; **and***
- (ii) An **equivalent or better replacement** facility is provided in an equally convenient location for users (either before closure of the old facility, or as part of redevelopment). The replacement should be of appropriate size, quality and accessibility to serve the community's needs.*

Only if criteria (i) and (ii) are met should a change of use away from community use be permitted.

*Proposals to improve or extend existing community facilities will be supported, as long as any expansion is designed to respect local character and residential amenity. New community facilities (for example, a community café, local businesses, allotments, health services, or sports facilities) are also supported **in principle**, especially if they address an identified local need, are accessible by foot/bicycle, and comply with other policies.*

The co-location of services (e.g. multi-use community hub) will be viewed positively. Developer contributions (via Section 106 or CIL, if implemented) towards improving community facilities may be sought from new housing developments in the village.

Plain English Policy Summary:

The following are valued community facilities in the parish:

- **St Sebastian's Primary School & Pre-School**
- **St Sebastian's Church**
- **Memorial Hall**
- **Social Club**
- **Village Shop & Post Office**
- **Recruiting Sergeant Pub**
- **Playing Field & Children's Play Area**
- **Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)**

Protecting What We Have

Proposals that would result in the **loss or closure** of any of these facilities will only be allowed if:

1. **There's clear evidence it's no longer viable or needed**

- E.g. 12+ months of proper marketing (for sale or rent), at a fair price, and without unfair conditions
- Or proof that no one wants or needs the facility

2. **A suitable replacement is provided**

- Must be just as good (or better), in a similarly convenient location
- Should be ready **before** or **alongside** the closure of the old one
- Must be accessible and fit for community use

If either of these tests are not met, losing the facility will **not be supported**.

Improving and Adding Facilities

Proposals will be supported if they:

- Improve or extend existing facilities (respecting local character and neighbour privacy)
- Add **new** community amenities (e.g. café, health services, sports facilities, allotments)
- Addition of **Purpose-Built Pre School**, freeing the existing use of the Memorial Hall back to the community during the day.
- Are **accessible on foot or by bike**, and meet local needs
- Consider **co-location of services**, like shared community hubs

Developer contributions (via Section 106 or CIL) may be required to help fund these improvements.



Reasoned justification:

By listing the facilities and setting conditions for their change, Policy 4 aims to **guard against the unwanted loss of valued services**.

This is consistent with NPPF paragraph 93 which supports planning decisions that plan positively for community facilities. Great Gonerby's facilities are generally well-used (as evidenced by community surveys and usage data; see Appendix for details) and are geographically central, meaning most residents can walk to them. If any facility comes under threat (for example, if a shop owner retires or pub trade declines), this policy ensures that the community and Parish Council have the opportunity to find solutions – whether through finding new operators or securing alternative provision – before a permanent loss occurs.

Simultaneously, the policy encourages enhancements: for instance, if the school needs to expand or the hall needs refurbishment, planning should accommodate that.

New facilities are welcome to bolster Great Gonerby's self-sufficiency, reducing the need to travel and enriching village life. In summary, Policy 4 helps sustain the **“social cohesion and community spirit”** objective of the Plan, keeping Great Gonerby a vibrant and well-served village.

Policy 5: Conserving Heritage and Local Character

Context and Issues:

Great Gonerby's historic environment – from its medieval church to the conservation area streetscape and scattered heritage assets – is central to its charm and identity. As a **hilltop village with historic architecture**, it presents a distinctive silhouette and sense of place that residents greatly value. The Conservation Area Appraisal (SKDC, 2009) notes the special interest of Great Gonerby's old High Street, Green Street and their environs, characterized by older stone houses, pantile roofs, and landmark structures. Outside the conservation area, there are also farm buildings, milestones, and other features of heritage interest, such as the 'Pinfold' stray animal pen site, now a key village community asset with flagpole and Christmas tree lights.



This policy provides local detail to supplement national Listed Building and Conservation Area protections, ensuring that development proposals pay due regard to preserving **architectural and historic significance**. It also covers archaeology, as the village's long history (potentially back to Viking or earlier) means there may be archaeological remains of interest in the area.

A key aim is to ensure that changes do not erode the character – for example, insensitive infill in the historic core, (hence the strong objection to SKPR241) or alterations to older buildings with inappropriate modern materials. Instead, changes should be subtle, using sympathetic design and materials. The policy also supports positive measures like restoration of historic buildings, reuse of disused heritage assets, and public realm improvements (such as appropriate traditional signage or street furniture in the centre, eg signposting of the Great Gonerby Walk route along church Lane and the western ridge to the Gonerby Cross).

Other important heritage factors which the policy seeks to highlight and protect include:

- Historical links to Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army recruitment in the 1640's
- Old Great North Road history, such as the incline landscaping to make the stagecoach journeys easier and Gonerby Gibbet for convicted highwaymen
- The original old petrol pump at the garage at the top of the high street

Policy 5: Conserving Our Historic Environment

Development proposals must conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment of Great Gonerby. **Designated heritage assets**, notably the **Great Gonerby Conservation Area** and **listed buildings** such as St Sebastian's Church (Grade I) and other listed structures, are to be **protected in accordance with their significance**.

Proposals affecting such assets or their settings should:

- (a) Preserve or enhance the asset's character, appearance, and historic value. In the Conservation Area, this means new development (including individual garden infill or extensions) should use complementary materials (e.g. stone, brick, slate, clay tile) and design details that reflect the area's historic architectural styles.
- (b) Avoid any adverse impact on important features of the asset – for example, developments must not block or detract from **key views of St Sebastian's Church** (such as views of its spire from the High Street, or from the Great Gonerby Walk route along Church Lane or approaching the village from all directions), and must not result in demolition of buildings that contribute positively to the Conservation Area.
- (c) Submit a **Heritage Impact Assessment** (where required) demonstrating how the proposal has taken account of the asset's significance and setting, and justify any harm (substantial harm will be strongly resisted unless it meets the stringent national policy tests).

For non-designated heritage assets, (including any locally important buildings or features identified in Parish records or the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record), development should be designed with sensitivity to their heritage interest. For example, the Pinfold stry animal site opposite St Sebastian's Church, now a village focal point around its flagpole and Christmas Tree..

Retention, refurbishment or adaptive reuse of historic buildings is encouraged as a priority over demolition.

The Parish's archaeological heritage should also be considered: in areas of known or potential archaeological potential (for example, within the historic village core or near known findspots), developers may be required to conduct an archaeological assessment and, if necessary, excavation or recording prior to development.

Proposals that respect and draw inspiration from Great Gonerby's heritage will be supported, whereas those that would cause unjustified harm to the village's historic assets or character will be refused.

Plain English Policy Summary:

New developments must **protect and, where possible, enhance** the historic character of Great Gonerby.

Key Heritage Sites:

Important heritage assets include:

- **St Sebastian's Church (Grade I listed)**
- **Other listed buildings and structures in the historic core of the village**
- **The Great Gonerby Conservation Area and the buildings within it**

These must be respected in terms of their **appearance, setting, and historic value**.

What Good Proposals Should Do:

1. **Respect Character and Style**

- Use materials that fit in (like stone, brick, slate, clay tile)
- Design should reflect traditional architecture – especially in the in proximity of the Conservation Area

2. **Protect Key Views and Features**

- Don't block or spoil iconic views (e.g. of St Sebastian's Church spire)
- Don't demolish buildings that add to the village's character

3. **Assess Heritage Impacts**

- Where needed, provide a **Heritage Impact Assessment**
- Show how the proposal has considered the asset's significance and setting
- Any harm must be clearly justified – **major harm will only be allowed in exceptional cases**

Non-Designated and Archaeological Heritage:

- Respect buildings or features identified as **locally important**, even if not officially listed
- Re-use or refurbish old buildings rather than demolishing them
- For areas with **archaeological potential**, developers may need to:
 - Carry out a proper archaeological study
 - Record or excavate any findings before starting development
 -

In short: **New development that celebrates Great Gonerby's heritage is welcomed. Proposals that would harm it without very strong justification will be refused.**

Reasoned justification:

This policy reinforces existing protections by providing specific local criteria, ensuring that **Great Gonerby's rich heritage is not only preserved but leveraged as an asset for future generations.**

The emphasis on the church's prominence, for instance, is based on its role as an architectural focal point visible from various points in the village and for miles around – new buildings should not mar this iconic sight. Similarly, the conservation area's value lies in the grouping of historic buildings and open spaces; infill that fills in important gaps or overwhelms small-scale cottages would be harmful. By requiring heritage impact assessments, the policy aligns with best practice for proposals in sensitive locations.

Encouraging the reuse of heritage buildings supports sustainable development and can provide opportunities (like converting an old barn to a community use or dwelling, rather than letting it decay).

Overall, this policy helps ensure that as Great Gonerby evolves, it **“respects its past while embracing its future,”** echoing the Plan's Vision and the community's desire to celebrate local history.

Policy 6: Important Views

Context and Evidence:

One of the defining features of Great Gonerby is the set of **panoramic views** enjoyed from in and around the village, thanks to its elevated position. These views contribute greatly to local character and residents' enjoyment of the surroundings. Two broad categories of valued views have been identified through local consultation and fieldwork:

- 1) **Outward views from the village toward the countryside**, and
- 2) **Internal village views of landmarks** (notably the church).

For outward views, key examples include the **westward vista across the Vale of Belvoir**



Including Belvoir Castle, which on clear days extends to distant ridges and includes rural farmland in the foreground.

Equally, looking south from the village edge or along the Grantham Road, there are views over the intervening green gap to the town of Grantham and the hills beyond. Note that the village would like the existing green space around the southern side of the village towards the edge of Grantham Town to be subject to a Protection Order to maintain a clear separation between the village and Grantham Town.

Further **valued views exist to the East** from Belton Lane, Kelham Road and the pedestrian walkway on Grantham Road **towards Belton House and Belmont Tower**

Preserving these open views reinforces the sense of a rural setting and the separation from Grantham. Inappropriate tall or large-scale development (such as a cell tower, wind turbine, or bulky housing blocks) could intrude on these vistas if not carefully sited.

The local community has pointed out particular vantage points: for example, the view looking west from near the churchyard or the end of Church Lane, known as 'The Ridge', the view looking northwest from the top of Marratts Lane, the view south and east from the end of Belton Lane, and east towards Belton Estate and Belmont Tower folly from the end of Kelham Road. Meanwhile, within the village, the sightline to St Sebastian's Church spire from various approaches (High Street, Grantham Road, Church Lane, Newark Hill) is cherished.

This policy seeks to protect identified important views through the planning process. A map (to be included in the final Plan) will illustrate the general direction of these views and key viewpoints.

Policy 6: Protecting Important Views

*The Neighbourhood Plan identifies a number of **Important Views** that contribute to Great Gonerby's character (as detailed below and shown on Map X).*

Development proposals should respect these views and demonstrate (through site layout, height, and design choices) that they will not significantly harm the view's composition or quality. *Proposals which would interrupt, obscure or significantly detract from an identified Important View will not be supported unless effective mitigation is provided.* The Important Views include (but are not limited to):

- **V1: Panoramic Westward View over the Vale of Belvoir** – seen from the western edge of the village (e.g. near the Ridge and Church Lane area), this long-distance view of rolling countryside and distant hills is to be kept open. New development on the west/northwest fringe of Great Gonerby should be low-profile and set within landscaping so as not to block this panorama wherever possible.
- **V2: Southern View toward Grantham** – looking south from points along Grantham Road/B1174 and the south end of the village, showing the green fields separating Great Gonerby from Grantham and the town's outskirts in the distance. Proposals in the southern part of the parish should maintain this gap and view; large structures or dense development that closes the perceived gap would be resisted.
- **V3: St Sebastian's Church Viewpoints** – various internal views looking towards the church, including the approach along High Street from the west and the view from the junction of Green Street/High Street and Church Lane Gonerby Walk, where the church tower and spire terminate the vista. Any development in the historic core should not **encroach on or dominate the church's silhouette**. Extensions or new buildings must respect sightlines to the church (for instance, keeping key view corridors free of obstruction).

(Additional views may be listed following consultation, such as views north to Gonerby Moor or east toward Belton – Map X will be updated accordingly.)

Applicants whose development may affect an Important View should provide visual impact information (e.g. verified viewpoints, cross-sections or 3D imagery) to illustrate the proposal's effect on the view.

Mitigation (such as careful siting, height reduction, or landscape screening) will be required where a proposal has any moderate impact on an Important View.

Plain English Policy Summary:

Certain views around Great Gonerby are part of what makes the village distinctive. This policy ensures those **Important Views** are **protected from harm by new development**.

New Development Must:

- **Respect key views** through careful design, layout, and building height
- **Avoid blocking, spoiling, or interrupting** the views
- **Include visual evidence** (like cross-sections or 3D images) showing how the proposal affects the view
- Use **mitigation** (e.g. lower building height, planting, smart siting) if there's a moderate impact

Identified Important Views:

1. **V1: Westward View over the Vale of Belvoir**

- Seen from the Church Lane area
- Wide rural panorama of countryside and hills
- Development here must be low-rise and carefully landscaped to keep the view open

2. **V2: Southern View toward Grantham**

- From Grantham Road (B1174) and southern village edge
- Shows green space separating Great Gonerby from Grantham
- Developments must **retain this green gap** – large or dense buildings here will be resisted

3. **V3: Views of St Sebastian's Church**

- Includes approaches from the west along High Street, Green Street and Church Lane
- Key views that feature the church spire must remain open
- New buildings in the historic core must not block or overpower these views

4. **V4: Views of Belton Estate (National Trust)**

- Seen from Belton Lane and Kelham Road
- Key views of Belmont Tower and Belton Estate
- New buildings or infrastructure must not block or overpower these views

More views may be added (e.g. to the north or east) after public consultation – the policy will be updated to reflect this in **Map X**.

In summary: **Great Gonerby's views are part of its identity**. Development that harms these important landscapes or sightlines will not be supported unless there's clear and effective mitigation.

Reasoned justification:

Protecting views is a way to **protect the scenic and rural qualities** of Great Gonerby that villagers most treasure.

This policy gives clarity to developers about which vistas are sensitive, so they can design accordingly. It is not meant to prevent any development that is visible, but rather to prevent development that would *dominate or fundamentally alter* a valued view. For example, a new house on the edge of the village could be acceptable if rooflines are kept close to the horizon and landscaping blends it in; but a tall silo or communications mast in the same line of sight might be unacceptable without mitigation.

The inclusion of internal views (like the church) underscores the importance of village landmark visibility – echoing Policy 5's emphasis on the church's setting. By requiring a consideration of views, the policy contributes to maintaining **Great Gonerby's distinct sense of place** – villagers will continue to enjoy their vistas of countryside which reinforce that they live in a rural village rather than an urban area. These views also have heritage value, as noted in conservation appraisals and local lore, thus overlapping with landscape and heritage objectives.

In summary, Policy 6 ensures that **development does not inadvertently spoil the iconic views that define the community's image of Great Gonerby**.

Policy 7: Green Infrastructure, Local Green Spaces and Biodiversity

Context:

The green aspects of Great Gonerby – its fields, hedgerows, trees, and open spaces – are integral to the parish's environmental health and residents' well-being. As noted, the village is surrounded by farmland and has some on-site green amenities like the playing field. There is a strong desire to formally protect certain green areas that are of particular importance to the community.



Following an assessment, the Parish Council intends to designate a number of **Local Green Spaces (LGS)** in line with NPPF criteria (small parcels of land that are demonstrably special to the community and hold recreational, historic, or ecological value).

Candidate LGS sites include:

- the **Village Playing Field and adjoining Recreation Ground**,
- **Allotment Gardens** (if any formal allotments exist or are established during the plan period),
- the **Churchyard of St Sebastian's** (which serves as a tranquil green space with historic gravestones and biodiversity)
- the **Church Lane** paddocks
- the **"Pinfold" and flagpole site** opposite the church
- the **Clockpelters site/** at the High Street/Pond Street junction (site of the old village pond and a seating area).
- **'The Wong'** at the corner of Green St and Pond St
- **The Village Green** strip to the south of the Church – site of the old Great North Road

- The **fields behind Manor Farm** off Long Street
- The **Open Space** between Cox's Walk and the school playing fields, and at Holden Way

These spaces are locally valued for play, gatherings, or as green lungs in the settlement. In addition to designated spaces, the wider **Green Infrastructure (GI) network** – meaning the network of footpaths, wildlife corridors, roadside trees, and watercourses – should be protected and enhanced.

There are opportunities to improve biodiversity, for instance by wildflower planting on verges, creating a community orchard, or encouraging farmers to maintain field margins.

New developments should contribute by incorporating wildlife-friendly features and connecting into this GI network (e.g. linking new footpaths to existing rights of way).

The policy below encompasses all these aspects: protecting designated green spaces, conserving general GI, and promoting net gains for nature.

Policy 7: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

Great Gonerby's green infrastructure network – including its open spaces, connecting footpaths, hedgerows, trees, and wildlife habitats – will be safeguarded and enhanced.

Local Green Spaces: The Neighbourhood Plan designates the following sites as Local Green Spaces (as shown on Map Y), due to their special significance to the community:

(i) **Great Gonerby Playing Field & Recreation Ground**

(including the children's play area and sports court) – valued for sports, play and village events;

(ii) **St Sebastian's Churchyard and Green**

a tranquil historic green space around the church, used for reflection and community gatherings (e.g. Remembrance Day);

(iii) **[Any other specific green, e.g. The Ridge footpath or war memorial garden, Pinfold/flagpole, the Wong, Cox's Walk etc.].**

Development on these Local Green Spaces is ruled out other than in very special circumstances, as per national policy. Only proposals that support their use or enjoyment (for example, an ancillary shelter, or new play equipment on the playing field) may be permitted.

Green Infrastructure and Connectivity:

*Development proposals should preserve existing **green infrastructure features** such as mature trees, established hedgerows, ditches, and ponds.*

Where removal of vegetation is unavoidable, this must be compensated by equivalent or greater replacement planting on-site (native species are encouraged to benefit wildlife).

Layout of new development should seek to **connect into the footpath network** – for instance, by providing pedestrian links to nearest public rights-of-way or sidewalks. If a development lies adjacent to an existing right-of-way, it should be designed to integrate and enhance that path (e.g. by adding signage, natural surveillance, or planting).

Opportunities to create new green corridors (linear greenspaces) through larger developments will be supported, especially if they link different parts of the village or connect to the countryside.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

All proposals are expected to achieve a net gain in biodiversity in line with emerging national requirements. This could be achieved through measures such as: incorporating bird/bat boxes in new buildings, creating wildflower areas or tree copses in landscaping schemes, retaining and buffering hedgerows, or contributing to off-site habitat creation in the parish.

Development that would result in the significant loss or fragmentation of habitats (such as the removal of an entire hedgerow or woodland without mitigation) will be resisted. Special care should be taken in areas supporting protected or notable species (for example, known bat foraging routes near the church and mature trees, or ground-nesting bird habitats on the outskirts). An ecological assessment should accompany proposals on greenfield sites to inform mitigation and enhancement plans.

Community initiatives that improve green infrastructure (like tree planting on streets, establishing allotments or community gardens, or creating a nature trail) are encouraged and development should not hinder their implementation.

Plain English Policy Summary:

Great Gonerby's green spaces and wildlife habitats are **essential to village life**. This policy ensures they are **protected, connected, and enhanced** through new development and community action.

Local Green Spaces (LGS) – Protected for Community Use

The following areas are designated as **Local Green Spaces** (see Map Y), meaning they are **safeguarded from development**:

1. **Great Gonerby Playing Field & Recreation Ground**
 - Used for play, sport, and village events
2. **St Sebastian's Churchyard and Green**
 - Peaceful, historic place for reflection and remembrance
3. **[Other local greenspaces – e.g. Ridge footpath, memorial garden, Pinfold/flagpole, the Wong, Cox's Walk]**

No development is allowed on these sites unless there are **very special circumstances**. Improvements for community use (like new play equipment or a shelter) may be allowed.

Green Infrastructure and Footpath Links

- Keep important **trees, hedgerows, ponds, and ditches**
- If removal is absolutely necessary, replace with **equal or better planting** (use native species)
- New layouts should **link to existing footpaths or pavements**

- Improve public rights of way near new development (e.g. signage, planting, visibility)
- Support new **green corridors** (like paths with trees and planting that link parts of the village)

Boosting Biodiversity – Net Gain Required

All new development must lead to a **net gain for nature**. Examples include:

- Bird and bat boxes on new buildings
- Wildflower planting or tree copses
- Keeping hedgerows and adding wildlife-friendly buffers
- Creating habitats nearby if they can't fit on site

Avoid harming important habitats or disrupting species like bats or ground-nesting birds. Proposals on **greenfield sites** must include an **ecology report** showing how impacts will be managed and biodiversity will be improved.

Supporting Community Nature Projects

- Tree planting on village streets
- New allotments or community gardens
- Nature trails or green walking routes

These initiatives are **encouraged**, and development should **not block** them.

Reasoned justification:

Policy 7 ensures that **environmental considerations are at the heart of planning decisions** in Great Gonerby.

By designating Local Green Spaces, the Plan gives these especially cherished areas protection akin to Green Belt, reflecting their importance (the playing field, for example, is the only large public open space for recreation in the village – losing it would be devastating to community life).

The churchyard's inclusion acknowledges its dual role as heritage and green oasis. Protecting GI features like hedgerows aligns with the parish's agricultural landscape character and can help maintain **ecological corridors** (e.g. hedges that allow hedgehogs and birds to move across the area).

This policy also addresses the national requirement (under the Environment Act 2021) for **Biodiversity Net Gain**, making it locally relevant. The community's aspiration is to see **more wildlife and greenery** in and around the village – whether that's bats still flitting around the church at dusk, or children seeing birds and butterflies in their neighbourhood.

Implementing this policy will contribute to that outcome, as well as help with climate resilience (trees for shade, vegetation for carbon capture and flood mitigation). In sum, Policy 7 supports the objective of "*harmony between human development and the natural environment*" by ensuring development works with, not against, Great Gonerby's green assets.

Policy 8: Renewable Energy and Low-Carbon Infrastructure

Context:

Tackling climate change is a global imperative that must be addressed at local level too. Great Gonerby, as a semi-rural community, has potential to contribute by accommodating appropriate **renewable energy installations** and encouraging low-carbon living.

Community consultation indicated general support for renewable energy projects as long as they are sensitively sited. For instance, solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on individual houses or community buildings are widely accepted. There is already a large **solar farm** to the north of the parish on Gonerby Moor, so there is no support for any future sites on this scale, but a shared ground-source heat network for new developments would be considered.

Wind energy is more controversial due to visual impacts, but small-scale wind (like a single farm turbine) might be considered if not too close to homes or important views.

Additionally, the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) is expected to rise, so providing charging infrastructure is vital.

The Plan also recognizes the need for any renewable projects to not harm the very environment we seek to protect – so safeguards regarding wildlife, landscape, and agricultural land are included. The aim of this policy is therefore essentially to **support renewables with conditions** to ensure environmental and amenity protections.

This local policy complements broader climate policies by focusing on what's appropriate in Great Gonerby's context (e.g. likely more solar than wind, due to landscape constraints, and a push for building-integrated solutions).

Policy 8: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development

*The development of renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure in Great Gonerby will be supported in principle, **provided that** potential impacts are adequately addressed.*

Further **community-scale solar projects and wind turbine farms will not be supported** but small-scale solutions such as solar panels on buildings or small ground-mounted solar arrays, or individual small-scale wind turbines, will be supported when they satisfy all of the following criteria:

- They do **not result in the loss of high-quality agricultural land** (Grades 1–3a) unless there is no feasible alternative and the energy benefits demonstrably outweigh this loss.
- They include measures to protect local wildlife and achieve biodiversity net gain – for example, a solar array should allow for wildflower meadow planting underneath and around panels, and maintain wildlife corridors.
- They are sited and designed to **minimize visual impact** on the landscape and do not significantly intrude into or harm any of the Important Views identified (Policy 6). Adequate screening (using vegetation or topography) should be in place for larger installations.
- They do not have an unacceptable impact on the **amenity of nearby residents** (no harmful levels of noise, glare, shadow flicker in the case of any wind turbine, or other disturbances).

- For wind energy proposals (including single turbines), they must be of a scale and location that has local community backing and meet national criteria. Large commercial wind farms are not considered appropriate within the parish's landscape, but micro-turbines or single turbines serving a farm or business will be assessed on their individual merits against the above criteria.

In addition, new development should facilitate the shift to low-carbon technology: for example, residential and commercial developments **must incorporate EV charging points** (in line with or exceeding building regulations requirements) and are encouraged to integrate on-site renewables (solar panels, air/ground source heat pumps, etc.) into their design from the outset.

The retrofitting of existing buildings with energy-efficiency measures and renewables (such as solar panels on roofs or electric vehicle charging infrastructure) will generally be supported, again subject to considerations of design (particularly on historic buildings) and amenity.

Plain English Policy Summary:

Great Gonerby supports **renewable energy and low-carbon development**, as long as impacts are properly managed.

Renewable Energy Projects Will Be Supported If They:

1. **Protect Productive Farmland**
 - Avoid using the **best and most versatile agricultural land** (Grades 1–3a) unless there's no other option and the benefits are clear
 - Further Large-scale solar farm proposals like the existing one to the North of the village, will not be supported
2. **Support Nature and Biodiversity**
 - Include planting (e.g. wildflowers under solar panels)
 - Keep **wildlife corridors** intact
3. **Minimise Visual Harm**
 - Don't spoil **Important Views** (see Policy 6)
 - Use screening (e.g. trees, hedges, natural landform) to hide larger schemes
4. **Avoid Harm to Local Amenity**
 - No harmful effects like **glare, noise, or shadow flicker**
 - Protect peace and privacy for neighbours
5. **Have Community Support (for Wind)**
 - Wind projects must be **supported by the local community** and be in a suitable area
 - Large commercial wind farms are **not appropriate**, but **small turbines for farms or businesses** may be supported if they meet the above tests

All New Development Should Help Cut Carbon

- Must include **EV charging points** (as required by Building Regulations, or better)
- Should include **on-site renewable energy** – e.g.:
 - **Solar panels**
 - **Air or ground source heat pumps**
 - **Battery storage**

Retrofitting old buildings with solar panels, EV chargers, or insulation is **strongly supported** – so long as it respects building character (especially if historic) and doesn't harm neighbours.

In short: **Clean energy and energy-efficient buildings are welcome in Great Gonerby** – as long as they are **well-designed, well-sited, and nature-friendly**.

Reasoned justification:

Policy 8 ensures Great Gonerby can play its part in the transition to a **low-carbon future**, in alignment with the national 2050 net-zero target and local climate commitments.

By laying out clear conditions, the policy gives a **green light to well-considered renewable energy projects** while safeguarding what residents value about their environment. For instance, solar panels on individual houses or small ground mounted solar arrays would be considered, but this should not come at the cost of destroying habitats or blighting views – the criteria address that balance.

The support for EV infrastructure and retrofitting aligns with wider trends (with petrol/diesel cars being phased out, every home will need charging access). Importantly, this policy can encourage developers to propose innovative solutions: e.g. a new housing site might include solar panels on every home and a battery storage for the community, knowing that the Plan is supportive.

The slight caution on wind energy reflects the landscape sensitivity and mixed public opinion, but doesn't rule it out entirely if a suitable scheme arises.

All in all, Policy 8 signals that Great Gonerby is “**embracing its future**” with respect to sustainability (as per the Vision), by welcoming renewable energy — **so long as it is done in harmony with community and environmental priorities**.

Community Aspirations and Projects (Non-Statutory)

The following **Community Aspirations** are important initiatives and goals identified by residents which **fall outside the scope of land-use planning policies**. While they are not formal planning policies, they are included in this Plan to ensure they are recorded and pursued in parallel with the Neighbourhood Plan's implementation. The Parish Council and community will work with relevant authorities and partners to achieve these aspirations between 2025 and 2040:

Source Index:

Sources:

- South Kesteven District Council, *Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)* – Settlement summaries for Great Gonerby and proposed housing allocation.
- City Population (Parish data) – Great Gonerby Census 2021 population and age statistics.
- Census Data UK – Great Gonerby household count and demographics.
- England Places (Great Gonerby) – Geographic context (location, elevation, nearby settlements, land cover).
- South Kesteven District Council, *Great Gonerby Conservation Area Appraisal* – Location and historical context of the village (2009).
- Wikipedia (Great Gonerby) – General information on community facilities and local identity.
- Barrowby Neighbourhood Plan (Consultation Draft Feb 2025) – Template policies and objectives (adapted for Great Gonerby).
- Geograph images: *St Sebastian's Church* (Grade I listed) and *Great Gonerby Memorial Hall* (community venue) photographs.

Appendix 1

Great Gonerby Housing Development Concept

Executive Summary

This document has been developed by the Planning Committee and the Neighbourhood Plan coordinator of Great Gonerby Parish Council (GGPC).

The Great Gonerby Neighbourhood Plan (GGNP) development project is well underway, having completed a series of public consultations over the last 12 months.

This concept plan is intended as an early indication of the emerging consensus of opinion from parishioners and villagers from those consultations. It is an attempt to shape this emerging consensus to take into consideration the requirements of multiple other stakeholders in the future delivery of the housing needs for the area, namely:

- SKDC Local Plan section and housing quota
- LCC Highways considerations
- Housing Developers
- Landowners
- Local current and future employers

The aim is to inform the SKDC planning team of where, in principle, the parish would find housing developments acceptable and where it would not, and to present an initial concept plan which would meet the objectives of all the above stakeholders and receive the support of the parish community and Parish Council. It is intended as a high-level starting point for discussion and not in any way a finalised plan.

Any proposed developments for any allocated sites would be closely scrutinised by GGPC and any required changes would be agreed with developers before approval.

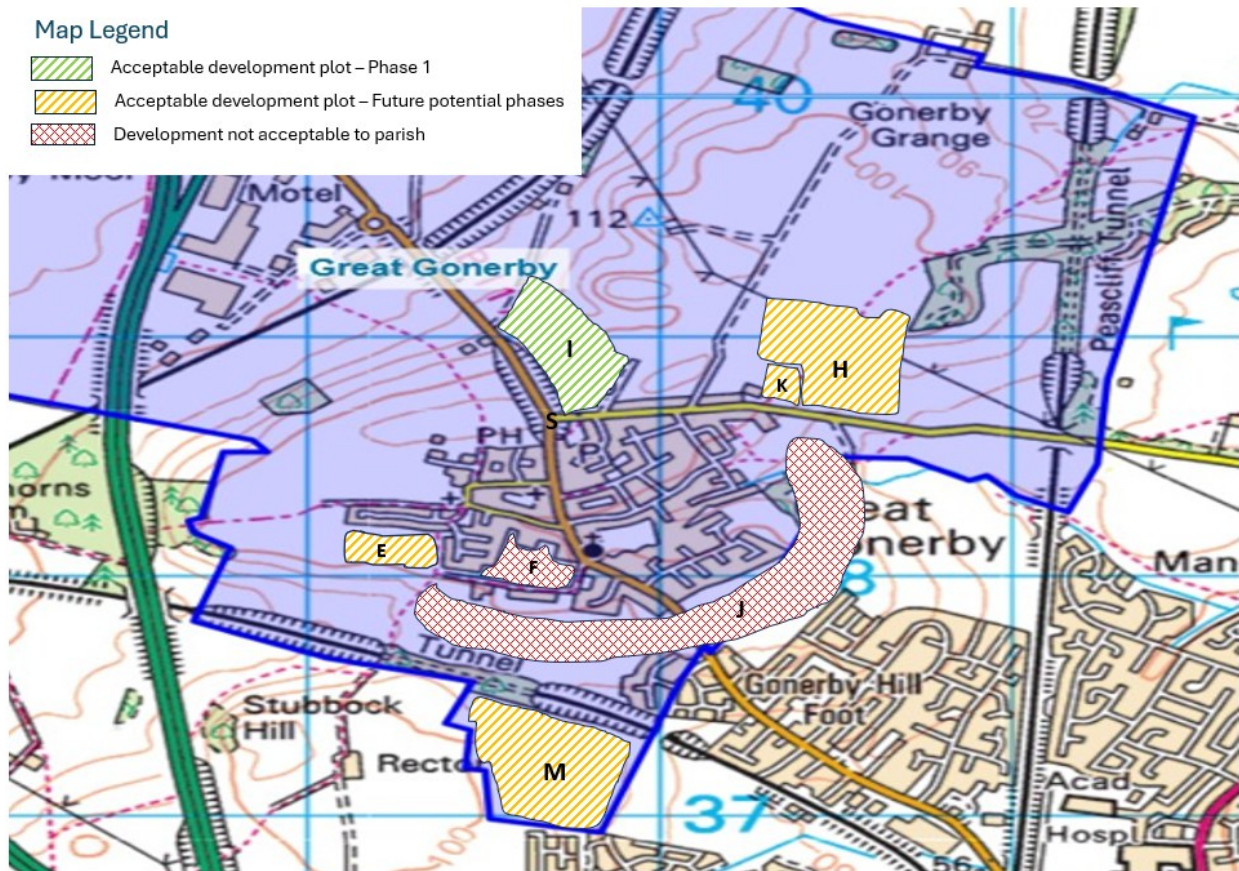
Key Points for consideration

1. There is considerable opposition from residents to the development of the land adjacent to Church Lane (SKPR241 in the Local Plan, labelled F on the map below), as documented in the responses to the Local Plan consultation in 2024 (470 objection signatures and 200 questionnaire submissions).
2. From the GGNP consultations there is a clear consensus to protect and preserve the existing green space, and we ask for this to be '*allocated open green space*', in the central area of the village, to limit the impact of development on its rich Heritage and Character, and to maintain a 'green band' to the south (marked J) below to keep it separate from the Grantham conurbation. We ask for consideration to be given to allocate this area as an '*Area of Local Separation*'.
3. The parish would broadly accept housing development to the north of the village, which could absorb a significant allocation of SKDC's housing quota whilst meeting the above consensus.
4. Proposed Employment development around Gonerby Moor makes the provision of housing to the north of the village an attractive option for employers.
5. The topographically challenging junction of Belton Lane and Newark Hill (labelled S below) has been subject to a LCC Highways feasibility survey which concludes it is

currently at maximum capacity, making it a limiting factor for any further development along Belton Lane. The costs of adapting the junction to make it suitable for modern traffic are unfortunately prohibitively high, therefore an alternative solution needs to be found.

6. It is possible that existing outline development plans could provide a solution to the Belton Lane/Newark Hill junction issues, subject to a Traffic Management Plan being acceptable to LCC Highways

Figure 1 – Phased Development to 2050



7. The plan utilises existing sites previously offered for consideration for development, some with planning applications well advanced. The plots as marked on the map (Figure 1 above) are representative only, drawn within the limitations of the Word software available to the authors. It is acknowledged that negotiations with landowners and developers will be required before the final shapes of the plots are agreed, as well as the details of planning designs.

Plot Labels:

- E – SKPR303, proposed 'Retirement Village' by Aspbury Planning
- F – SKPR241, land adjacent to Church Lane
- H – SKPR183, proposed landowner site to north of Belton Lane
- I – Proposed landowner/Marrons developer site to north of Belton Lane
- K – Proposed landowner site to north of Belton Lane
- M – Phase 3 of Rectory Farm development

Belton Lane/Newark Hill junction issues

The junction is situated at a point where the old Great North Road was 're-profiled' during the Turnpike Acts of the 1820's creating a deep cutting to make the hill less steep for stagecoaches. The approach from Belton Lane had to drop steeply into the cutting to meet Newark Hill.

The junction topography was designed for low volumes of horse-drawn traffic and is not fit for purpose for modern road vehicles, even with the existing 7.5T weight restriction.

The entrance in the cutting to Belton Lane is narrow, barely wide enough for 2 cars to pass, and anything larger such as farm or delivery vehicles can often block the junction.

There have been two fatal accidents in recent years, demonstrating the need to do something about this dangerous junction.

The LCC Highways feasibility survey concludes that the junction is at or exceeding maximum capacity with the anticipated increase in traffic volume from the Allison Homes Manthorpe Chase development to the west. The survey suggests that further housing development anywhere along Belton Lane would not be approved by LCC Highways for this reason, therefore these sites have been left out of the forthcoming revised Local Plan.

However, this concept plan suggests potential traffic management solutions could be built into existing outline development plans north of Belton Lane which would mitigate the junction issues, enabling such developments to be acceptable to LCC Highways.

Conclusion

Although the LCC Highways feasibility study currently does not facilitate housing development to the north, traffic management considerations could be designed into the detail of such development plans to meet Highways' requirements. These plans then would represent a viable solution which helps SKDC meet its housing development targets whilst also receiving the support of the parish residents:

- SKDC gets a better contribution of dwelling numbers to its housing target
- Great Gonerby gets to keep its much-cherished green space and heritage assets at Church Lane and separation from Grantham
- GG Neighbourhood Plan can be fully aligned with a revised SKDC Local Plan
- LCC Highways mitigates the problem of the Belton Lane/Newark Hill junction
- The housing developers and landowners are able to create financially viable developments
- Great Gonerby Parish will be looking for community contributions for enhancement of the village