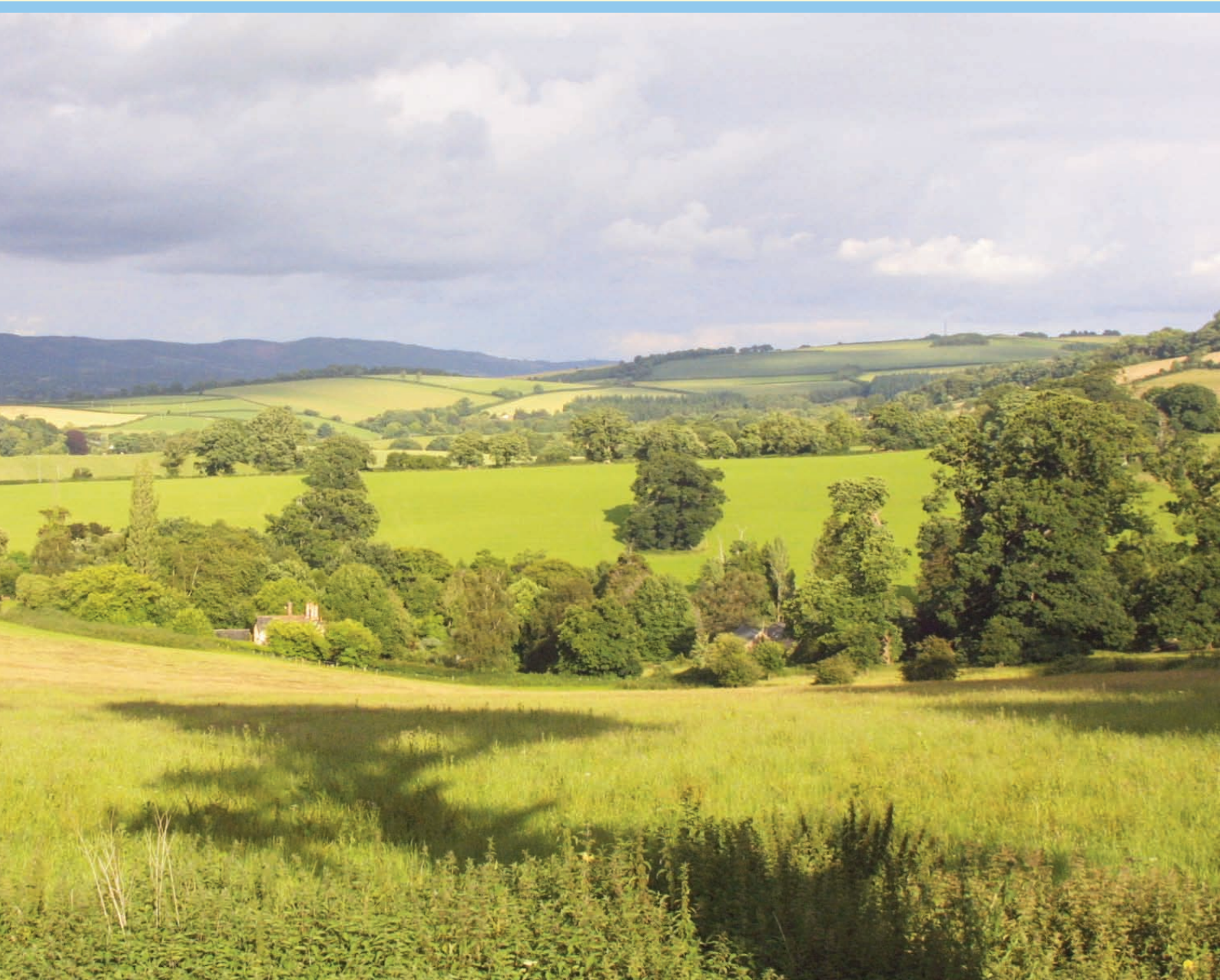


NETTLECOMBE PARISH · WEST SOMERSET

Nettlecombe *Parish Plan*

YOUR PLAN FOR YOUR PARISH



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HARVEST TIME IN NETTLECOMBE 2012

Introduction

The parishioners of Nettlecombe were consulted via a well-publicised public meeting to see if there was interest in formulating a future plan for the parish.

There was enthusiastic support for this and a committee was formed from members of the parish, which determined that a plan was needed:

1. To take advantage of the opportunity offered by central government for communities to determine their own development within the Local Development Framework, the Localism Bill and ongoing changes in local planning legislation.
2. To give the Parish Council a mandate to work towards improving the life of Nettlecombe residents now and into the future.
3. To give residents the opportunity to become involved in improving life in the parish.
4. To provide a structure for achieving these improvements, including accessing funding where available to ensure these provisions are ongoing.



ALL ROADS LEAD TO NETTLECOMBE!



OAK TREE AND OIL SEED RAPE FIELD, NETTLECOMBE 2013

Geography, land use and environment

Geographically much of Nettlecombe lies above the 152m contour and reaches 358m on the Brendon ridge. The landscape is undulating, in places steeply, and lies mostly on slate and red sandstone.

There are occasional rocky outcrops evidenced by the many disused small quarries in the parish, once a convenient local source of building stone for the community.

The landscape consists of good grazing and mixed arable land, with the steeper slopes covered by woodland. It descends to the north east and drains into the Washford River or the Doniford Stream.

In size the parish is almost 4 miles from north to south and 3 miles from east to west, but has an irregular shape, giving an area of about 12 square miles on the map, but this is increased by its undulating nature.

Approximately 80 per cent of the land area is given over to mixed farming, primarily sheep and cattle on the steeper slopes, with mixed arable crops on the flatter land. The remaining 20 per cent lies on the steeper slopes and consists of managed woodland, some of which is used for raising pheasants, shooting being a popular sport in and around Nettlecombe parish.

Nettlecombe Court is occupied by the Field Studies Council, an environmental education charity committed to helping people understand, and be inspired by, the natural world.

Nettlecombe Park was created around the Court at the end of the 18th century and was subsequently extended to include pleasure grounds with artificial lakes along a stream and much new iron fencing to keep the deer at bay. During the 20th century harder times led to much of this falling into decay and some was very nearly lost forever.

Recently much of this loss has been reversed. Grant aid has enabled the estate to re-instate Parsonage Pond (originally the site of the village and parsonage), the lakes below the pleasure ground and the old leat.

Old hedges and fences were grubbed up and new metal fencing to the pattern of the original has been installed to re-create the style and atmosphere of the original park.

The park has been wood pasture or parkland for at least 400 years. The oldest standard oak trees are over 200 years of age and some oak pollards may be even older. The continuity of open woodland and parkland, with large mature and over-mature timber, has enabled characteristic species of lichens and wood boring beetles to become established.

Many of these species are now nationally scarce because this type of habitat is scarce over large areas of Great Britain. It is because of the presence of these species that, in 1990, 90 hectares of Nettlecombe Park were designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Within the SSSI, 150 species of lichens have been identified. This reflects the wide range of habitats present, created by variations in the age of trees, their exposure and aspect. Thirteen of these species are regarded as being indicators of ancient woodland or parkland sites.

Beetles recorded from this site include five nationally scarce species. Eleven other species are associated with the dead and decaying parts of old trees, and are restricted to this habitat.

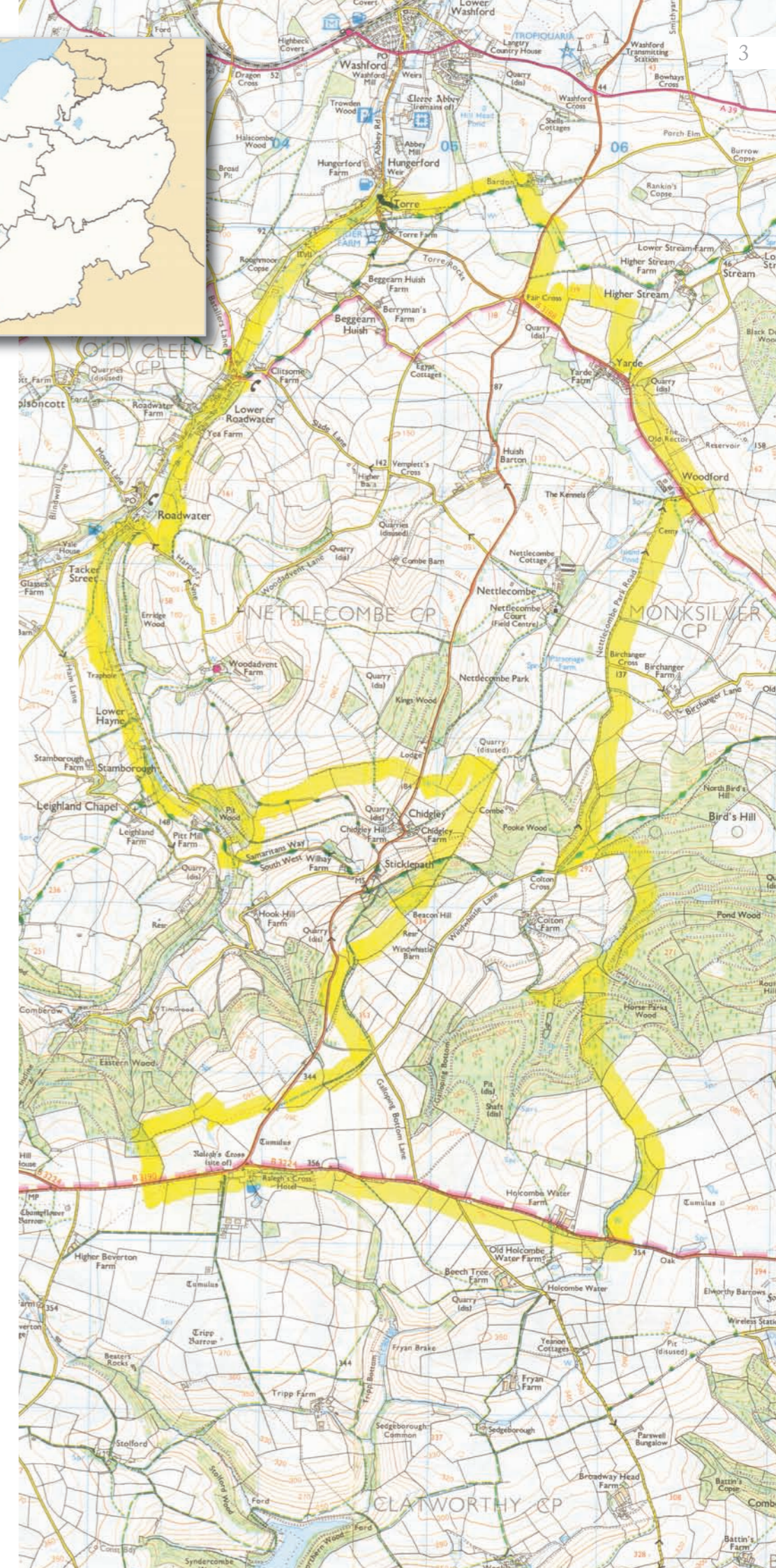
Timber forms part of the local economy and recently it has become necessary to fell large quantities of larch to control disease, particularly in Pooke Wood and Kings Wood. This disease is hosted by rhododendron so this has also been cut back.



The area on the map bordered in yellow indicates the boundary of the Civil Parish of Nettlecombe in West Somerset.

West Somerset covers a largely rural area, with a population of 34,675 (2011 census), in an area of 740 square kilometres (290 square miles).

According to figures released by the Office for National Statistics in 2009, the population of West Somerset has the oldest average age in the United Kingdom at 52.



The built environment

The parish of Nettlecombe lies within the bounds of the Exmoor National Park and is fragmented into the three hamlets of Woodford, Yarde and Torre, and several outlying farms as far as Holcombe Water Farm on the Brendon Hills, and Woodadvent and Clitsome Farms adjacent to Roadwater.

This is a very rural parish; there is no village, no school, no library building or public house; yet despite its low population density it is a mixed and active community.

Like many rural areas the built environment is historical and in the vernacular. The majority of buildings were constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries to serve agricultural needs, and are built from locally sourced red sandstone, slate and timber.

Some properties were thatched and some of these retain their thatch, though others have had their slate or thatch roofs replaced with modern concrete tiles. Similarly some buildings have their external stonework covered by coloured limewash or plaster. Some farm barns and stables have been converted to residential use, increasing the

residential aspect of what were originally agricultural settlements. Two exceptions in style are Combe House, a typical Regency style symmetrical house with a stucco finish and a shallow pitch roof, and the Old Rectory, built as a private house in 1900. Both were built for members of the Trevelyan family estate. At least two houses in Yarde date back to the 14thC and most were built in the 17th and 18thC. There was an important mill, an inn, a large farm and a blade mill. In 1891 a school was established with 120 children in its heyday. All these buildings are now private residences.

The Manor of Nettlecombe is mentioned in the Domesday book and the first mention of a house on the site is in 1525. It has been extensively enlarged over the centuries. There was probably a church by the late 12thC and it became the Church of The Blessed Virgin Mary by 1440 and is still the proud possessor of the oldest hallmarked church plate in the country. These two buildings were the centre of the once village of Nettlecombe. In the late 1700s the Park was landscaped and the village was removed to specially built houses in Woodford. At this time the hamlets of Yarde and Torre were enlarged to

accommodate the workforce of the estate. Both the church and the Court are built of local red Sandstone, and still form the centre of the community as the Court is now a Field Study Centre with hundreds of visiting children and adults each year.

Torre lies to the north-west of the parish it emerged as a hamlet in the 14thC and grew during the 18th and 19thC. The construction of the West Somerset Mineral Railway started here at Roughmore on 29th May 1856. Torre House formerly Torre Farm dates back to 1681 and was a sizeable farm, the outbuildings of which now form the Torre Cider farm.

Other settlements of importance are Beggearn Huish, the estate being mentioned in 1086; Woodadvent Farm dating from 1284; Huish Barton built in the 16thC and Colton Farm, where iron ore mining was concentrated from 1860. There are not many modern houses possibly the most recent being Torre Surgery. Outside the parish, but very much a part of it, is the Elworthy, Monksilver and Nettlecombe Community Hall, a dynamically styled focus for social activity.

NETTLECOMBE COURT AND THE CHURCH



TORRE



THE EMN COMMUNITY HALL



WOODFORD



YARDE WITH THE BLADE MILL IN THE RIGHT FOREGROUND

The people of Nettlecombe

There are approximately 90 households in the parish, plus a number of holiday cottages, and population of approximately 250, evenly distributed through the age range. There are roughly equal numbers of males and females.

The vast majority lives in the parish full time; one third have lived here for more than twelve years, with a further third living here for more than five years.

More than a third of the population expect to be living here in five years time; the most common reason for choosing Nettlecombe as a place to live is the quality of rural life within the parish.

There are no schools in the parish, but we have around 20 young people in pre-school to higher/further education, all of whom travel to school by bus or board.

We have a Brownie pack and a Young Farmers club within the parish.

There is a surprising diversity of employment in Nettlecombe. Apart from farming we have parishioners working in a wide variety of jobs

within the parish including tourism, engineering, financial services, communications, design and arts and crafts. Most of these businesses are owner run, showing a high degree of enterprise for such a small rural community. Some of these businesses employ people who live outside the parish.

People of the parish are involved in a wide range of activities. Local societies such as the West Somerset Railway, West Somerset Village History Society and Watchet Museum are supported.

The most popular hobbies are walking, gardening and equestrian activities, bird watching and natural history reflecting the desire to enjoy a rural lifestyle.

The Parish Questionnaire returns give an overall impression of a mixed community, with diverse occupations, interests and ages, but sharing concerns for, and appreciation of, the lovely area in which they have chosen to live.



NETTLECOMBE FETE (NETTLECOMBE COURT) CIRCA 1950'S



NETTLECOMBE FETE (HUISH BARTON) 2012

Visitors to Nettlecombe

The rural nature of our parish makes it a popular destination for visitors with an interest in nature and country pursuits, both traditional and modern. Families are attracted to Torre Cider Farm, a long established tourist attraction where visitors can try farm produced scrumpy and home cooked meals as well as making friends with pigs, goats and chickens. There is also educational information about cider production.

Wood Advent Farm is not only a place to stay but an activity centre as well. There are facilities for archery and clay pigeon shooting and also organised accompanied walking holidays.

Walking is a popular activity within the parish; we have many miles of footpath, including part of the Coleridge Way, which follows the footsteps of the famous romantic poet.

Many of our visitors stay in the parish as a base to explore the wider area of west Somerset, including the Quantock Hills, the Brendon Hills and Exmoor. Another popular attraction is the West Somerset Railway, a preserved working railway for enthusiasts and tourists alike. There are several places where visitors can stay in the

parish. Wood Advent Farm offers comfortable accommodation as well as activities in a charming isolated location. Woodford House in the heart of the parish is a large, comfortable Victorian house, once part of the Nettlecombe estate. Nettlecombe Lodge at Chidgley is a charming listed building c1820, also once part of the Nettlecombe estate.

The place which hosts most visitors to the parish is the Field Studies Council's centre at Nettlecombe Court (a listed building). This residential centre, one of several Field Study Centres around the country, is run by the charity the Field Studies Council dedicated to promoting environmental understanding for everyone. The visitors are primarily young people in full-time education who come here from all over the country to study the landscape, flora and fauna of the local area. In addition there are development courses for environmental professionals as well as introductory courses for vocational interest.



TORRE CIDER FARM



THE TOUR OF BRITAIN CYCLE RACE PASSES THROUGH FAIRCROSS, NETTLECOMBE, 14 SEPTEMBER 2010

The future of our Parish

Introduction

The original purpose of parish plans was to influence local development within the Local Development Framework as defined by the area planning authorities. For Nettlecombe parish this is the Exmoor National Park and West Somerset Council. Their development policies make it unlikely that there will be any building development within the parish, so the emphasis of our plan is focused on social and environmental development which is likely to be affected by the Localism Bill and forthcoming changes in planning legislation. We have continually consulted our parish population through gatherings hosted at Nettlecombe Court, by a house to house survey of every property in the parish, and by regular meetings of a committee of residents which has reached out to the community on specific issues. The result has been a list of aims, some of which are long term, but others are already being realised.

Our parish plan is continually evolving; as time passes further consultation with parishioners by public meeting will ensure it develops with the changing needs of the parish.

Parish Website

The Parish Plan Steering Group decided to establish a parish website to provide a resource for locals and visitors alike. Intended as part notice-board, part directory and part celebration of our parish, it will supplement the parish noticeboards and 'Pathways' church magazine by being both immediate and interactive. It will depend very much on the participation of local people and organisations for its material.

Action: A webmaster was appointed by the Committee and the website is already established and continues to develop. Although these are early days its popularity is already evident. www.nettlecombewestsomerset.co.uk



HOLCOMBE FOREST LOOKING SOUTH EAST

Neighbourhood Watch scheme

The parish questionnaire identified an interest in Neighbourhood Watch within the parish. There is already a scheme in operation at Beggearn Huish and Egypt, as a result of this plan there is now a new scheme operating in Woodford. As yet there is no scheme in Yarde or Torre.

Action: The plan will encourage residents to participate in Neighbourhood Watch as a means of increasing security and safety in our community. This will be achieved through the parish noticeboards and the website.



COLTON FARM FROM THE WEST

Fly tipping

Fly tipping has been a problem in the parish, it is a nuisance for farmers and it spoils our environment.

Action: Incidents can be reported to West Somerset Council Customer Services telephone: 01643 703704 or online at: www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk (waste & recycling section), this information will be communicated to parishioners by means of 'flyers' on parish notice-boards and by the new parish website.



HUISH BARTON FROM THE WEST

PANORAMIC VIEW OF NETTLECOMBE PARISH FROM COLTON CROSS LOOKING NORTH



Proposed projects and action

Speeding traffic

Speeding and anti-social driving is a problem on the B3188, which is now used as a shortcut between Minehead and Taunton. This is particularly dangerous in the hamlets of Torre and Woodford, where the road is narrow and there are no footpaths.

Action: We will maintain pressure on the county highway authority (through future Dunster Panel meetings) and the Parish Council to provide an effective and permanent means of traffic calming on residential stretches of road, to discourage commercial and commuter through traffic and to educate drivers into more responsible driving habits. The plan supports the Speedwatch scheme, and progress has been made in re-establishing the scheme in Yarde and Woodford.

Welcoming new residents

Moving to a new area, particularly an isolated rural area, can be a daunting time. We welcome new residents and wish to include them in our community.

Action: New residents will be welcomed with a hand-delivered welcome card giving useful local contacts and an introduction to the parish website which shows the full range of amenities and services available to local people.



WOODFORD - SPEEDING & ANTI-SOCIAL DRIVING ARE A PROBLEM!

Keeping the parish informed

There are four Parish notice boards in Nettlecombe Parish which, whilst useful, are not currently adequate.

Action: Some notice boards will be replaced by new, larger types with space for local residents and organisations to post notices. The notice boards and website are intended to be mutually supportive. A dedicated volunteer will liaise with the publishers of 'Pathways', the Church of England magazine serving the six parishes of the Quantock Towers Benefice to ensure their readers are kept informed of the parish plan development.

Extending the use of Nettlecombe church

The Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a charming and historic building situated beside Nettlecombe Court. The Parochial Church Council (separate from the Parish Council) is keen to extend its use beyond a place of worship and would welcome appropriate secular events such as art sales, music recitals etc.

Action: By promotion of the venue through the 'Pathways' magazine and the Church newsletter available from the Churchwardens and the parish website.



THE CHURCH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Broadband for all

Nettlecombe's quiet rural charm belies a dynamic community which needs modern communication methods to further its business and social aims. Broadband speeds offered by the current network are inadequate for our needs, but are due to be upgraded under a government and council backed scheme to improve broadband throughout Somerset and Devon.

Action: Interested parties within the Steering Group will maintain a watching brief on this broadband technology and update the community on possible alternative solutions to the current BT provision.



STILE IN COLTON LANE (CHIDGLEY TO MONKSILVER FOOTPATH)

Parish footpaths

There are many footpaths in the parish, some of which are in need of maintenance. There is also a need for a footpath between Yarde and Woodford to avoid walking along the busy B3188, which already has a problem with speeding traffic.

Action: The Parish Council is to use its powers and influence to keep the network in order and to establish a footpath between Yarde and Woodford.



WALKING IN NETTLECOMBE PARK

With grateful thanks to:

The Nettlecombe Parish Plan was produced by the Parish Plan Steering Group:

- Jenni & Bob Beard
- Marilyn Crothers
- Mary Daniels
- Lucy Devitt
- Ben Lintott
- Liz & Dick Mayes
- Michael Ralph
- Sheelagh & Martin Spink
- Anna Thomas
- Pat Wolseley

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Photographs:

- Bob Beard
- Hilary Binding (1950's Nettlecombe Fete)
- Michael Ralph



NETTLECOMBE PARISH GRAVEYARD

NETTLECOMBE COURT AND THE CHURCH
LOOKING NORTH, DECEMBER 2010

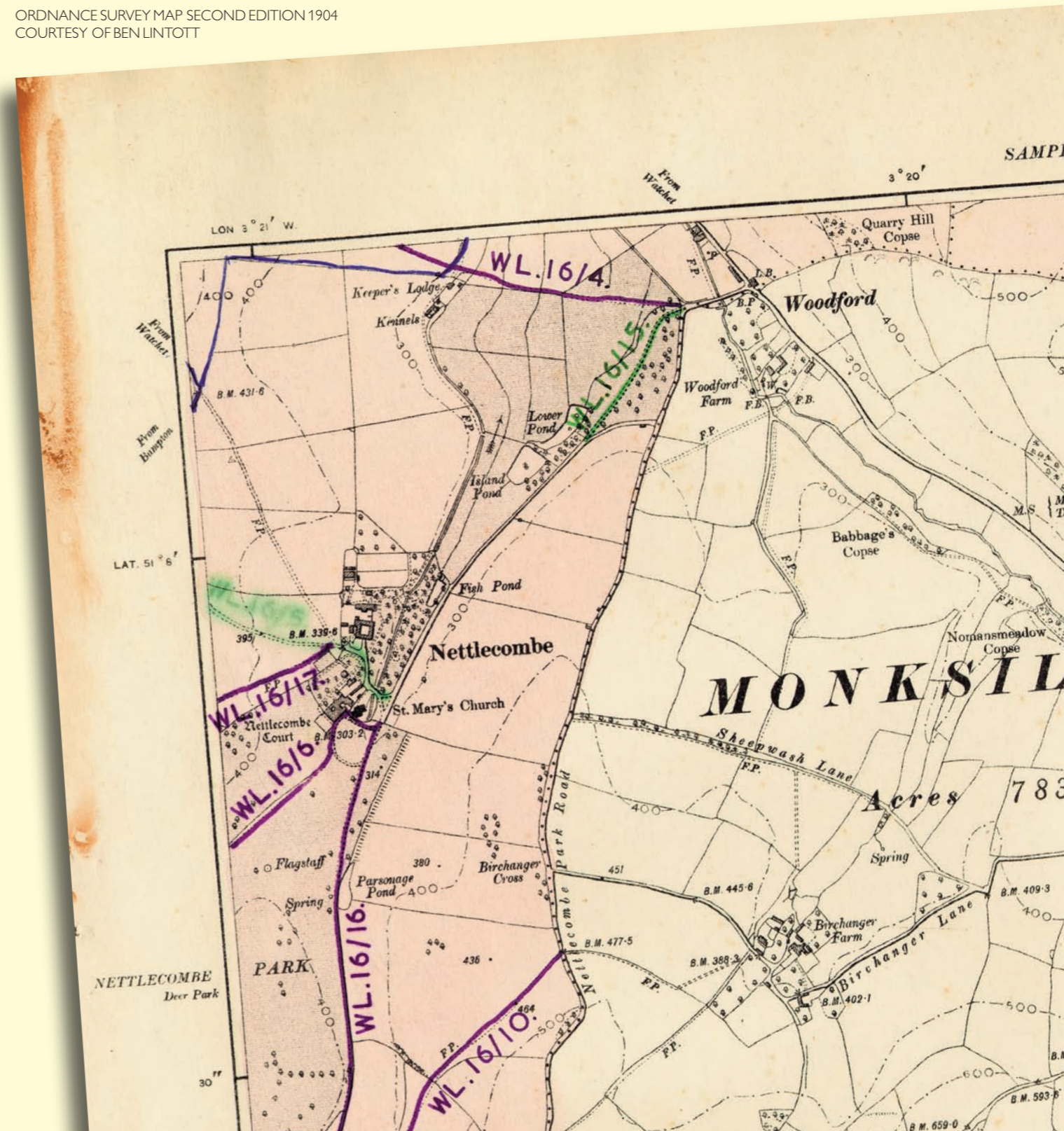


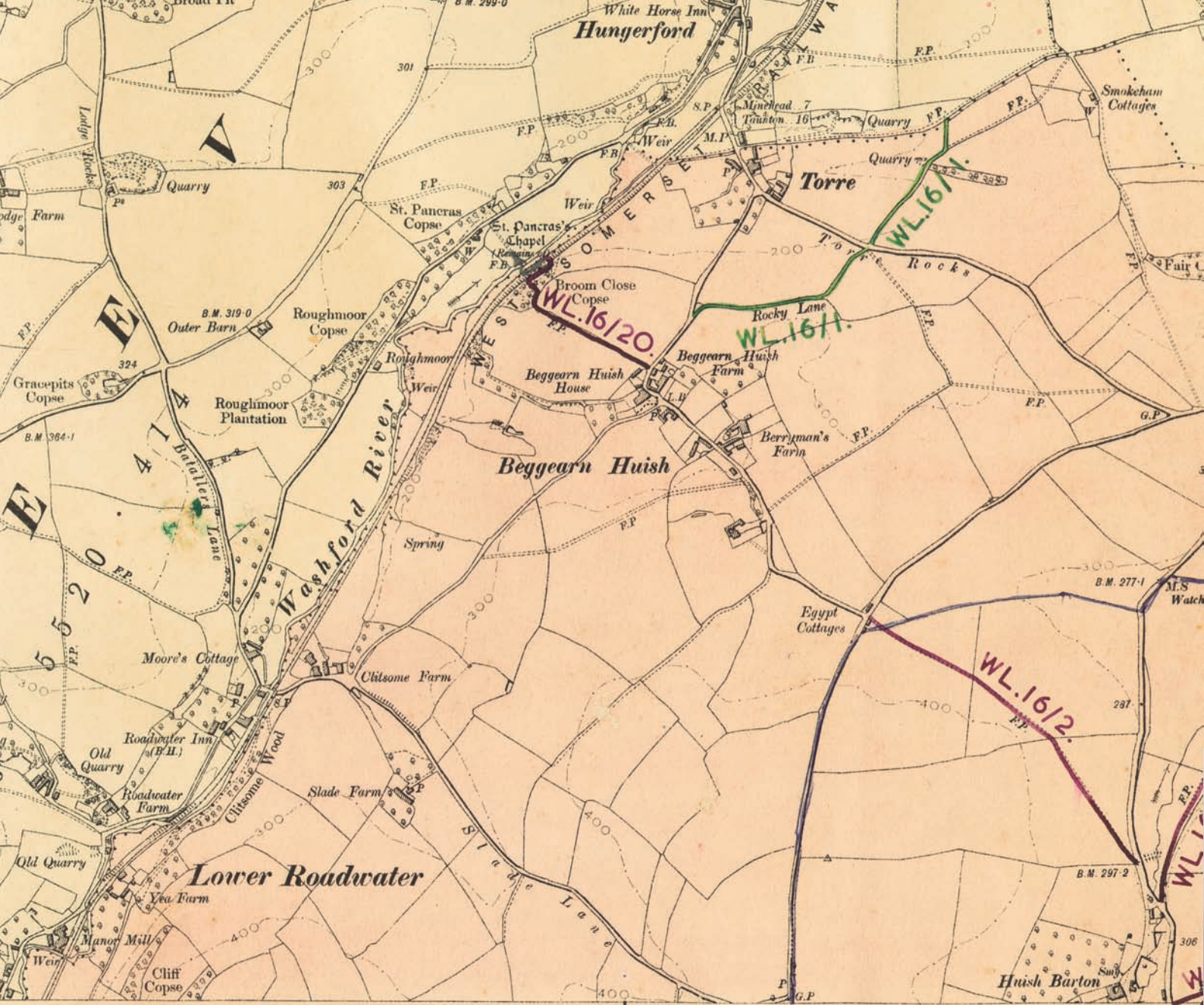
EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK SIGN AT FAIR CROSS



SPRINGTIME IN NETTLECOMBE PARK

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP SECOND EDITION 1904
COURTESY OF BEN LINTOTT





Roadwater LON. 3° 22' W. NETTLECOMBE PH.

Scale — Six Inches to One Statute Mile or 880 Feet to One Inch — 10 3/80

10 Chains	5	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80 Chains
40 Perches	20	0	40	80	120	160	200	240	280	320 Perches
1000 Feet	500	0	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	5280 Feet	1 Mile	
1 Furlong										

Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton. *N.B.*—The representation on this map of a Road, Track, or Footpath, is no evidence of the existence of a right of way of a Foot below the general Mean Level of the Sea.

SHEET ... XLVII.

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP SECOND EDITION 1904
 COURTESY OF BEN LINTOTT

FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:
 VIEW OVER NETTLECOMBE PARK LOOKING
 TOWARDS THE QUANTOCK HILLS

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