

Draft Submission of  
Chilcompton Parish Council  
to Mendip Local Plan

Note: This is a draft for consultation. The Parish Council urges all villagers and other stakeholders to send comments to: [parishclerk@chilcompton.org](mailto:parishclerk@chilcompton.org). Further details may be found at the end of the document.

### **Introduction**

In 2013 Chilcompton produced a Village Plan after a process that involved significant consultation with the Community, including questionnaires going to every house, and other questionnaires addressing specific groups. The Village Plan also incorporated the survey done for the Millennium Report of 2000, which was also based upon a questionnaire which went to every house in the Village.

Since work started on developing the Village Plan, the government has set out new policies and structures, which reduce the weight given to a Village Plan in local decision making. At this point the Parish Council considered doing a Neighbourhood Plan, which would be given significant weight under the new structures. However, it was determined that the ability to obtain an adequate level of Community engagement so soon after completing the Village Plan could be unachievable if it were received as a bureaucratic exercise by many.

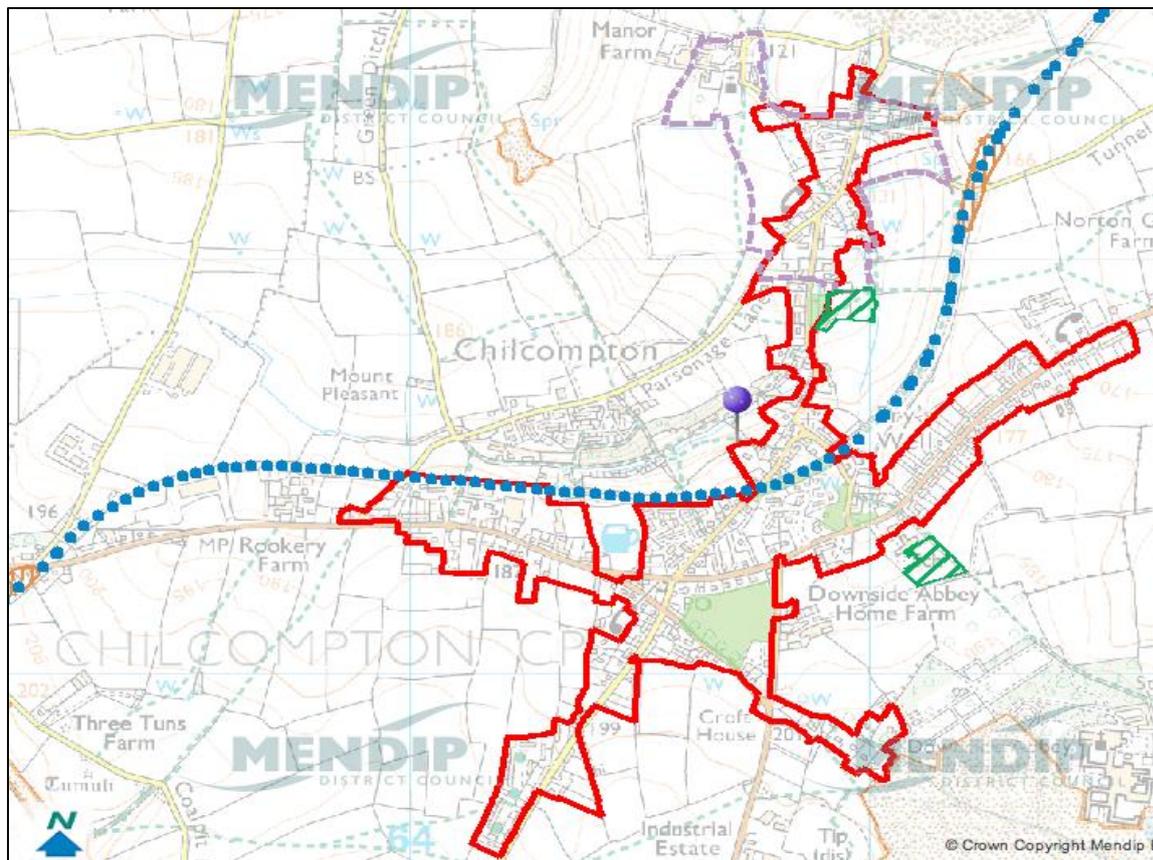
Following discussions with Mendip Planning Department it was agreed that they would strongly consider any submissions we made to them as part of their development of a Part 2 of The Local Plan covering the whole of Mendip. The more any ideas and requests could be evidenced as commanding local support, then the more weight they could be given, subject to other considerations.

## Purpose

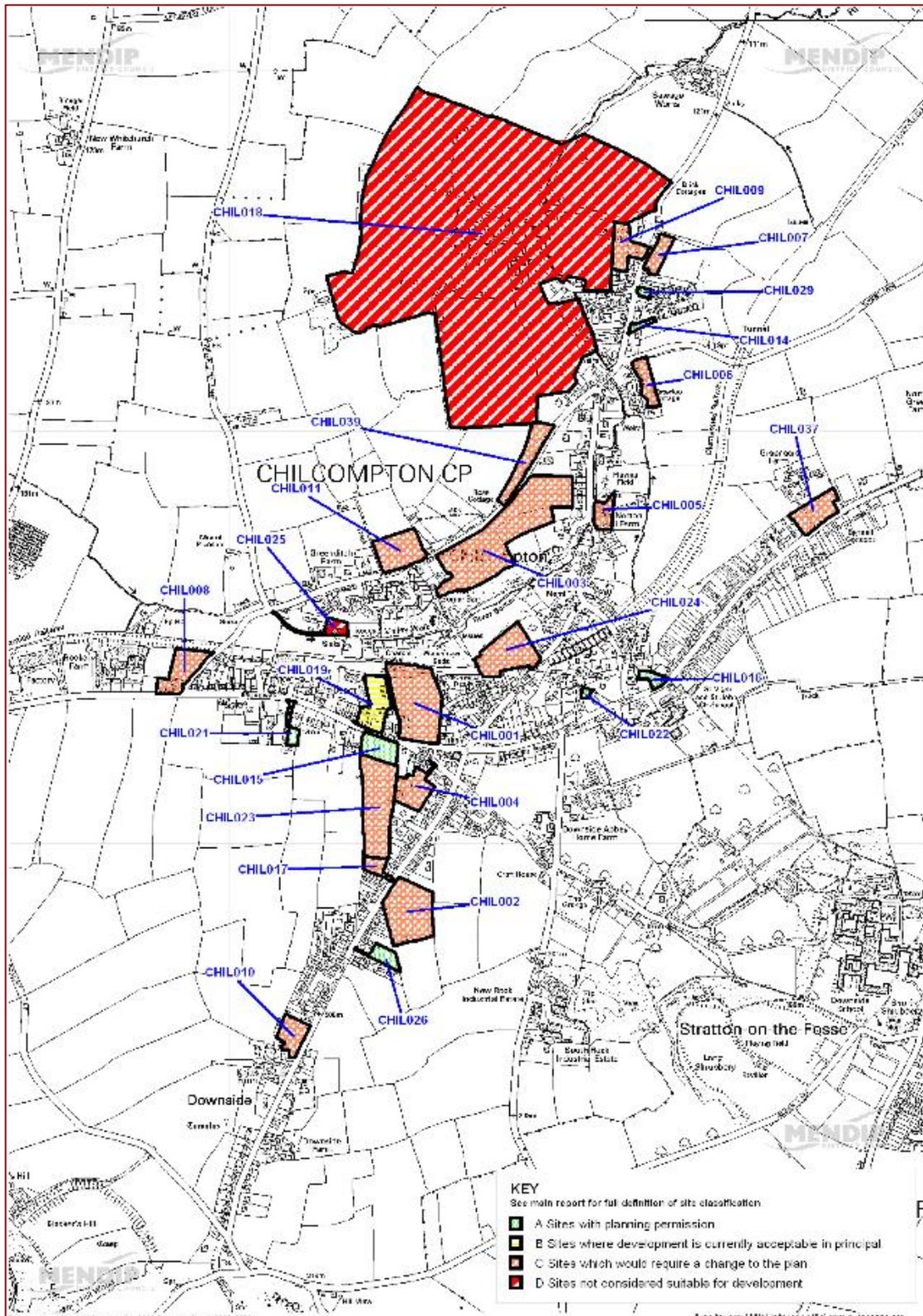
The purpose of this document is to set out some of the issues Chilcompton would like to see in Mendip's Local Plan, which is due to be drafted in early 2014.

## Background

As one of the larger and more popular villages in Mendip with significant local resources, house builders are increasingly seeking permission to build in the Parish. There is concern that resources such as schools and shops are being stretched beyond their limit, as well as the entire Parish infrastructure. The Community feels that, particularly considering recent changes to the legislative framework, there is insufficient clarity about the policy framework and the long to medium term vision for development in Chilcompton. Mendip District Council accepts that recent legal challenges to their strategic planning framework and the cost of opposing these challenges has significantly weakened their ability to control or manage new developments in a way they would like.



Map showing Mendip's draft proposed development limit  
To see the full map and key go to <http://www.planvu.co.uk/mdc/>



Map of Mendip's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (2011)

To view larger map go to <http://www.mendip.gov.uk/shlaa> (you will need to scroll down to the bottom of the page, open "Documents" and select Chilcompton)

### **Scope of these proposals**

Given the time constraints for submitting this document it has not been possible to do a detailed analysis of the existing or previous policies as set out in the last Local Plan and other Mendip plans. As a result, the omission of anything in this document that was in previous plans should not be construed as not supporting them. For the most part, the comments received from the Community reflect what they want changed or what they see as the priorities.

The proposed planning Guidelines are given under the following headings:

- Preservation of existing aspects
- Housing
- Industrial and business premises
- Retail
- Social and community facilities

## Section One - Preservation of existing aspects of Chilcompton

There are a number of features and landmarks that the Community consider critical in giving Chilcompton its individuality and therefore need to be especially preserved.

1. The open fields between Chilcompton and Midsomer Norton, especially along the Chilcompton Road, should be designated as a green belt and any development prohibited. In particular, B&NES should not be permitted to extend their building line across the county boundary into Mendip.

**Why?** These few fields are considered critical to preserving the separate identity of Chilcompton and preventing it being consumed into the Midsomer Norton and Radstock conurbation.

2. The open fields to the east of The Street and the River Somer going up to the old railway line should be designated as green belt and any development prohibited. This could exclude a strip of land alongside and to the east of Somer Lea.

**Why?** To preserve an aspect of Chilcompton that helps retain the sense of a small rural community and is considered to be a unique feature and landmark of the Village by the Community.

3. The area around the River Somer from Greenditch, through the valley, down The Street and The Pitchings, until it passes the far side of Church Lane should be preserved. Particularly the relationship between the road and the river with the white metal railing and old bridges. No new bridges should be permitted across the river along this stretch.

**Why?** This area is considered a beautiful and iconic visual element that helps define Chilcompton as somewhere special. The river is a unique asset and part of our industrial heritage, having performed numerous roles throughout Chilcompton's history, much of which is still visible; for example, the fish stock ponds, watercress beds and mill pond. It includes the site of an early Bell mine and an old quarry. The white railings along the

river were a gift to Chilcompton from Captain Streeten. In addition, the river is a vitally important ecosystem and wildlife habitat where several uncommon and endangered species of bird have been seen, including herons, kingfishers, ducks and moorhens. Because of this vitality, the river is also used in the education of our local children to demonstrate how essential such a natural asset is.

4. The area around Fry's Well spring should be preserved.

**Why?** It is one of the famous and iconic features that help define Chilcompton as somewhere special. It was famously mentioned by Coleridge in his poetry and is part of the Village's historic heritage.

5. The War Memorial on Bowden Hill should be preserved.

**Why?** It is part of the Village's historic heritage.

6. The green land in the triangle formed by Wells Road (B3139), Rock Road and Naish's Cross (B3356) should be preserved.

**Why?** This is an oasis of green with livestock from Downside Home Farm creating a rural ambience, designated as Q2 land (open space of visual significance) by Mendip District Council. This area endorses the rural aspect of this part of the Village and promotes the well-being of residents.

7. On Stockhill Road, the Village envelope goes up just beyond as Greenways to 108 San Anfa. There are green fields on both sides of the road between 108 San Anfa and Nitts Farm which is the northern extent of the old hamlet of Downside. This green land should be preserved.

**Why?** The identity and integrity of the old hamlet of Downside should be preserved as it has a rural farming character with 3 active farms at present.

8. The stone walls on either side of the road from the War Memorial, on Bowden Hill and the Street to Shell House, should be preserved. Of particular note is the small alcove in the wall on Bowden Hill that was an old spring or water supply.

**Why?** These walls and the many details built into them, such as the spring alcove, are part of the Village heritage and are a demonstrable aspect of our history.

## **Section Two - Housing and Residential Accommodation**

Whilst accepting that over time new houses and residential accommodation will be built in Chilcompton, there are three key areas of concern:

- The number of houses for which permission has been granted has already exceeded Chilcompton's quota.
  - The mix of houses being built is not in keeping with the expressed needs of the community with inadequate smaller homes and flats being built.
  - There is little structured planning as to where new houses should be built.
9. The Mendip Local Plan should make it clear that Chilcompton has already exceeded its agreed new house building quota and that large scale developments are unlikely to succeed.

**Why?** To assist developers by preventing them from committing resources to projects they may then need to defend with legal process.

10. In as much as it is possible to make strategic decisions about where new houses should be sited in the long and medium term, the local plan should make it clear that the preferred area for new residential property will be towards the Eastern and Southern boundaries of the Village.

**Why?** To provide strategic direction and give clarity for villagers and developers alike.

11. No new houses should be built closer than 15 metres to the Wells Road (B3139).

**Why?** One of the features of Chilcompton is the way most of the houses along the main road are set well back. This is an important defining feature of the Village.

### **Section Three - Industrial and business premises**

Maintaining sites of employment and allowing further (appropriate) small industrial or business premises to be developed is of critical importance to the Village and to creating a vibrant and diverse Community. Otherwise there is a risk that we become just a “dead” commuter village.

12. The block of land to the north of The Broadway, from The Somerset Wagon (Public House) to Greenditch Close, currently being used by a haulage company, the local garage and a second hand car lot, should be preserved as a site of employment. It should be made clear that no new residential buildings will be permitted on this site.

**Why?** It is important to preserve employment opportunities in the Village and it is beneficial for business and the Community if industrial and business premises are grouped together rather than spread out ad hoc. The existing garage provides important facilities for residents and the Community’s sustainability and integrity.

13. The land on either side of Rock Road from Abbey Road to Green Lane, should be designated for employment. It should be made clear that no new residential buildings will be permitted in this area.

**Why?** It is important to be able to attract new business to the Village and it is more efficient for business if their locations are in one or two areas rather than scattered around. This area already has a small industrial estate and is a natural location for any future

business or industrial development. It will also help planners and developers.

## **Section Four - Retail**

Having local retail outlets that meet the needs of the Community are critical in maintaining a sense of community. So many villages have become 'dead' when they lost their shop, pub, etc. Local shops also help provide employment, reduce our carbon footprint and are important to people on low income for whom travelling to shops further afield is a significant financial burden.

14. The maximum protection available should be given to the Redan and the Somerset Wagon pubs. Both sites should be designated for retail, social and community purposes only, so that no housing can be built on the site.

**Why?** Both pubs are important local community resources. The Redan in particular is highly valued by the Community and was recently designated as a Registered Community Asset. In addition, it is one of the few remaining sites in a central location that is suitable as a retail or community hub. There is significant concern that if this plot was given over to housing, the Village would lose its heart for all time. Without a central core of social, community and retail facilities a village becomes "dead". The Redan is at the centre of well-supported campaign to protect it.

15. The site current occupied by Downside Motors should be designated as for retail or business use only.

**Why?** Should the site ever become available for development, its place at the centre of the community (close to the school and Village Hall) means it is one of the few plots in a central location available for retail services, which would be lost for all time if it was given over for housing.

## **Please give us your comments.**

It is important that the Parish Council hears the views of as many villagers and other stakeholders as possible. Do you agree with these proposals? Whatever your views, we would like to hear them.

The feedback received will be collated, made anonymous (personal identifying data removed) and presented to Chilcompton Parish and Mendip District Councils as an appendix to the final submission.

There are two ways you can voice your views.

- By email to [parishclerk@chilcompton.org](mailto:parishclerk@chilcompton.org) or,
- By post to:

Malcolm Rigby, Clerk to the Council,  
Shell House, The Street,  
Chilcompton, Bath  
BA3 4HB

If possible, please use the feedback questionnaire that should have arrived in the same email as this.

Thank you, on behalf of Chilcompton Parish Council.