

PITCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

RESIDENT BRIEFING & SURVEY LAUNCH



Saturday 27 June 2026



10:30am–12:30pm



Hadspen Village Hall



Introductions

Steering Group

- Jonathan Duffy
- Mark Hutton
- Lucie Reader
- Richard Waller
- Caroline Donald
- Chris Mounsey



WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Pitcombe Parish Council has formally started work on a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Somerset Council has now designated the Neighbourhood Plan area: the whole of Pitcombe Parish.
- This gives us a formal route to shape future planning and development.
- This is not just about one village, one hamlet, or one site.
- It is about the future of the whole parish over the next 10–15 years.



WHY A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

- The parish already has a 2015 Parish Plan. It was useful, but it now needs updating.
- A Parish Plan can cover a wide range of local issues, but it has limited planning weight.
- A Neighbourhood Plan is more focused on planning and development, but it has much greater force once adopted.
- Once made, it becomes part of the planning framework and must be taken into account in planning decisions.



WHY NOW?

- former Bruton School for Girls site
- development pressure from Bruton and the wider area
- flooding and drainage concerns
- traffic and road safety
- housing need and affordability
- climate resilience and water management
- ageing population and access to services
- major landowners, estates, farming and rural businesses

We need an up-to-date plan that reflects today's pressures and tomorrow's risks.



THIS IS THE WHOLE PARISH

- Pitcombe
- Cole
- Hadspen
- Shatwell
- Gants Mill
- Godminster
- Bruton edge within the parish
- Lodge Hill
- Priddle's Hill
- Cattle Hill
- A371 and A359 areas
- parts of The Newt
- farms, rural homes and outlying areas

We need views and evidence from every part of the parish.



WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Pitcombe Parish Council is leading the formal Neighbourhood Plan process.
- A steering group has been formed from the earlier local plan interest group so work could begin quickly.
- The group has already started work, but it is only a starting point.
- It is not closed. It can and should be expanded as more residents come forward.
- The aim is to build a wider pool of people who can help shape the plan and provide local knowledge.



WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?

- Parish Council formally agreed to proceed
- decision communicated to Somerset Council
- Somerset Council designated the whole parish as the Neighbourhood Plan area
- steering group formed and started work
- 2015 Parish Plan reviewed
- community briefing meeting convened
- parish-wide survey drafted
- separate BSG survey insert identified



WHAT THE STEERING GROUP HAVE LEARNED

- keep the survey tight and practical
- cover the whole parish, not just the main hamlets
- do not let BSG dominate the whole process
- include future-facing issues: climate, water, ageing and access to services
- recruit more help from residents
- seek targeted technical advice where needed
- keep the work proportionate to Pitcombe



WHAT THE PLAN MUST COVER

- housing and affordable homes
- design and local character
- landscape, heritage and views
- flooding, drainage and water management
- roads, traffic and safe movement
- farming and rural land use
- community facilities and services
- health, wellbeing and isolation
- young people and families
- local businesses and employment
- major sites and future pressures



INTRODUCING THE SURVEY

Two linked surveys: one for the parish plan, one focused on the BSG site



Parish survey

Tell us what matters across Pitcombe Parish: homes, traffic, flooding, countryside, heritage, facilities, local business and community life.



BSG site survey

A separate section asks what the former Bruton School for Girls site could provide: education, SEND, sports, arts, health, wellbeing and community uses.



Who should respond?

Residents, young people, local organisations, landowners and businesses. We need broad views — not just the loudest voices.



How to respond

Complete it online or use a paper copy. One response per person is best; households can submit more than one view.



Key dates

Survey opens Saturday 27 June. Please respond by Friday 17 July so results can shape the first draft priorities.

Your answers become evidence: they help set priorities, shape policies, and show Somerset what the community wants.

THE SURVEY – WHY RESPOND?

- who people are
- where in the parish they live or have a connection
- what they value
- what worries them
- what kind of development may or may not be acceptable
- where the pressure points are
- what evidence or local knowledge residents can provide
- **responses collected by July 17th**

The survey will be available online and in paper form.

WHY THE SURVEY MATTERS

- residents' views
- local knowledge
- maps and photographs
- flooding records
- traffic concerns
- heritage and landscape features
- housing need
- community facilities
- site-specific issues

The survey is not just consultation. It is the start of the evidence base.



BSG: WHY IT MATTERS

- one of the largest and most sensitive sites in the parish
- educational history
- buildings, sports facilities and open land
- relationship with Bruton
- traffic, access and services
- risk of dereliction
- possibility of housing pressure
- opportunity for education, sport, community and wellbeing uses

BSG needs specific attention — but it is not the whole Neighbourhood Plan.



BSG: SURVEY AND PETITION

The main parish survey will include BSG as one major issue.

A separate BSG survey insert will gather more detailed views on the site.

A separate community petition will test support for protecting community, educational, sporting, wellbeing or public-benefit uses.

The survey gathers evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan. The petition shows the strength of community support on BSG.



OTHER FUTURE PRESSURES

- future development near Bruton
- The Newt and any future expansion
- agricultural and rural land-use change
- farm diversification and challenges
- traffic from tourism and nearby development
- pressure on local lanes
- flooding and climate resilience
- housing need across the parish
- protection of countryside, views and heritage
- other external development impact (such as Castle Cary)

The plan must look ahead, not just respond to today's most urgent issue.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

What the public can expect — and what we need from you now

1

Process started

Parish Council agreed to proceed; Somerset has designated the whole parish.

2

Today's meeting

Why the plan matters: BSG site, housing, flooding, traffic and local facilities.

3

Surveys open

Parish survey and separate BSG site survey launched: Saturday 27 June.

4

Please respond

Complete online or return paper copies by Sunday 26 July.

5

Share & add evidence

Encourage neighbours to respond. Send photos, examples and local knowledge.

6

Results reviewed

Steering group summarises responses and identifies the strongest local priorities.

7

Draft priorities

Evidence is turned into aims, policies, maps and practical project ideas.

8

Stay involved

Join topic work, keep sending evidence, and comment again at formal consultation.

The most useful thing you can do now: complete the survey, encourage others to respond, and send us evidence.

THE STATUTORY PROCESS

Somerset Council's neighbourhood plan route

1

Area designated

Completed: whole parish

2

Evidence gathering & engagement

Survey, local evidence, topic groups

3

Draft plan

Aims, policies, maps and evidence

4

Reg. 14 consultation

Formal 6-week local consultation

5

Submit to Somerset

Plan, consultation statement, basic conditions

6

Reg. 16 + exam

Somerset consultation, independent examiner

7

Referendum

Somerset arranges local vote

8

Made plan

If over 50% vote yes, Somerset makes the plan

The referendum is the final community test: if more than 50% vote in favour, Somerset Council makes the plan.

OUR FAST FIRST STAGE

June 2026: Council agreed to proceed; Somerset designated the area; steering group formed; briefing held; survey launched.

July–August 2026: survey responses gathered; paper copies delivered and collected; BSG insert and petition circulated; evidence gathered; volunteers recruited.

September 2026: survey results reviewed; key themes identified; evidence gaps listed; Somerset Council advice sought.

October 2026: draft aims and policy themes prepared; targeted technical help identified; Parish Council reviews the next stage.



A REALISTIC VIEW OF THE WORK

- Neighbourhood Plans take work and must be done properly.
- We do not need an 80-page plan for the sake of it.
- We do need a plan that is properly consulted on, evidence-based and strong enough to carry weight.
- We can keep it manageable by focusing on what matters, using local knowledge well and getting targeted technical advice where needed.



HOW RESIDENTS CAN HELP

- complete the survey
- encourage neighbours to respond
- deliver paper surveys
- collect local evidence
- share photographs or records
- identify flooding and traffic problems
- map heritage, landscape and views
- help with youth engagement
- help older or offline residents respond
- join a small topic group
- help with data entry and admin

People do not need to be experts. Local knowledge is evidence.



HOW TO RESPOND

Complete online

<https://bit.ly/PPCNeighbourhoodSurvey>

Return paper copies

Jonathan Duffy,
c/o The Manor House,
Cole, Bruton, BA10 0PL

Deadline

Friday 17 July

Who should respond?

- residents, young people, landowners, local organisations and businesses
- one response per person is best
- households can submit more than one view

Please respond by Friday 17 July. Your answers become evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan.

<https://bit.ly/PPCNeighbourhoodSurvey>



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- survey circulated
- paper copies made available
- BSG insert shared
- community petition on BSG launched separately

- volunteers contacted
- survey results reviewed
- steering group reports back to the Parish Council
- Somerset Council kept informed

There will be further opportunities to comment.



FINAL ASK

- Please help us make this a parish-wide plan.
- Complete the survey.
- Sign up to help if you can.
- Encourage neighbours to take part.
- Tell us what matters in your part of the parish.
- Share evidence, not just opinions.
- Help us make sure Pitcombe Parish has a clear, credible and legally useful voice about its future.



ANY QUESTIONS

Thank you for your interest and taking the time to attend

