

## **Puriton Local Visual Landscape and Views Report**

### **Puriton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

#### **Introduction**

This report documents the views and vistas which are particularly valued within the Parish. They help to articulate what is distinct in the Parish and are of particular importance locally either because of the landscape they frame or the contribution they make to enhancing parts of our built environment and its character. These have been drawn together based on local knowledge of Steering Group members as local residents, and informed by the work done to produce the Puriton Masterplan Design Codes (with particular regard to the essential setting of Puriton village and its setting on the eastern side of the village. Sedgemoor District Council landscape assessment work has also been considered to help understand any relevant context for the parish<sup>1</sup> as has Natural England MAGIC online mapping<sup>2</sup>.

This report sets out the location of the valued views, illustrates their value using photographs and sets out a description of the views and explanation of why they should be identified as particularly important in the Puriton context.

As well as a personal and Steering Group collective perspective to select valuable and high-quality views, the following criteria and questions have been posed to help inform and confirm this thinking:

- Feeling of openness
- Framing of the view
- Landscape character
- Countryside setting
- Built form and character
- Line of sight
- Vanishing point
- Panoramic nature of views
- Vantage points and topography
- Why is it of value / special?

#### **Location and Visual Assessment of Views**

The map below identifies “view cones”. These are the points from which the views are observed and the approximate “splay” or extent of the view. These were discussed and agreed as valuable views at the Steering Group’s meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

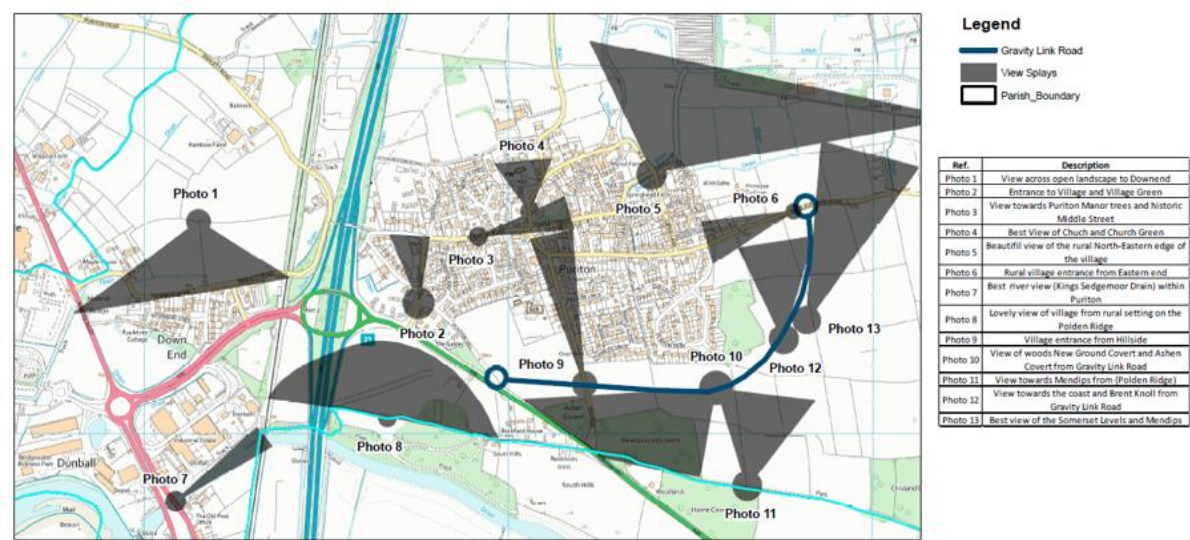
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<sup>1</sup> See

<https://somersetcc.sharepoint.com/sites/SCCPublic/Planning%20and%20Land/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsite%2FSCCPublic%2FPlanning%20and%20Land%2FSedgemoor%20%2D%20Landscape%20Assessment%20and%20Countryside%20Design%20Summary%20SPD%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FSCCPublic%2FPlanning%20and%20Land&p=true&ga=1>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

Map 1: Important Valued Views



The photographs which follow illustrate these views and help to articulate why they are valued and what makes them important.

View / Photo 1: View across open landscape to Downend



Description and reasons why the view is valued: This view from the public footpath provides a rare longer distance view of Downend in its setting.



View / Photo 2: Entrance to Puriton village and the Village Green



Description and reasons why the view is valued: This is the traditional entrance to the village. The trees along Hall Road provide a softening and are an attractive feature in the street scene.

View / Photo 3: View towards Puriton Manor trees and historic Middle Street



Description and reasons why the view is valued: This is the focal point of the village, with the entrance to The Manor and attractive mature trees as a backdrop.



View / Photo 4: View of the Church and Church Green



Description and reasons why the view is valued: The church in its setting with the green triangle and Sam's bench. A traditional view of the village and an amenity space that is much appreciated by villagers.

View / Photo 5: View of the rural North-Eastern edge of the village





Description and reasons why the view is valued: This view is one where the countryside encroaches upon the village and the view across the rhyne and the field is appreciated by dog walkers in particular.

View / Photo 6: Rural village entrance from eastern end



Description and reasons why the view is valued: The attractive eastern approach to the village, the rural entrance, although this has been degraded somewhat by the construction works on the southern side.

View / Photo 7: River view (King's Sedgemoor Drain) within Puriton





Description and reasons why the view is valued: View of the river (King's Sedgemoor Drain) looking north-east from Dunball Industrial Estate. The river setting is further contextualised by the Polden ridge on the right-hand-side of the photograph.

View / Photo 8: View of the village from a rural setting on the Polden ridge



Description and reasons why the view is valued: A panoramic view over the village and across to south Wales and the Mendips. The location and landscape are greatly valued for these breathtaking long views.



View / Photo 9: Village entrance from Hillside



Description and reasons why the view is valued: A rural lane from south to north brings the countryside into the village along Hillside. The copper beech tree and hedgerow enhance its rural character.

View / Photo 10: View of woods New Ground Covert and Ashen Covert from Gravity Link Road



Description and reasons why the view is valued: The view (one of several along this stretch of road) looking northeast across to New Ground Covert and Ashen Covert, which are much appreciated assets for dog walkers and others that use the network of paths and green bridge access.

View / Photo 11: View towards Mendips from Polden Ridge



Description and reasons why the view is valued: characteristic open farmland landscape looking towards the Mendips in the distance over the top of the village is attractive when viewed from the ridge path.

View / Photo 12: View towards the coast and Brent Knoll from Gravity Link Road





Description and reasons why the view is valued: A panoramic view of the village across to Brent Knoll and Wales. The location and landscape is greatly valued for these breathtaking views and has been given greater public access following the road construction, although the new development will mitigate this to some extent.

View / Photo 13: View of Somerset Levels and Mendips





Description and reasons why the view is valued: An excellent location where the view of the Somerset Levels and Mendips opens up demonstrating the open character of the landscape to the north from the route of the new Gravity Link Road.

## **Conclusions**

Important vistas and views into and from the surrounding open countryside are valuable local assets that should be protected from inappropriate development to maintain the special character and landscape setting of the village. These vistas and views should remain uninterrupted and not obstructed in whole or in part. They should be protected, not only for their own sake and the sake of the amenity they offer, but also because the loss of such features and views would erode the quality of our environment.

The adopted Local Plan policy D31: Countryside around settlements provides the strategic policy context to protect the countryside as part of the landscape. It is recognised that the quality of views and their importance locally is subjective (and not tangible in a land-use sense) and one view considered important by one person may not be by another. However, in line with national policy and land-use, a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan could draw on the evidence set out in this report and context set by the adopted Local Plan to protect against inappropriate development proposals which would have an adverse impact on and degrade the value of the views identified and landscape and character within which they site.