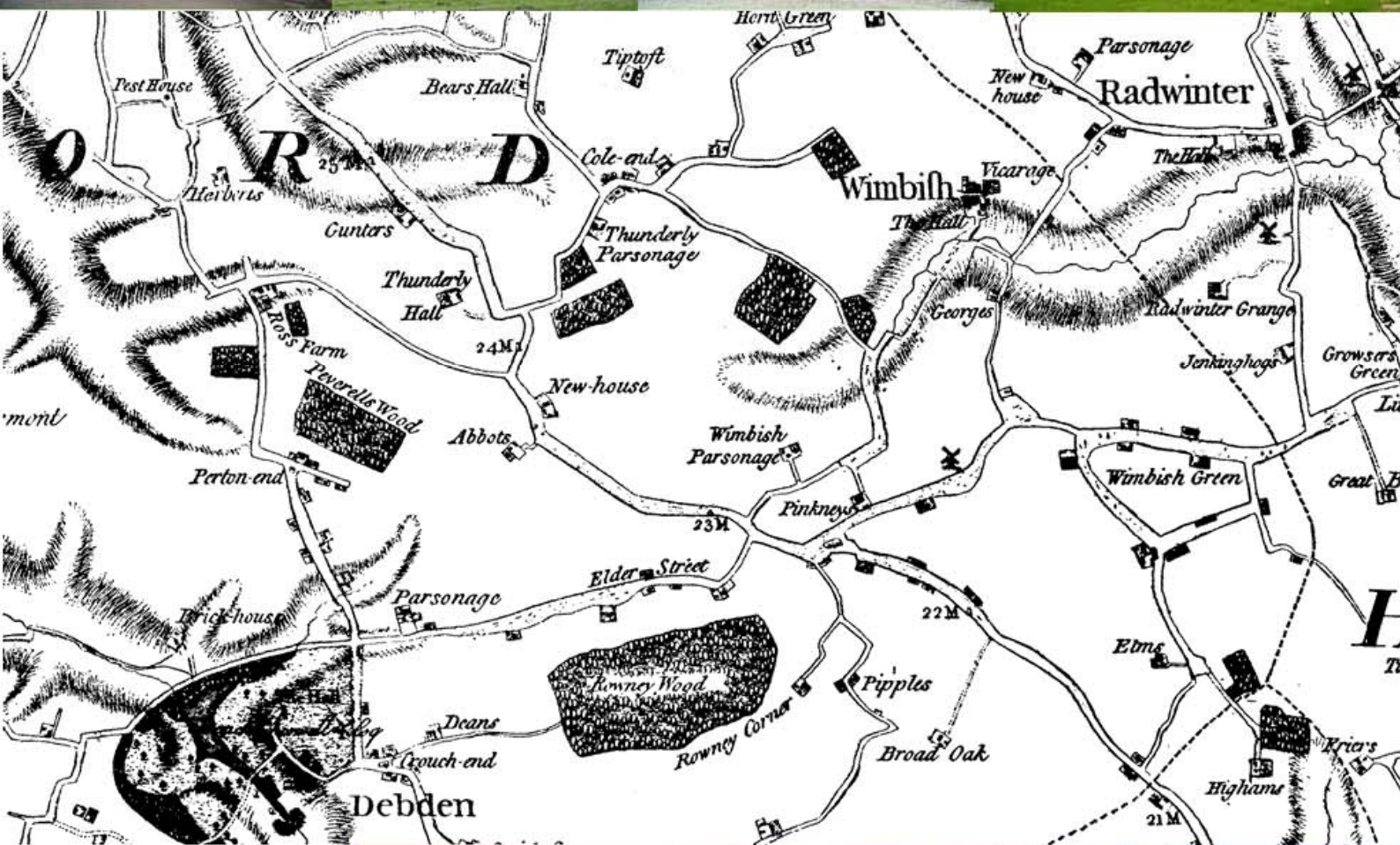


# Wimbish Parish Plan



2007 Onwards

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## **Abbreviations**

PC	Wimbish Parish Council
UDC	Uttlesford District Council
ECC	Essex County Council
PCC	Wimbish Parochial Church Council
WRAG	Wimbish Roads Action Group
Jubblies	Wimbish Jubilee Committee



This Parish Plan is a Countryside Agency funded initiative prepared by the Parish Council and supported by the Parish Plan Steering Committee.



Tree planting on the Lucy May field, a community run conservation project.

## Aims

The aims of this Parish Plan project are:

- to consult all Wimbish residents about:  
“*The type of village and community we want*”
- to summarise our collective view and produce an outline action plan

## Summary Findings

The findings are based on responses received to a formal questionnaire delivered to every household in Wimbish in 2004. Views expressed at an open day and in 3 informal surveys have also been taken into account.

In summary:

An overwhelming majority of us strongly value “the pleasant, open and rural character” of Wimbish and wish to keep it that way.

Our other top priorities include:

- Action to provide greater safety on Wimbish’s roads
- Development of a small number of houses, especially affordable houses, for local people and key workers
- Replacement of the existing village hall by a new multi-purpose community centre to strengthen and contribute to a sustainable community.

This Parish Plan has been delivered to every household in Wimbish and is also available on the Wimbish website: [www.wimbish.org.uk](http://www.wimbish.org.uk)

## A Brief Profile of Wimbish

*Census 2001 – Population 1550 in 421 households (of which Carver Barracks approx. 40%)*

The parish of Wimbish, a widely spread rural community of some 1500 people, adjoins the south east boundary of the market town of Saffron Walden. Long views over pleasant open farmland give the parish its distinctive rural character. 4½ miles from end to end, and covering some 4,920 acres, Wimbish includes 4 manors (Broadoaks, Pinkneys, Abbots and Tiptofts). It is also believed to have more miles of footpaths than any other parish in Essex, making it a haven for walkers and naturalists alike.



Although the Ordnance Survey map shows the name ‘Wimbish’ in the vicinity of the parish church in the north east corner of the parish (see back page), the main population centres are elsewhere. In fact, formerly known as ‘Wimbish and Thunderley’, the parish encompasses several quite distinct hamlets, each with its own individual character and identity. These include Tye Green, Upper and Lower Green (or Wimbish Green), Howlett End, Elder Street/Carver Barracks and other less clearly defined areas including Thaxted Road, Maple Lane, Mill Road, Cole End, Rowney Corner and Pepples Lane.



Although the parish has most of the elements that comprise a traditional village, All Saints church (near Maple Lane) is a mile from Wimbish Primary School, the village hall and recreation ground (in Tye Green) are almost a mile from the pub/restaurant (in Howlett End), and this in turn is almost a mile from the shop/PO (at Elder Street/Carver Barracks).



Many of the individual hamlets of Wimbish have their own strong sense of community. However, the spread out nature of the parish coupled with the lack of a clear focal point has always presented something of a challenge to the development of a sense of cohesion in the parish as a whole, particularly in recent years as the original population has aged or moved away and been replaced by incomers, many of whom are commuters. The construction of a new multi-purpose community centre has been identified as a possible way to address this, and residents have expressed strong (85%) support for such a scheme via the 2004 Community Questionnaire. Such a development would of course require appropriately experienced teams of volunteers to secure the necessary funding, to select a site and design that the community can support and to manage the project in all its phases.



Carver Barracks, accounting for some 35 - 45% of the inhabitants, has had a significant presence in Wimbish for many years, and integration with the Wimbish community has been growing since 33 Engineer Regiment established a permanent residence here. The key integrating factor is the primary school, a high proportion of whose pupils are based at Carver Barracks. The barracks also nowadays has regular representation at parish council meetings and provides important logistic and other support to community activities. The recently formed ‘Tang-Ting Twinning Association’ is likely to strengthen these ties.



Wimbish’s historic economy of agriculture and supporting trades employs very few local inhabitants these days. Not surprisingly in view of Wimbish’s proximity to London and Cambridge, the majority (72%, excluding Carver Barracks) of the working population travel out for work on a daily basis. A limited bus service operates to parts of the parish but many areas are not directly served, and most people either choose (or are obliged) to travel by car.

Wimbish is outside development limits for planning purposes, and therefore new building other than appropriate affordable and/or infill housing is normally prohibited. The 2004 Questionnaire identified some support for a limited level of new building, and at the same time a strong collective wish to preserve Wimbish’s pleasant and quiet rural character as it is.

# 1. Transport & Highways

- **Tye Green parking:** Dangerous parking in Tye Green, particularly on the bend by the Village Hall, has long been an area of concern for a large proportion of Wimbish residents, in fact it emerged as the area of 'greatest concern' in an informal survey conducted in 2002. After several years of lobbying by the PC and WRAG, in late 2006 UDC carried out a kerb dropping project to allow off street parking for those houses on the dangerous bend by the village hall. The plan is now to implement parking restrictions (yellow lines) on the bend in 2007, subject to planning controls. Although it is hoped that this will resolve the problem once and for all, it must be acknowledged that there is a risk that it may also allow traffic to pass more quickly through this part of Tye Green. There are also plans to extend the lay-by opposite the Leys bungalows to allow more parking (no date set as yet). **Action: follow up these proposals to ensure earliest possible implementation; monitor thereafter**

- **Road safety in the vicinity of the village school:** In conjunction with the Safer Journeys



to School initiative, warning lights were installed on either side of the school in 2005/6. Speed cushions and extra street lighting are also planned, however these have been deferred to 2007/8 pending allocation of additional funding. **Action: follow up these proposals to ensure earliest possible implementation and then monitor thereafter.**

- **Speed limits and variable message signs:** The PC and WRAG have also been pushing vigorously for more realistic speed limits throughout Wimbish, and thanks to strong support from Highways department, new 40mph speed limits have now been installed in Elder Street, Thaxted Road and Mill Road, and extensions have now been made to existing speed limit areas in Howlett End (40mph) and Tye Green (30mph). It is generally felt that variable message signs (which show your speed as you approach) have been used to good effect to control traffic speed in nearby Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, and the parish council and WRAG have been lobbying Highways and our county councillor for some years to have these installed in Wimbish. We now understand that ECC is putting policies in place to permit implementation of these signs. **Action: Work with Highways to monitor the speed of traffic to determine whether additional measures are required, particularly variable message signs, and to push for this work to be included in the locally determined budget (LDB) and work programme.**



- **Roadside paths:** The lack of safe roadside paths, particularly along Mill Road, Top Road, and parts of Elder Street and Thaxted Road is an ongoing area of concern for Wimbish residents. Discussions were opened with Highways on this subject in 2005, during which it became clear that Highways were under the impression that the parish council did not wish to see anything done about this. The parish council has now asked Highways to re-include roadside path installation in its medium term plans for the area, aiming for a solution which

honours the rural nature of Wimbish. **Action: Continue to work with Highways department to bring plans forward for consideration by residents and subsequent implementation.**

- **Public/community transport:** In common with many rural areas in UK, lack of regular and reliable public transport is seen as a serious challenge for Wimbish, which has one of the poorest bus services in the area. **Action: Ensure appropriate representation in local public transport related committees, and continue to press vigorously for an improved service, with support from our district and county councillors and other relevant parties.**



## 2. Housing & Development

**Affordable housing:** The lack of supply of affordable housing for local residents and key workers emerged as a major concern for residents in the 2004 Questionnaire. Some 67% of



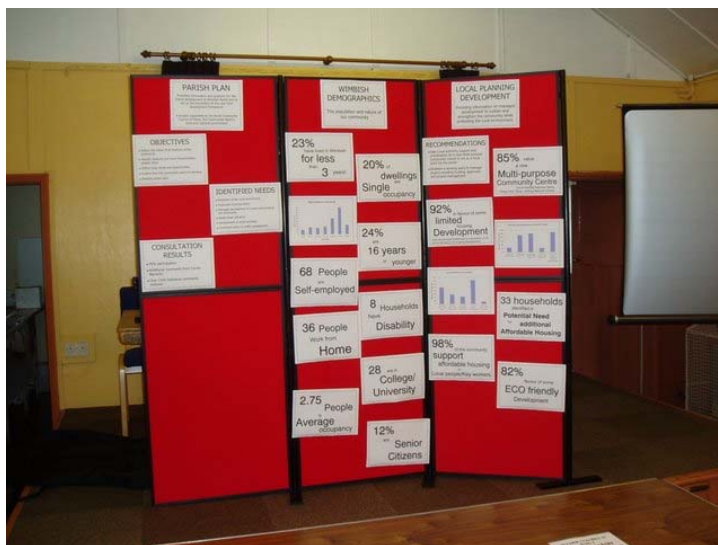
respondents were in favour of the principle of building new affordable houses in Wimbish. The Rural Housing Trust carried out a formal survey of short/ medium term needs on residents' behalf in late 2006 and identified a need for a scheme of around 8 new properties. The exact number and the ratio

of rented to shared ownership is likely to be decided following a more detailed second stage survey. The project is now in the hands of the Rural Housing Trust (on behalf of the parish council) to identify and negotiate for suitable land, and to commence the planning process. The parish council is very keen to ensure that such housing is as environmentally friendly as possible. **Action: Continue to push for earliest possible implementation, in conjunction with Rural Housing Trust.**

- **Other new house building, and conversions/extensions:** The 2004 Questionnaire identified some support (40 – 50%) for infill building, the conversion of existing or redundant buildings and the construction of new houses, provided limited to small groups (less than 10 houses). There was little support (10%) for larger groups of houses of whatever kind. Indeed, the strong collective wish to preserve the rural tranquillity of Wimbish would seem likely to generate significant opposition to any such large schemes. **Action: These community views need to be taken into account by decision making bodies when considering planning applications in Wimbish.**

## 2. Services, Facilities & Employment

- Demographics:** The 2004 Questionnaire gathered demographic statistics from households and full details are available at [www.wimbish.org.uk](http://www.wimbish.org.uk) or from the Clerk to the Parish Council. In summary, 29% have lived in the parish for 3 years or less, and 31% for 25 years or more. The age distribution of residents was found to be broadly in line with the national average, except that Wimbish has only 12% over 65, vs 16% national average.



- Use of existing facilities (village hall, pavilion, recreation ground):** 37% of respondents reported using the recreation ground, 45% using the church and 36% the Village Hall. Although 54% of Tye Green residents reported using the Village Hall, the comparable figure for Lower Green was 28% and for Elder Street, only 14%. For St Pauls and the Pavilion, the figures were even lower, 13% and 7% respectively. **Action: Activities to attract more residents to these community facilities are currently organised by the PCC, the Village Hall Committee and the Jubblies.**

- Proposed new multi-purpose community centre (including facilities):** In 2002/3 at the start of the Parish Plan process, it was believed that an area land in Wimbish could be obtained for the construction of a new MPCC. Our main aim in proposing this project was to develop a new focal point for Wimbish, helping to create a greater sense of community in our rather



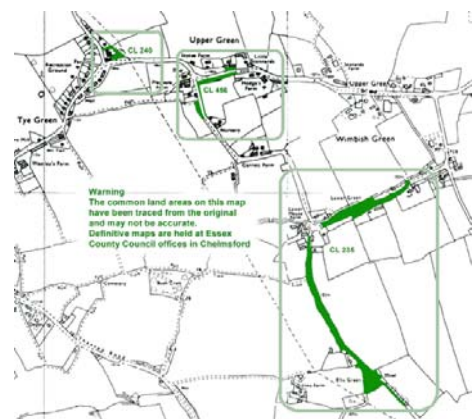
spread out parish. Initial discussions with Uttlesford District Council Planning Department (UDC) were very encouraging and residents subsequently voted overwhelmingly (85%) in favour of a new MPCC via the 2004 Questionnaire. In addition, the plans were taken up by Essex County Council as a Pilot Project for the whole of Essex, with funding and support to match. However, it eventually became clear that the piece of land we had in mind would not be available to the community after all.

Enquiries regarding another piece of land also fell through in 2005. And more recently at the 2006 Village Hall AGM, objections were raised concerning the possibility of constructing MPCC on the Recreation Ground. So we are now pretty much back to the drawing board, pending the identification of a suitable alternative plot that would be likely to attract popular support. Also, to take this project forward to the next stage, we will need a dedicated team of volunteers and a funding programme. **Action: To keep up the search for suitable sites, and continue to seek to attract potential volunteers to run the project.**

- **Local employment:** 37% of respondents to the 2004 Questionnaire reported being employed and 12% self-employed. 77% of respondents stated that they would like to see more encouragement for small businesses in Wimbish. **Action: Continue to explore options for encouraging small businesses in Wimbish, in conjunction with the Village Hall committee and the Jubblies.**
- **Farmers market:** Following a clear indication of interest in a regular Farmers' Market, a monthly was event was established in the village hall in 2005 and this is now well attended every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday in the month. This regular event is managed by the Village Hall committee on behalf of the community.

## 4. Conservation & Rural Issues

- **Common land, verges, ponds:** The 2004 Questionnaire registered strong support (83%) from residents for maintaining common land, verges and greens within Wimbish to a high environmental/conservation standard. In 2005, the parish council embarked on a long term project to identify all such land in Wimbish and to prepare and implement conservation plans. **Action: Identify and register all common land; secure available funding and restore ponds and overgrown areas; regularise contractual arrangements for routine conservation activities.**



- **Footpath maintenance:** 76% of respondents to the 2004 Questionnaire already walk in the village and surrounding area, and 29% feel that footpaths are not being adequately maintained. **Action: Regularly monitor the status of footpath maintenance and ensure that the work is properly contracted and carried out.**



- **Lucy May field project:** This 5 acre field was left to the community by Ben Taylor in the 1970s. Formal approval for a change from agricultural to recreational use (conservation area) was approved by UDC in 2005. Part of the area has now been extensively planted with native woodland trees and another area with grass for grazing. It is expected that the project will be available for use by residents and for grazing in 2008. **Action: Manage the area as an environmental conservation project for the benefit of the community.**

- **Syndicates and recycling:** The 2004 Questionnaire identified significant interest in syndicates for common services. The oil syndicate is already in operation and running smoothly. **Action: Explore the scope for a septic tank waste removal syndicate.**

## 5. Education, Leisure & Recreation

- **Wimbish Primary school:** In the 2004 Questionnaire, 34 households reported having children of primary school age. Of these, 11 reported sending their children to Wimbish school, 4 to Radwinter, 4 to Thaxted, 3 to Debden and the remainder to at least seven other primary schools in the area. The response to the Questionnaire from Carver Barracks was limited (16 households) so these figures do not properly reflect the strong support for Wimbish Primary from Carver Barracks. Nevertheless, with many country areas facing a serious decline in their primary school population, there does seem to be scope for the parish council and the community to work closely with the school to preserve this precious community asset. **Action: Work closely with the school and other community groups to provide support as required.**

- **Clubs, societies (existing and proposed):** Regular events in Wimbish are the Village Fete and the Church Flower Festival, run in alternate years in the summer months. The 'Litter Pick' has become an established event in early April each year. The Wimbish Walk takes place every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in the month and is well attended (up to 30 people). Other regular events are meetings of the Good Companions every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in the month and the Carpet Bowls Club every Thursday. Quiz Nights and Salsa Nights are held periodically, and again are well attended. The Village Hall is used regularly for private functions. In addition to these



activities, comments in the 2004 Questionnaire reflected a good degree of interest in additional areas such as local history, tennis and gardening. **Action: Work more closely with the Jubblies and the Village Hall committee to help promote additional activities such as these.**

- **Youth groups:** In the 2004 Questionnaire, some 14 households identified a need for youth groups. **Action: Work more closely with the Jubblies and the Village Hall committee and other interest groups to help promote activities for youth in Wimbish.**

## 6. Information & Communication

- **Parish Church Magazine, website and notice boards:** 83% of respondents to the 2004 Questionnaire reported that they read the Parish Church magazine and 75% reported that they look there 'for information on local events' (vs 41% consulting the Wimbish website and 39% consulting their local notice board). Although a high proportion (80 to 90%) of Tye Green and Carver Barracks residents consult their local notice boards, the proportion from other parts of Wimbish is much lower. It seems likely that the website in particular will grow in popularity as more households acquire broadband internet access. In early 2007, Wimbish won a competition for the best fully independent Parish Council website in Essex. Essex has 270 parish and town



councils, including 52 in Uttlesford. **Action: Ensure the local notice boards are well maintained and up to date. Continue to promote the use of the Wimbish website as a key means of disseminating information to the community.**

- **Parish Council news:** In an informal survey in 2002, many residents commented that they would like to see a more transparent and more widely available account of parish council activities. The website was designed primarily with this in mind. The parish council has since issued a number of paper newsletters (a total of 6 as at April 2007) with the objective of wider distribution. However, publication of these has been intermittent. **Action: Adopt a regular schedule and format for publication of parish council news (say quarterly) and ensure that a newsletter is always produced.**

- **Village archive:** In the 2004 Questionnaire, 66% of respondents reported that they would use a village archive if one were to be set up, and 12% (25 households) reported that they would be willing to help to establish it. In 2005, one village resident volunteered to act as Recorder for Wimbish, and exhibitions of Wimbish antiquities have been popular activities at recent Village Fetes. **Action:**



**Work with the PCC, Jublies and Village Hall committee to find a suitable means of storing and making available Wimbish archives.**

## **Action Plan - Making it happen**

- The production of this plan is only the beginning. It provides a basis on which the Parish Council, the Village Hall committee, the Jubilee Committee, the Parochial Church Council and other relevant volunteer groups can work together to build and preserve *'the village and community we want'*
- However achieving our objectives will not be possible without a steady flow of volunteers. If you think that you can help to make a difference, please contact the Parish Clerk (details given below) or any Parish Councillor. Every little contribution helps.
- This plan is intended as a living document, allowing for continuing development. Specific actions are highlighted in **RED** in each section.

### **Parish Clerk:**

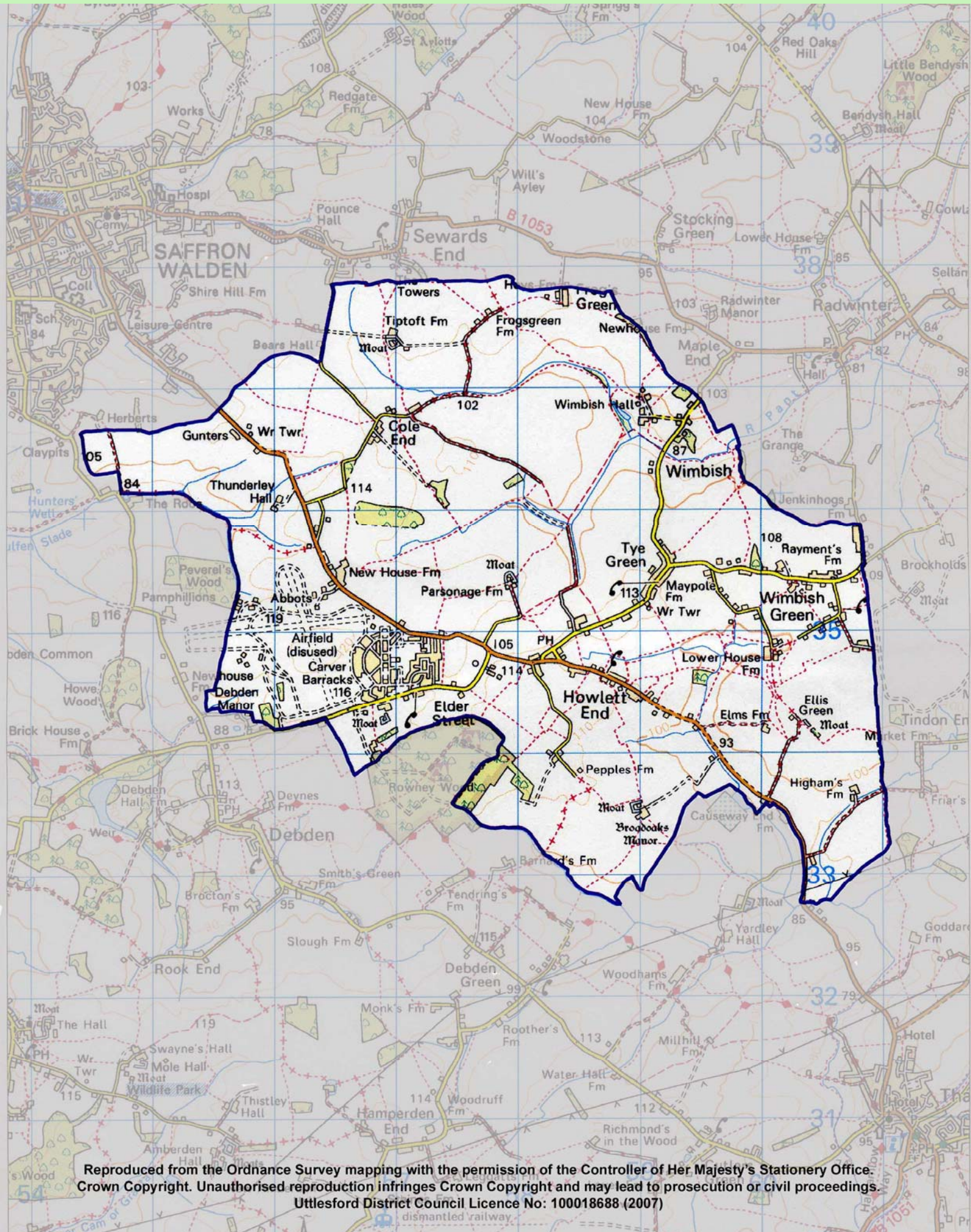
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