

# 10.1 SETTLEMENT INSETS - BICKNOLLER

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## Policy Profile

Settlement Classification:	Small Village (SP/1)
Landscape Conservation:	Quantock Hills AONB <sup>1</sup> (LC/2)
Landscape Character Area:	Doniford Stream and Quantock Fringe <sup>2</sup> (LC/3)

## Location and Character

10.1.1 The village of Bicknoller stands at the foot of the Quantock Hills within the designated AONB.<sup>3</sup> From Bicknoller and Weacombe the Hills rise steeply to the north-east while land to the south dips towards Doniford Stream. Tributaries of this stream flow alongside several streets within the village. The settlement pattern takes the form of a compact village core made up of historic buildings from which four main limbs of twentieth century development radiate outwards. It is surrounded mainly by higher quality Grades 1 and 2 agricultural land, although to the east there is average quality Grade 3 land which quickly gives way to poorer quality Grade 5 land on the Quantocks<sup>4</sup>. Historically, Bicknoller would have grown about the junction of four unclassified roads leading to Chilcombe, Williton, Crowcombe, West Quantoxhead and Kilve. Modern development along Church Lane and, to a lesser extent, Dash Woods Lane links the built-up area of Bicknoller with the A358.

## Settlement Policy

10.1.2 In Policy SP/1 Bicknoller is classified as a Small Village. There are relatively few services within the village, but it is situated less than two miles from the Rural Centre of Williton. For this reason, coupled with the facts that the existing settlement stands on relatively level ground and is well screened by trees, Bicknoller might be a suitable location for further development on a limited scale. It is generally accepted, however, that any development should be within the development limits of the village and should take the form of either infilling, or redevelopment or conversion.

## Population and Housing

10.1.3 The parish population increased steadily from 317 in 1971<sup>5</sup> to 369 in 1991<sup>6</sup>, and at the time of the 2001 Census the population had risen further to 371.<sup>7</sup> The built

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<sup>1</sup> National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; HMSO; 1956

<sup>2</sup> WS Atkins South West; West Somerset Landscape Character Assessment; West Somerset District Council; 1999

<sup>3</sup> National Parks Commission; The Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order 1956; op. cit.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales; Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food; 1988

<sup>5</sup> Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; Census 1971: England and Wales: County Report: Somerset Part II; HMSO; 1975

<sup>6</sup> Office of Population Censuses and Surveys; 1991 Census: County Report: Somerset Part 2; HMSO; 1993; ISBN 0 11 691489 0

<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics; 2001 Census: Neighbourhood Statistics – West Somerset; ONS; 2004 (data-set)

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## WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN – APRIL 2006

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area of Bicknoller has expanded considerably over the inter-war and post-war periods from its original centre to the north, with a ribbon development of detached dwellings along Trendle Lane and more intensive development between the Church and the A358, including Parsons Close and Combe Close.

- 10.1.4 In order to protect the character of the surrounding countryside, minimise the loss of agricultural land and facilitate the economic provision of services, any further residential development should be contained within the defined village limits, as shown on the Inset Map. Furthermore, proposals for new agricultural development should have due regard to the design requirements of Policy BD/6.
- 10.1.5 For the period of the Plan, the development limits have been drawn to include the existing built-up area and the properties on the south side of Trendle Lane where early post-war ribbon development has been intensified. However, the site allocated for housing development in Policy H/I of the Watchet/Williton Interim Local Plan<sup>8</sup> has been deleted. There were fears that it would result in a greenfield development on the periphery of the main built-up area of the village, which could in turn establish a precedent for further development. This does not affect the current outstanding permission for one bungalow off Combe Close.

## Employment

- 10.1.6 Bicknoller has developed as a dormitory and second home/retirement settlement, although it still has a residual agricultural function.

## Shops and Services

- 10.1.7 There are limited facilities in the village including St. George's Church, the Bicknoller Inn and car park, and village hall with adjacent seating and children's play area. The mobile library service visits the village fortnightly. The village contains a combined Sub-Post Office and Stores following the conversion of a disused barn next to the Village Hall in 1995. Bicknoller is served by the Minehead-Taunton bus which stops on the A358 by the Church Lane junction.

## Environment and Conservation

- 10.1.8 It is the core of the village that possesses the most distinct charm on account of its compact nature and the large number of buildings in local stone and other vernacular materials. The buildings front onto internal roads which are roughly arranged in a square, and each road terminates in a T-junction with a central island. The narrow winding access roads have experienced considerable ribbon development, albeit of relatively low density.

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<sup>8</sup> West Somerset District Council; [Watchet/Williton Interim Local Plan](#); West Somerset District Council; 1981

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- 10.1.9 Although Bicknoller does not warrant Conservation Area status<sup>9</sup> due to the significant amount of post-war development in the village, there are several groups of attractive cottages and larger properties within its core. Of these, seven are listed for their special architectural and/or historic interest and St. George's Church is a Grade I listed building.<sup>10</sup> Policies LB/1 and LB/2 set out criteria against which proposals affecting listed buildings will be judged. It is important that any new development respects and reflects the character of these buildings where appropriate. In particular, attention will be paid to the design on all aspects of new development, whether visible from the public highway or not.
- 10.1.10 The village has several trees, groups and individuals, which are of high amenity value and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders<sup>11</sup> (see Policy TW/1). However, that is not to say that the other trees within the village are not of equal importance. Several are quite excellent specimens and collectively they help screen the village from outlying areas.
- 10.1.11 Some improvements have been made to the - front of the village hall, including the provision of seating and children's play facilities. The substantial area of land to the rear of the village hall is presently used for car parking and would benefit from some environmental improvements and landscaping, which would improve visual amenity in this part of Bicknoller.

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<sup>9</sup> H.M. Government; Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Chapter 9 (as amended); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540990 1

<sup>10</sup> Department of the Environment; List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest: District of West Somerset, Somerset (Parishes of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, East Quantoxhead, Holford, Kilve, Stogursey, Strington and West Quantoxhead) (as amended); Department of the Environment; 1984.

<sup>11</sup> H.M. Government; Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Chapter 8 – Part VIII (as amended and associated secondary legislation); HMSO; 1990; ISBN 0 10 540890 5.

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