

Marnhull Neighbourhood Development Plan – Views Report

Produced by the Marnhull Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, June 2025

The Parish-wide design guidelines and codes produced as part of the work on the Neighbourhood Plan states that existing visual connections to the surrounding landscape and long views out of the settlement should be maintained. It notes the particular importance of the tower of the grade I listed St Gregory's Church, which is a landmark feature on the skyline when looking towards the village.

Linked to this, the landscape guidelines produced by Dorset Council¹ also highlight that the steep slopes above the valley of the River Stour, to the north and west of Marnhull, mean that development here would be very prominent from the opposing valley sides, as well as creating many noteworthy views from the top of this sensitive slope, from lanes and footpaths (sometimes glimpsed through the gaps between buildings).

For this reason the Steering Group have looked to identify and assess the important views that can be enjoyed within the parish. As a first step, local residents were asked to identify the views that they particularly valued as part the consultation event at the Flower Show when local residents were encouraged to indicate on the map those views that they particularly cared about. Views also identified as part of the work on the Conservation Area Appraisal were similarly identified. These views were then consider by members of the Steering Group (guided by their planning consultant) in terms of:

- the degree and general level of public access, including whether the view was from a long distance / recreational trail, another public right of way, a highway, public open space, or other space (which could for example include permissive paths) - all wholly private views were excluded;
- the type of users (i.e. motorists, walkers, cyclists and equestrians), and also the 'typical' level of daily or weekly users as far as could be estimated from local knowledge;
- the recognisable landmarks visible within the view – taking into account that this could change in relation to summer / winter foliage and planting;
- positive attributes such as whether the view has any notable cultural or other associations, or other reasons for it being more noteworthy than other areas of countryside);
- negative attributes such as detracting features within the view.

Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study (North Dorset)

Text extracts from Marnhull Section:

Views towards the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB to the east from elevated ground. Slopes adjacent to the valley of the River Stour are visually prominent from the opposing valley sides.

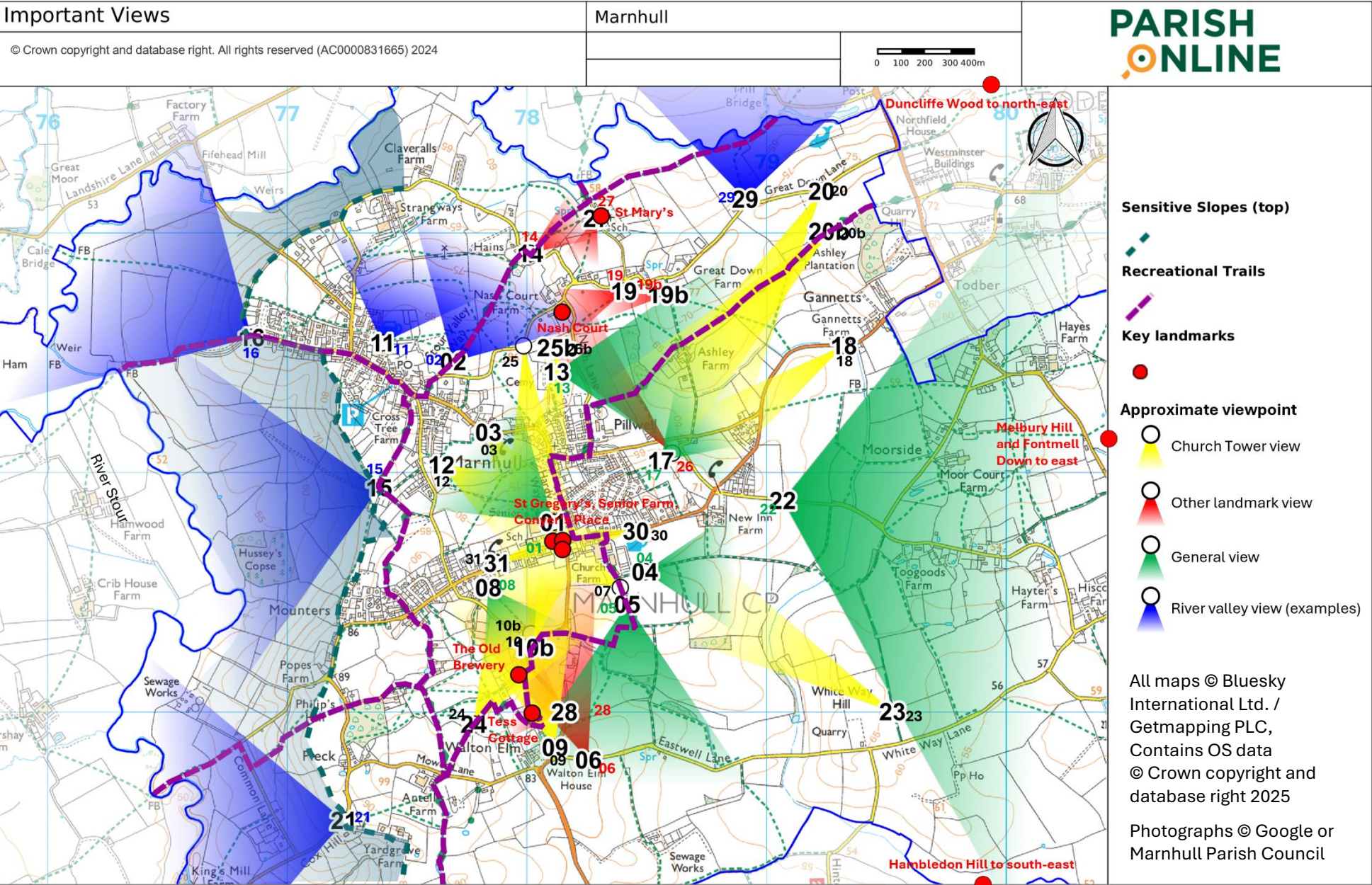
Looking outward from the village are mostly undeveloped, wooded skylines with long-reaching views. The tower of the grade I listed St Gregory's Church is a landmark feature on the skyline when looking towards the village and is visible from most directions.

Development within the conservation area, or its rural setting, could potentially affect its special interest by changing its character, historic layout, rural setting, or result in the loss of key views.

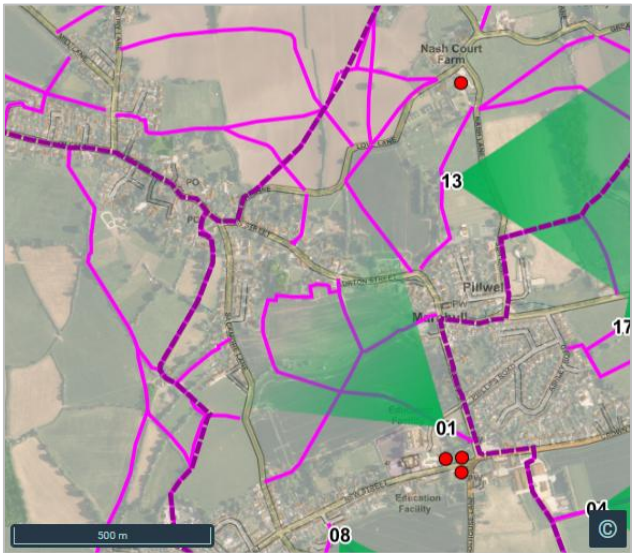
Avoid siting development in visually prominent locations, including the upper valley slopes of the River Stour. Proposals should not detract from landmark views, including views to the church tower.

¹ Strategic Landscape and Heritage Study for North Dorset Area - Assessment of land surrounding the larger villages, prepared by LUC for Dorset Council, October 2019
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/documents/35024/282495/North+Dorset+Larger+Villages+L+%26+H+Assessment+%28incl+M+St+A+update%29.pdf/0633a15b-488b-b462-e832-9fbc0bf36c55?version=1.0&t=1619387696131>

The resulting views that were deemed to be the most valued and worthy of particular note are mapped and described in detail below. Please note that grid coordinates and direction of view point are provided as a guide, but may cover a wider area than indicated by these measurements.



View: 1 - from St Gregory's church tower and graveyard



View looking WNW (and 360°) from St Gregory's church tower and graveyard (and N47/31) (XY grid reference 378171, 118728)

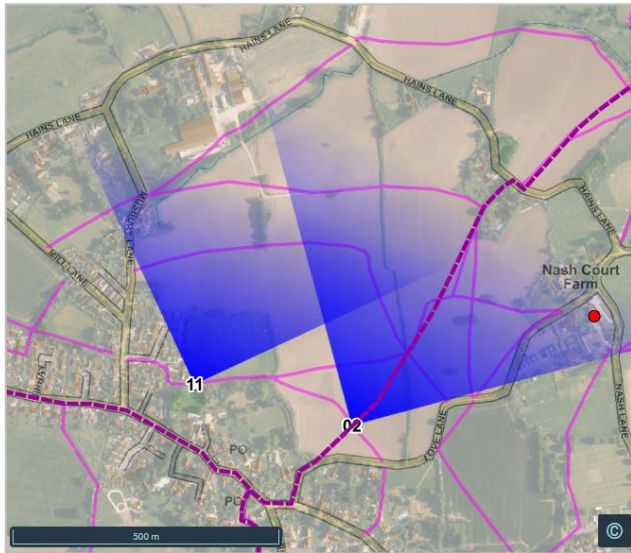
Views from the churchyard across the central field towards Burton Street and part of the Conservation Area, and also from the tower of St Gregory's over the Blackmore Vale in all directions across the countryside for which it is an important landmark.



Example of view from the tower



View: 2 – across the Valley of the River Stour and across to Fifehead Magdalen and Duncliffe Wood



View looking NE from N47/95 Round Dorset Walk / Stour Valley Way (XY grid reference 377693, 119463)

Panoramic views to many important landmarks in distance – to the north to the River Stour and Fifehead Magdalen, and eastwards towards Nash Court and beyond to Duncliffe Wood. A unique vantage point accessible from several footpaths. A more focused view of Duncliffe Wood is also enjoyed from the end of Love Lane.



View: 3 - St Gregory's Church from Burton Street



View looking SSE from Burton Street and N47/33 (XY grid reference 377840, 119169)

This is a much valued, unobstructed view of the St Gregory's Church from both the gateway on Burton Street near the red phonebox and the important green space that separates the two main routes along which the village formed, with N47/33 running in a southerly direction towards the church.





View: 4 – towards the Cranborne Chase including Fontmell Down / Melbury Hill



View looking E from N47/115 (XY grid reference 378493, 118586)

This is one of the clearest views in the village to Fontmell Down / Melbury Hill – a long view from high ground, across countryside characteristic of the Blackmore Vale.



View: 5 – from the Hardy Way towards Hinton St Mary



View looking S from N47/34 Hardy Way (XY grid reference 378418, 118451)

A captivating view from high ground on the Hardy Way as you exit the village, looking across open countryside. Hinton St Mary is visible in this view in the winter months.



View: 6 – the Old Brewery and tower of St Gregory's from Eastwell Lane



View looking NNW from Eastwell Lane (XY grid reference 378257, 117801)

Pausing at the field gateway there is a long view across fields towards the Old Brewery and other historic buildings on Carraway Lane, as well as Hindgaston House (a substantial property and formally associated with the brewing industry), with the tower of St Gregory's also just visible on the skyline beyond.

This is also seen closer to hand from footpath N47/117



View: 7 - St Gregory's Church (and tower) from along the Hardy Way



View looking WNW from N47/36 Hardy Way (XY grid reference 378257, 117801)

Providing a clear view to St Gregory's Church from along the Hardy Way approaching the village from the south. The whole of the church and tower is visible and also the back of Conyer's Place (the Old Rectory)



View: 8 - towards the Cranborne Chase including Fontmell Down / Melbury Hill

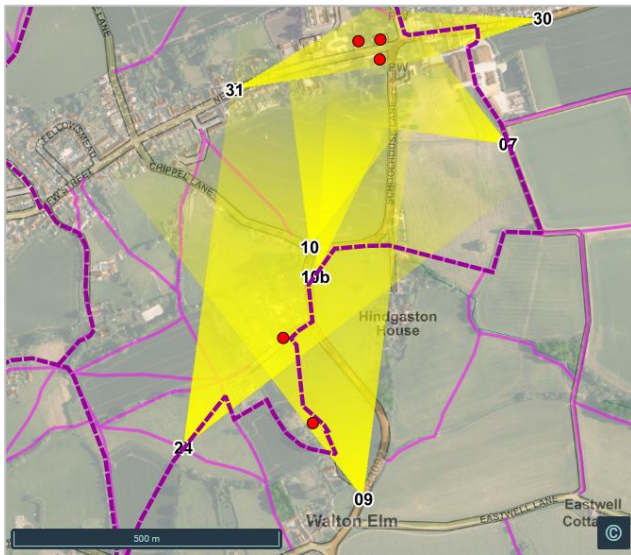


View looking SSE from N47/28 (XY grid reference 377840, 118520)

Long view from the footpath in the field behind Butt's Close towards Fontmell Down / Melbury Hill – whilst development is planned in this field it should be possible to retain such a view subject to consideration of layout, landscaping etc.



View: 9 - St Gregory's Church from the B3092 approach past Walton Elm



View looking N from B3092 (XY grid reference 378118, 117853)

Approaching the village along the main road from the south, at the junction with Eastwell Lane up to the junction leading to Tess' Cottage provides an early sighting of St Gregory's tower (one of the best views of St Gregory's from the B3092), and then follows with views of Tess' Cottage and the Old Brewery.

NB the tower of St Gregory's also just visible on the skyline from Viewpoint 6.



View: 10/10b - St Gregory's Church from the B3092 approach nearing the village



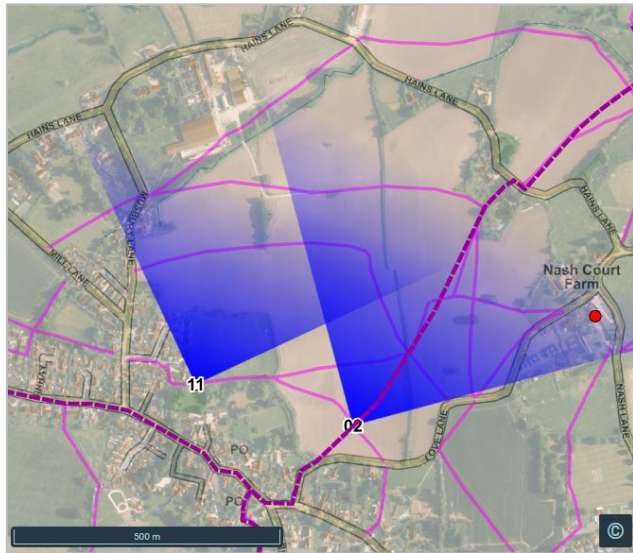
View looking N from B3092 and N47/28 (and N47/27 Hardy Way) (XY grid reference 378017, 118326 and 378027, 118271)

Type of view: St Gregory's Church (and tower)

Second very striking view of St Gregory's tower on the approach to the village, widely seen by motorists travelling along the main road. The field entrance, providing access to footpath N47/28, provides a clear view for those on foot, and from the higher ground of N47/27 which is on the Hardy Way.



View: 11 - across the Valley of the River Stour and across to Fifehead Magdalen and Duncliffe Wood

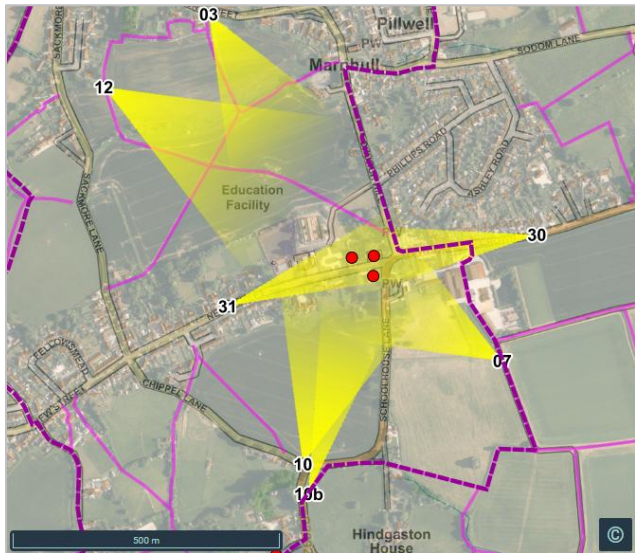


View looking NNE from N47/95 (and also along Hains Lane) (XY grid reference 377398, 119541)

Long view from the footpath behind Clock House over the valley of the River Stour towards the village of Fifehead Magdalen in the distance. A similar view closer to the river can also be glimpsed from gaps along Hains Lane.



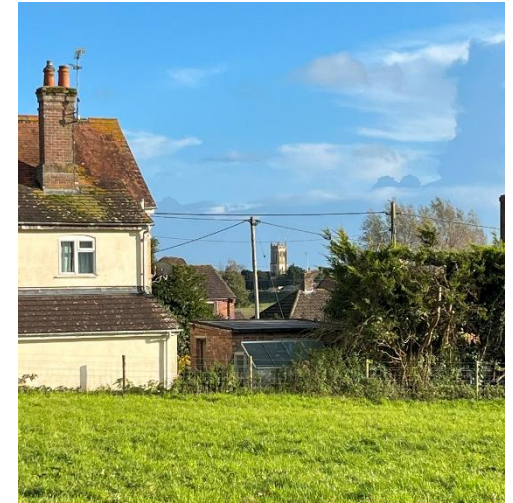
View: 12 - St Gregory's Church from Dunsford Field, off Sackmore Lane



View looking ESE from N47/32 (XY grid reference 377643, 119032)

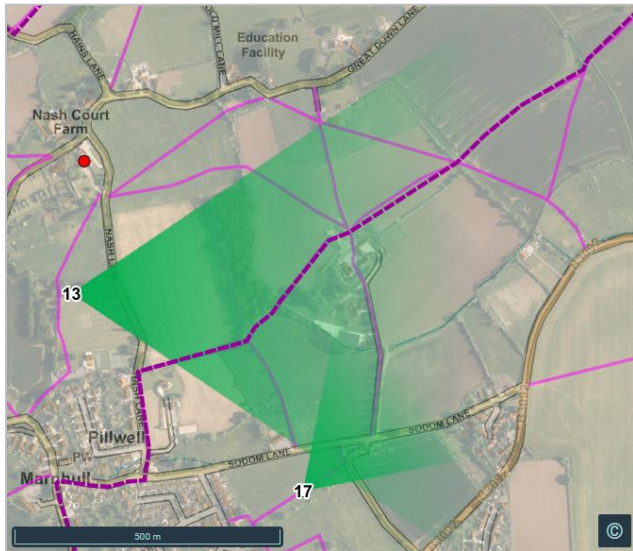
Regarded as one of the best views of St Gregory's, and described as "one of the best in rural Hardy country", the whole of the church and tower is visible and also Grade 2 listed Senior's Farmhouse. The footpath into the central field here is very well used.

A glimpse of the church is also possible from the far side of Sackmore Lane (see right and following page).





View: 13 – from the Recreation Ground towards Cranborne Chase



View looking E from Recreation Ground (XY grid reference 378124, 119421)

A wide angle view from the back of the popular Recreation Ground / playing field, over the woodland plantation to Fontmell Down / Melbury Hill in the Cranborne Chase National Landscape.



View: 14 - St Mary's Church and Old Mill Lane buildings from the Stour Valley Way



View looking NE from N47/103 Round Dorset Walk and Stour Valley Way (XY grid reference 378014, 119915)

From the gateway on Hains Lane and along this well-used footpath, is a delightful view of St Mary's Church, Meadow Cottage and the old mill cottages, and across the village of the River Stour to Fifehead Magdalen.



View: 15 – the Valley of the River Stour from the ridgeway



View looking W from Stour Valley Way N47/7 (and also N47/5) (XY grid reference 377383, 118937)

The ridge is widely accessible by footpaths (including the Stour Valley Way) running from Mounters in New Street as far as Ham Lane. This ridge provides wonderful sequence of clear views over the old Marnhull Common, the River Stour, and onto Stalbridge and the rest of the Blackmore Vale beyond.



View: 16 - the Valley of the River Stour looking west from the Round Dorset Walk

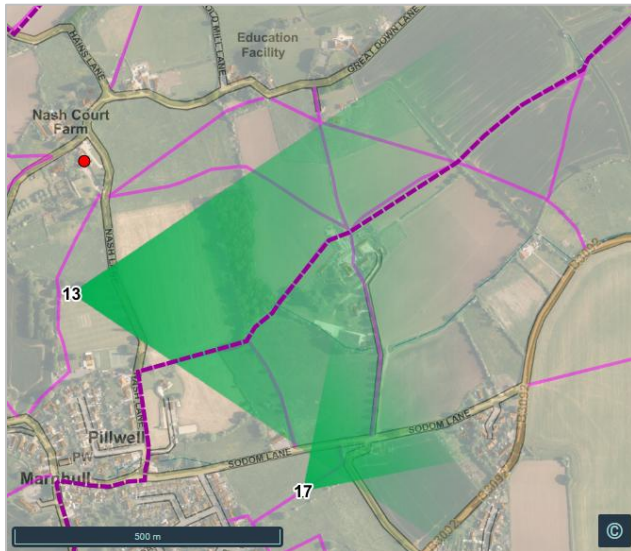


View looking WNW from Ham Lane, Round Dorset Walk N47/4 (XY grid reference 376851, 119564)

Another key viewpoint on the ridge, this time on part of the Round Dorset Walk, where the ground falls away down to the river creating good views looking westwards for miles over the River Stour towards Stalbridge and Henstridge in the distance.



View: 17 – rural setting of Laburnham Cottage with Duncliffe Wood backdrop



View looking NE from N47/34 (XY grid reference 378559, 119049)

Type of view: General inc distant hills

A beautiful view from the footpath across the top of the Grade 2 listed Laburnham Cottage and out to the countryside with Duncliffe Wood visible in the distance - whilst development is planned it should be possible to retain such a view subject to consideration of layout, landscaping etc...



View: 18 – first glimpses of St Gregory's Church from the B3092 east of the village



View looking WSW from B3092 (XY grid reference 379323, 119530)

An early view of St Gregory's Church on the approach to the village from the east, as seen from along the main road just before and past the small hamlet of Gannets.

Further glimpses are gained as the motorist navigates the winding road, and also from where the footpath exits onto the road (photo to left)



View: 19/19b – Nash Court from the east



View looking WSW from N47/87, N47/85 and N47/79 (XY grid reference 378405, 119758 and 378589, 119744)

Clear views of the front of Grade 2 listed, Nash Court, from the footpaths to the east.

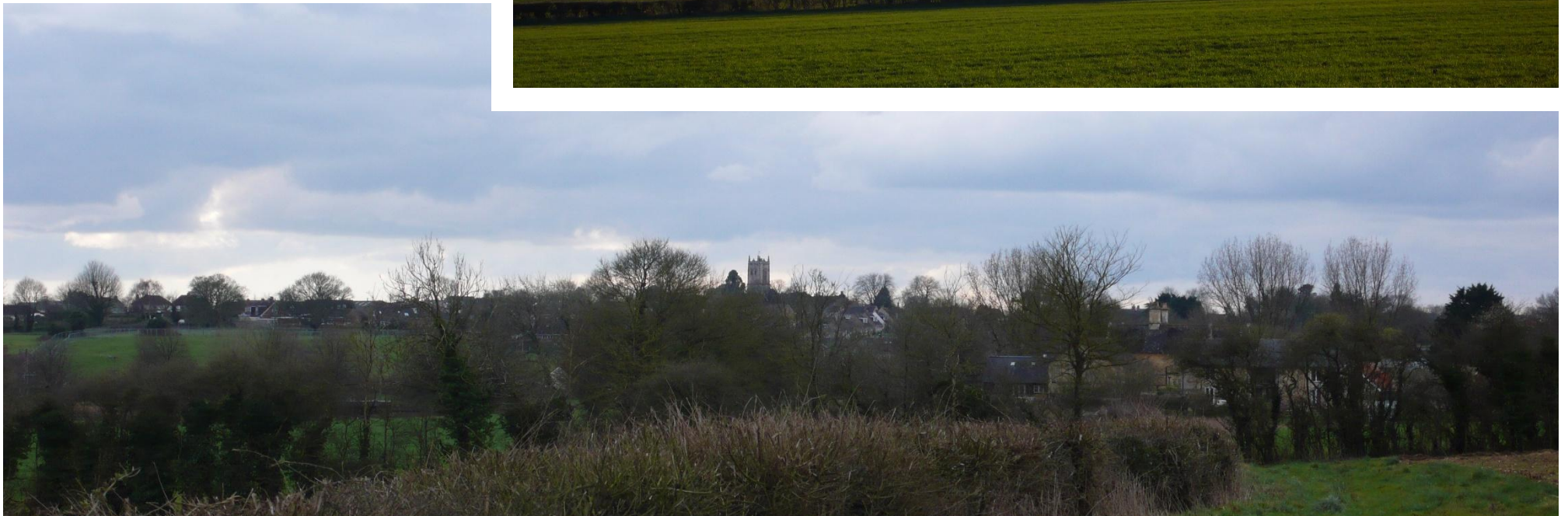


View: 20/20b - St Gregory's Church approaching the village from the Hardy Way / Great Down Lane



View looking SSW from Great Down Lane and N47/80 (Hardy Way) (XY grid reference 379230, 120175 and 379261, 120008)

Long views from the high ground on Great Down Lane, from the gateway just near Ashley Down Farm and also from the Hardy Way towards the village and the tower of St Gregory's Church.



View: 21 - Valley of the River Stour from Cox Hill



View looking SW from Cox Hill (highway) and N47/13 (White Hart Link) (XY grid reference 377238, 117548)

An impressive long view from the top of Cox Hill across the valley of the River Stour and on to Stalbridge, which can be seen both from the road as you exit the village, with similar view also possible from Common Lane and nearby footpaths.



View: 22 – Sweeping views of the hills

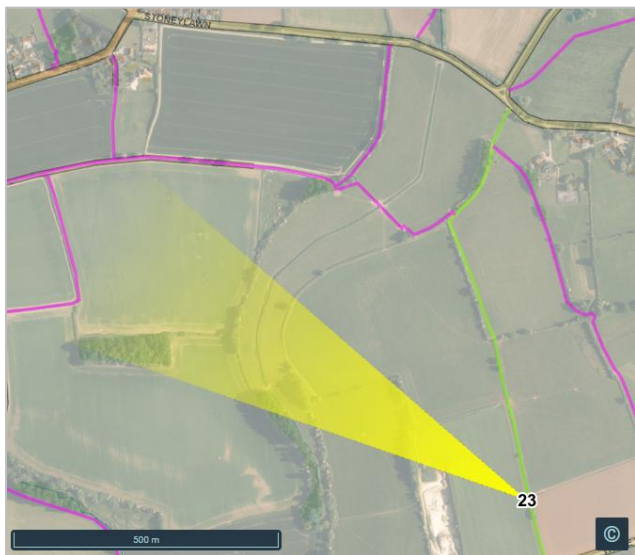


View looking NE from Stoneylawn (highway) (XY grid reference 379067, 118883)

Remarkable panoramic view through field gates on the lane leading away from the village past Stoneylawn, with Duncliffe Wood, Melbury Hill, Fontmell Down and Hambledon Hill all visible in the distance.



View: 23 – long distance view to St Gregory's Church from the east

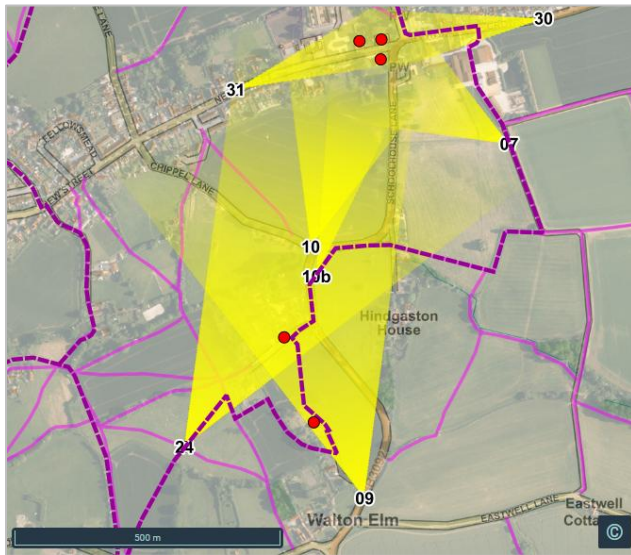


View looking NW from N47/50 (XY grid reference 379526, 118003)

Long view from the second gateway of the bridleway off Whiteway Lane across fields to St Gregory's Church.



View: 24 - St Gregory's Church from the Hardy Way, approaching Walton Elm



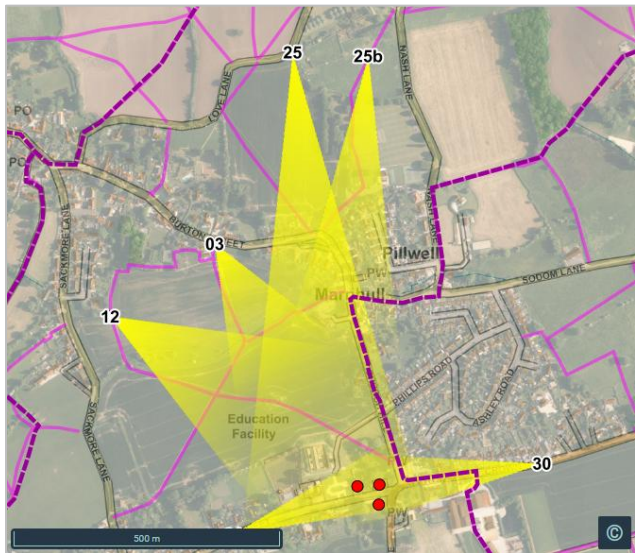
View looking NE from N47/23, N47/16, N47/22 (Hardy Way, Stour Valley Way and White Hart Link) (XY grid reference 377779, 117949)

View from the footpath at the end of Carraway Lane over the beautiful pasture with mature trees and hedgerow, to St Gregory's Church. The Old Brewery is not currently visible because of intervening trees. This view can be seen from the many footpaths which converge here, and include the Hardy Way, Stour Valley Way and White Hart Link.

Duncliffe Hill is also visible to the right.



View: 25/25b - St Gregory's Church from the north



View looking S from Love Lane and N47/89 (XY grid reference 377986, 119529 and 378129, 119522)
Type of view: St Gregory's Church (and tower)

View from the field at the end of the Nash Court walled garden and corner of Love Lane, with the tower of St Gregory's visible through trees. A similar view is also visible from the well-used footpath to the east, which leads to the Cemetery and Recreation Ground.



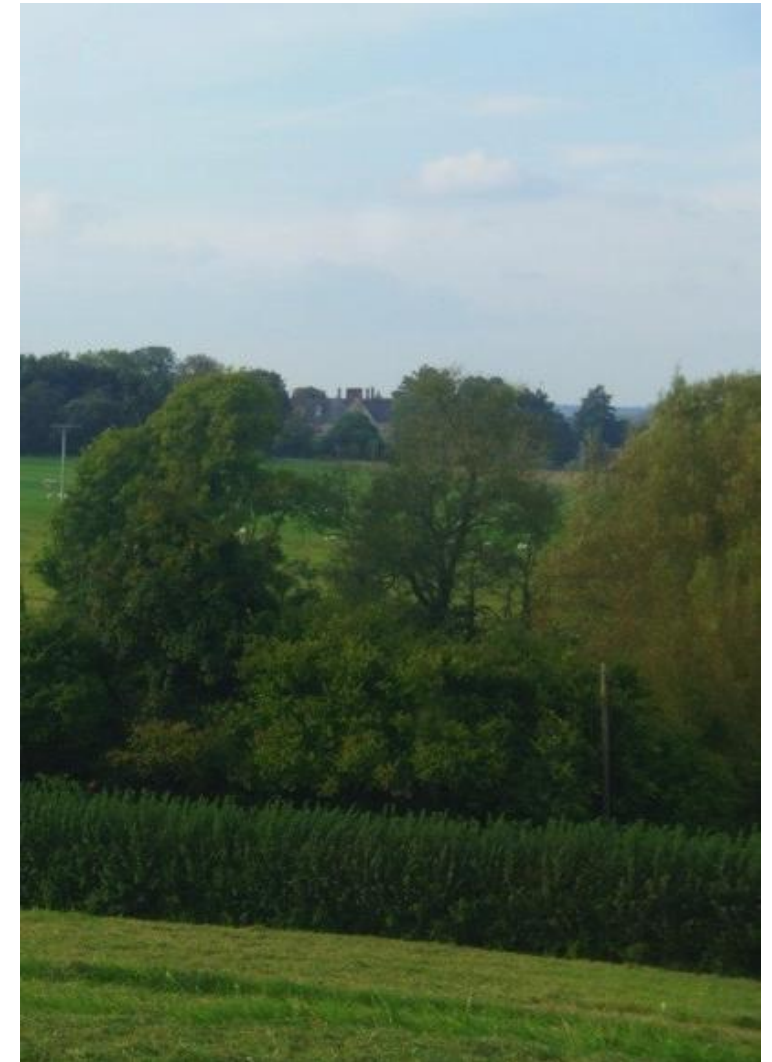
View: 26 – view to Nash Court from the south



View looking NW from Sodom Lane and N47/85 (XY grid reference 378607, 119081)

Type of view: Other landmark

View from the well-used footpath across Sodom Lane to Nash Court - whilst development is planned in this field it should be possible to retain such a view subject to consideration of layout, landscaping etc..



View: 27 – view to Nash Court on the footpath coming from St Mary’s Church

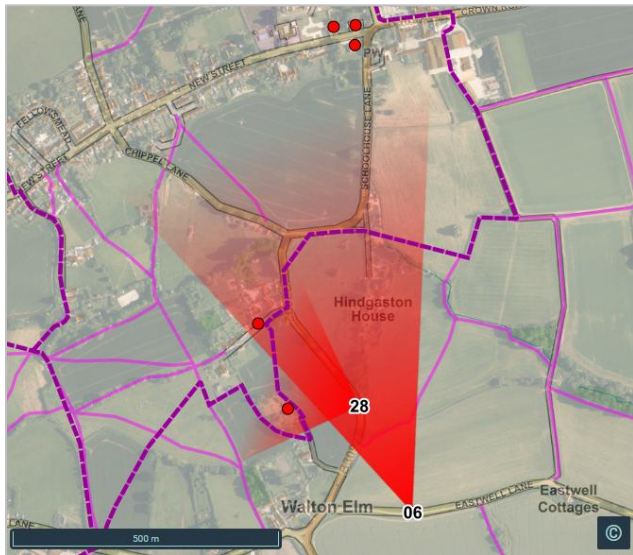


View looking SSW from N47/105 (XY grid reference 378291, 120061)

View to Nash Court from the ancient hay meadow on the footpath associated with the history of St Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Nash Court.



View: 28 – view of Tess' Cottage and The Old Brewery, Walton Elm

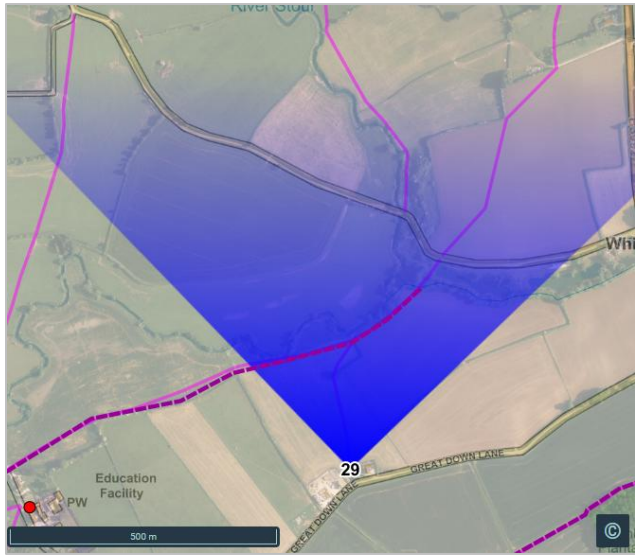


View looking W from B3092 (XY grid reference 378157, 118001)

View from round the bend on the B3092 south of Carraway Lane to Tess' Cottage and The Old Brewery (also visible from the field in between crossed by the Hardy Way). These historic properties view can be clearly seen through a gap in the hedge with only a metal railing fence. This is the best view of these historic listed buildings and a classic Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles scene.



View: 29 - Valley of the River Stour looking towards Fifehead Magdalen.



View looking N from N47/108 (XY grid reference 378911, 120142)

View from the gateway and public footpath off Great Down Lane, across the valley of the River Stour and further on towards Fifehead Magdalen.



View of the St Gregory's Church from along the main approach road from the east, aligning in the centre of the view about 300m out as the road straightens. The view is then framed by the buildings either side of the road, first set back and then forming a more notable 'tunnel' outside the Crown Inn.



View: 31 - St Gregory's Church from along New Street



View looking east from New Street (XY grid reference 377875,118621)

View of the St Gregory's Church from along New Street from the west, aligning in the centre of the view about 270m out as the road straightens. The view is framed in part by the hedgerows, shrubs and trees within the front boundaries of plots, with Seniors Place becoming visible as the foreground after you pass the school building.

