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## Walkhampton Community Plan

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## 1 Introduction

The Civil Parish of Walkhampton is part of the Burrator Combined Parish which comprises the civil parishes of Meavy, Sheepstor and Walkhampton. The Parish Plan for Burrator was prepared in 2012, updated in 2013 and is in need of updating.

There are four readily discernible communities within Burrator Combined Parish:

- Dousland
- Meavy
- Sheepstor; and
- Walkhampton

The community of Dousland currently straddles the civil parishes of Walkhampton and Meavy, see Figure A.1.1, and is currently split into the areas of “Walkhampton-Dousland” and “Meavy-Dousland”, and is not treated as a community in its own right.

Rather than preparing a Parish Plan, Burrator Parish Council (BPC) decided that the communities within the Burrator Parish should prepare Community Led Plans for each community within the grouped parish. This approach was determined to encourage community participation within the planning exercise which was notably lacking during the previous campaign.

BPC recognised the need to update its current Parish Plan and the planning exercise was begun in June 2017, after presentations from Devon Communities Together to BPC. Following this presentation, presentations were made in each of the Civil Parishes after which a Steering group was formed to manage the process. After the decision to base the Plan on a community basis, sub-steering groups were formed to represent each of the constituent communities and their outlying sub-communities. The community areas are shown in Figure A.1.2.

This report presents the Community Led Plan for Walkhampton.

The individual Community Led Plans will be brought together and integrated to form the Community Led Plan for the Combined Parish of Burrator.

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 The Parish of Burrator**

The Parish of Burrator is wholly within the Dartmoor National Park. It straddles the upper reaches of the River Meavy and is framed by the Walkham and Plym Rivers. The terrain is moorland, dry stone enclosed farmland and wooded river valleys. The granite quarries, tin mines and railways that once provided employment now exist as relics and landscape features that have been softened by time. Burrator Reservoir, after which the parish takes its name was formed by flooding the Meavy valley at the end of the 19th century. With its many surrounding granite tors, moorland and woodlands, Burrator provides a natural beauty spot that attracts many walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those who just come to visit in all seasons of the year.

The three separate parishes of Meavy, Sheepstor and Walkhampton were brought together as Burrator Grouped Parish in 1973 for administrative reasons rather than any tight ties of community. The 2011 Census recorded a total of 1,445 people living in Burrator and with a total land area of 5,945 hectares this makes it one of the largest and most sparsely populated parishes in England. Our population numbers have remained reasonably constant for a number of years.

Today, Burrator has an ageing demographic and remains a thinly populated, dispersed rural community. Four main settlements make up our area: Dousland, Meavy, Sheepstor and Walkhampton. Each is distinct in its own right. They also include other outlying hamlets such as Hoo Meavy, Goodameavy, Lovaton and Welltown as well as the hill farms that stretch across the parish in this mix of population centres.

### **2.2 The Aim of the Burrator Community Led Plan**

No one is better positioned to understand the needs, issues and aspirations of a local community than the people who are part of it. The aim of the Burrator Community Led Plan is to identify these details and put in place a set of realistic planning goals that can be delivered to improve or, where required, sustain the parish. It also provides a useful source of information for external authorities and organisations in helping them understand the aspiration and concerns of the people of Burrator. Even though the Dartmoor National Park Plan has recently been finalised, it will be reviewed on a regular basis and can be updated to take account the recommendations of the Burrator Community Plan.

### **2.3 Challenges Facing the Walkhampton Community**

Burrator, like every other parish, town and city, faces a future of financial uncertainty.

Our local farms and businesses are struggling to cope with the consequences of the economic downturn, not to mention the uncertainties of BREXIT, and virtually every aspect of public life is experiencing cuts at national, regional and local levels. Petrol and domestic fuel prices continue to rise and our very high water rates have long been a bone of contention.

Many parishioners on fixed incomes face increasing domestic expenses, whilst young people are struggling to find suitable local employment or housing. There is also increasing pressure on the budget allocations for the Devon & Cornwall Police Force and Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. The delivery of Health and Social Care has undergone major organisational changes. Clinical Commissioning Groups are now responsible for arranging health care and the County Council has taken on greater responsibility for the delivery of social care. The question of how these services will cope with the future demands of an ageing population still remains the focus of intense debate.

In an effort to reduce its overheads the Dartmoor National Park Authority has recently reorganised and streamlined its management structure. The West Devon Borough Council (WDBC) budget, along with that of Devon County Council (DCC), is required to make further savings whilst maintaining vital local services and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities. WDBC is already sharing many services with South Hams District Council (SHDC) in an effort to stretch resources, and has recently considered a merger between the Councils. However, this was rejected and WDBC is now considering further changes and cuts to the services it provides to minimise the projected future overspend.

#### **2.4 The Plan in Context and Vision for Walkhampton Community**

The previous section presents the background against which to formulate a Community Led Plan. As a starting point, we need a clear vision that captures the aspirations of our community. The goals in our plan are set to contribute towards this vision.

Our planning goals, whilst guided by the vision, need to be achievable, realistic, affordable and time-bound so that we can deliver progress within the community.

The following statement derived from information gathered in preparing this document summarises the key aspirations from people across the Walkhampton Community and sets out our vision as:

**A Community with a vibrant spirit that conserves the natural beauty and cultural heritage of its environment, provides for all of its age groups and enjoys a safe and healthy way of life.**

## 2.5 Planning Cycle and Timescales

The goals in the Community Action Plan should be broken down in to 3 timescales depending on the priority and/or ability to deliver an outcome. These are:

- Short – complete within the next 12 months;
- Medium – complete with 1 to 2 years;
- Long – complete within 2+ years (with specific target dates) or on-going action for annual review.

This does not include the time required to rationalise the individual community plans or for their inclusion in whole or in part in the Burrator Parish Plan.

As a matter of course, the Community Led Plan(s) for Burrator Combined Parish should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated, if necessary, to include progress and any changes required in the Plan.



### 3 Consultation

#### 3.1 Walkhampton Community Consultation

In line with the recommendations from the *Dartmoor Communities Together* (DCT) representative, the Consultation process was designed to be as inclusive as possible.

A plan was developed for the community consultation exercise which included the steps recommended in The Community Led Planning Toolkit provided by DCT:

- 1 Getting started
- 2 Establishing a steering group
- 3 Taking stock and planning ahead
- 4 Understanding your community
- 5 Prioritising and planning actions
- 6 Drafting an action plan
- 7 Finalising the action plan
- 8 Implementing and monitoring the action plan
- 9 Reviewing the plan.

At the initial briefing from the DCT representative, a record was kept of all those attending the briefing meeting and of their initial aspirations.

Following the meeting a number of people were approached to form a Walkhampton Steering Group (WSG) Committee to develop a consultation document based on the issues raised by, and the aspirations of, the attendees. Following the issue of the Consultation Document, other people were subsequently co-opted to the WSG to assist with various activities.

A time-based plan was developed to ensure that the consultation was inclusive.

The consultation document was prepared as a questionnaire which was distributed to all households within the Walkhampton Community. The questionnaire did not address each member of the household and it was assumed that the head of the household presented a rounded response representative of the household.

Following the consultation exercise, the completed questionnaires were analysed, and the key issues identified. This data was then used to prepare a presentation of the results for the residents of the community of Walkhampton.

### 3.2 Feedback Meeting

The first feedback meeting took place in the village hall at 1930 on Thursday 22 March 2018. The feedback was given in the form of a PowerPoint presentation by the members of the WSG to a packed hall.

The summary of the questionnaire results and illustrative photographs of the issues were presented as table displays. A formal presentation was also made in sections representing the questionnaire sections. Following the presentation of each section, time was allowed for audience questions to the WSG members and comments were noted.

A total of 52 people signed the register at the meeting, and it was estimated that a total of 59 attended excluding the WSG members.

Of the Questionnaires issued 33% were returned. However, this does not allow for second homes and holiday lets within the Walkhampton Community. It is estimated, there are no definitive figures for holiday lets and second homes, that around 40 to 45% returns are probably representative of the permanent households in Walkhampton which completed and returned the questionnaires.

### 3.3 Interest Groups

The following interest groups were identified within the Walkhampton community:

- Community Interest groups (hereafter referred to as interest groups (IG))
- Business Groups; and
- Stakeholder Groups

These were consulted using prepared guidance notes with pairs of WSG members interviewing the groups at arranged meetings. The meetings were neutral and designed to inform the group of the outcomes of the consultations and collect feedback from the groups that could be used to inform any proposed action plans. Records of the meetings were made, and copies provided to the groups for approval with the knowledge that they would be placed on public record.

#### 3.3.1 Interest Group Consultation

The following Interest Groups were identified, and interviews undertaken with representatives from these groups:

- The Burrator Beacon
- Bus Users
- Lady Modiford's School
- St Mary's Church
- The Walkhampton Memorial Hall

- Walkhampton Cottage Garden Society (Flower and Produce Show)
- Resident Youths (Teenagers & Children)

The records of these meetings were used to assess issues and aspirations for improvements and/or developments within Walkhampton and to develop an understanding of issues raised by the questionnaire returns.

### **3.3.2 Business Group Consultation**

Some of the original interest groups identified were businesses operating within the Walkhampton community, these included:

- The Roundabout & Moxham Garage
- The Walkhampton Forge
- The Walkhampton Inn (Re-opened by a new tenant since the questionnaire was issued)

Other small businesses may be operated from domestic premises; however, it is difficult to know about all of these and little feedback has been obtained to date. Where formal consultations have been made, records have been kept, and the results taken into account as with Interest group records.

### **3.3.3 Meetings with Key Stakeholders**

Key Stakeholders were identified as authorities and other similar bodies which have responsibility for infrastructure within the Walkhampton Community. These were specifically identified as:

- Devon County Council Highways Dept.
- Southwest Water
- Environment Agency Southwest

As with the previous groups, interviews with the relevant representatives were undertaken where possible. Records of these meetings were kept and sent to the interviewee for comment and correction.

These meetings were fruitful, as subsequent to the meetings some of the long-standing issues have been dealt with by the Stakeholder, or at least investigated and some feedback has been provided to date. Some issues remain to be resolved in the long term and will form part of the Community Led Plan.

## 4 Key Issues identified

### 4.1 Introduction

The issues raised from the consultation exercises have been grouped together under selected headings which facilitate general discussion and the formulation of an action plan.

These are as follows:

1. Environmental Issues
2. Planning and Housing
3. Environment and local businesses
4. Transport & Highways
5. Facilities and services
6. Leisure, Recreation and Community Spirit
7. Education

These issues are addressed in the following Sections:

### 4.2 Environmental Issues

The key environmental issues raised during the consultation were:

- Flooding of Blackbrook
- Sewer Overflows in the sewer network serving Walkhampton
- Surface water run-off
- Refuse, garden waste and recycling collections
- Management of fly tipping
- Street Cleaning

These issues have been addressed previously, however climate change has resulted in more intense rainfall. This results in more rapid increases in the volume of water passing through Blackbrook, increased surface water flowing down the hills from the Church, from Dousland and Woodman's Corner resulting in increased potential for flooding in the centre of the



village.

Sewer overflows are a separate issue and have occurred with great regularity over the last six years or more. Raw sewage has overflowed from various manholes in the vicinity of the village running down the roads towards the centre of the village. The uncontrolled overflow enters Blackbrook polluting the stream. It also creates safety hazards for pedestrians and vehicles coming into contact with the raw sewage. This is particularly relevant for the children and parents attending Pre-Nursery School (now closed) and Lady Modiford's Primary school who are not all aware that the overflow is raw sewage and the potential health implications. Whilst South West Water, or its contractors, has addressed the problems causing the overflows, the overflows continue to occur albeit with reducing regularity.

There were also issues identified with the collection of refuse, garden waste, recycling and food waste. However, the recycling arrangements have been changed since the consultation was undertaken, and it is understood that further changes may be imminent.

Particular comments were associated with littering resulting from the collections. A significant number of complaints identified that residents were not happy to have to make additional payments for garden waste collection, although this service is optional. Fly tipping was also identified as a problem, although not all residents were familiar with the procedure of reporting fly tipping.

Street cleaning also emerged as an issue, with some residents indicating that they were dissatisfied with the street cleaning provided by WDBC. A significant proportion of residents indicated that they had never seen any street cleaners in Walkhampton, and when vehicular cleaning was undertaken, the vehicle was too big to access the large number of smaller roads.

### **4.3 Planning and Housing**

The need for affordable housing in Walkhampton has been identified from the responses to the questionnaires. However, land identified in the draft Dartmoor National Plan as available for social housing, was removed in the final plan. There is therefore currently no identified available land proposed for affordable housing.

The housing development at King's Tor, the site adjacent to the Forge and opposite the Roundabout and Moxham Garage, was given planning permission to include affordable housing units. However, these have not been built, and the 4 four bed roomed houses that were built are currently empty and being advertised for sale. The situation with respect to the affordable housing units on this site is currently unknown. However, at least one respondent identified the need for sheltered housing to be provided in Walkhampton Village. This site, being central to the remaining facilities within the village would be suitable for such a development.

Other proposed private developments have failed to obtain planning permission over the years.

In general, a small amount of development is supported by the respondents e.g. limited development of affordable housing e.g. for young locals or sheltered housing for the local elderly.

#### **4.4 Transport and Highways**

There are four key issues identified from the consultation exercise:

- The shortfall in public transport provided outside of core hours
- Parking within the village
- The speed of traffic through the village
- Highways maintenance

##### **4.4.1 Bus services**

The bus services available from Walkhampton link into longer distance services. However, the services are tied to core hours which exclude their use for travelling to work or for the purpose of socialising in the evenings. It is also difficult to access taxi services as there is no “local taxi”, and fares can be prohibitive for younger people and the elderly.

##### **4.4.2 Parking**

Parking within the centre of Walkhampton is greatly restricted by the lack of dedicated car parking spaces, especially within the old village and associated housing developed before the car reached its current popularity.

The Walkhampton Inn and School have their own car parks as does the Walkhampton Memorial Hall, however this is insufficient to satisfy local need and to serve these institutions when they are actively used.

The current parking facilities are adversely affected by three additional factors:

- The School run by parents from outside the village delivering their children to Lady Modiford’s School
- Parking of vehicles in the vicinity of the Roundabout and Moxham Garage which has little parking room of its own
- Overspill from the Walkhampton Inn car park.

This results in random parking around the monument, in the entrance to Blackbrook Close, in the vicinity of Lady Modiford’s School, and in other nearby areas preventing some residents from entering or leaving their own properties and preventing them from parking.



The parking available to the Roundabout and Moxham Garage is frequently used to keep vehicles propped up on jacks or axle stands. This is a potential hazard for pedestrians walking in the vicinity of this area. However, recent events in Sep 2019 have led to the closure of Hamley's garage at Yelverton. These premises are understood to be owned by the Roundabout & Moxham Garage. Parts of the Roundabout & Moxham Garage operation is due to be moved to Yelverton, which may alleviate some of the current parking problems.

The greatly welcomed re-opening of the Walkhampton Inn, since the start of the consultation, has exacerbated the parking problems.

#### **4.4.3 Speed of traffic through the village**

The majority of respondents identified the speed of traffic through the village as a problem. This has been recently highlighted by a road traffic accident at Knowle Down where a car went off the road missing pedestrians by only a few minutes and causing damage to property at the nearby Knowle Farm.

A one-off speed check during the morning peak period undertaken by DCC Highways indicated that most vehicles were travelling at less than the current 30 mph limit.

Nevertheless, respondents have indicated that they would like to implement traffic calming measures and a 20 mph limit through the centre of the village should be sought or some other means of reducing the general traffic speed.

#### **4.4.4 Highways maintenance**

A large part of the road infrastructure in Walkhampton Parish is rural and there are issues with:

- Blocked drains

- Potholes
- Lack of gritting during the winter

Whilst it is understood that WDBC budget is restricted, residents, especially those in the more rural locations, would like to see improved maintenance to maintain the quality of the roads infrastructure.

#### 4.5 Facilities and Services

This section relates to community facilities and services within the boundaries of the Walkhampton Community.

The village lost its post office and shop around 20 years ago. At the beginning of the consultation process the Walkhampton Inn had been closed for a significant period of time with the possibility of the owner's, The Wellington Pub Group, applying for a change of use for the premises. Following a campaign, the community of Walkhampton with the assistance of BPC succeeded in getting the Walkhampton Inn listed as an Asset of Community Value. Since then the lease of the Walkhampton Inn has been awarded to a new tenant and it has been run as a public house for the nearly two years.

The other facilities and services available within the Community, were as follows:

- St Mary's Church
- Lady Modiford's School
- The Walkhampton Memorial Hall (WMH)
- The Saturday Market and Coffee Shop (In the WHM)
- The Pre-School Nursery (Closed 27 Sep 2019)
- The Roundabout and Moxham Garage
- The Forge
- The Burrator Beacon

These facilities and services within the Walkhampton Community, with the exception of the Pre-school Nursery, are well supported not only by the resident population but also by the populations from the other communities in the Burrator Grouped Parish Council.

The WMH is currently in the process of being upgraded in a multi-stage process. The first stage providing a new roof was been completed in 2018. The WMH provides a centre of focus for the local residents especially when used for the Saturday Market and Coffee Shop and for staging community events (e.g. Flower & Produce show, Arts & Crafts exhibition and Sale, Remembrance Sunday, etc).

There was concern expressed that Lady Modiford's School was not as well integrated with the village as it had been in the past. This was identified as a lack of effective communication between the community and the school, and *vice versa*. However, much



improved links between the community and the school have been developed during the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the school in 2019.

A number of concerns were expressed in the consultation exercise in relation to some of these facilities; namely parking and the integration with other facilities and services. However, in general most of the residents were highly supportive of these institutions and the services they provide.

A general lack of knowledge of businesses that are run from homes in the area was identified.

The Burrator Beacon was warmly supported by the respondents although there was some comment about the reliability of the delivery to homes.

## **4.6 Leisure, Recreation and Community Spirit**

### **4.6.1 Leisure & Recreation**

In general, residents were happy with facilities in the village for leisure and recreation, although a number felt that greater use could be made of them (eg WMH, playing fields, School etc).

However, the current changing room facilities available at the WMH do not satisfy current requirements. This may be addressed in the upgrading works for the WMH currently being undertaken in a phased approach.

### **4.6.2 Community Spirit**

Overall feedback indicates that Walkhampton has a caring, inclusive and supporting community spirit.

General feedback indicates that most would like this to continue in that way. This is shown by the community cohesion in support for: WMH usage, Christmas Lights, Bus Shelter Decorations, Remembrance Sunday and St Mary's Church etc

### **4.6.3 Other Issues**

Whilst a number of individual suggestions were made for general improvements to services and facilities within the community of Walkhampton, the general feedback indicated that the community were generally satisfied and that there were no unidentified issues that need urgent attention.

## **5 Draft Action Plan**

Based on the issues identified during the Feedback meeting in March 2018 with the community, a draft community led plan has been developed with the aims and objectives as follows:

### **5.1 Environmental issues**

#### **5.1.1 Flood Prevention**

- Promote the awareness of residents in the flood zone (SAs delineated by SWEA) and to ensure that they know how to register with the Flood Warning System
- Engage with SWW in relation to sewage overflows to request SWW to provide feedback on sewer overflows including the causes of the overflows and SWW's proposals to minimise such occurrences.
- Engage with DCC to discuss effective control of surface water runoff and how best to minimise the risk of flooding.

#### **5.1.2 Waste disposal and Recycling**

- Seek clarification on current recycling and disposal procedures and programmes from WDBC
- Address littering in the community
  - From waste collections
  - From general littering
- From fly tipping Engage with WDBC to determine what street cleaning is currently undertaken and to establish what if any improvements can be made in conjunction with WDBC and its contractor(s)

### **5.2 Planning and Housing**

- Seek clarification from the Devon Home Choice , that manages Social Housing on behalf of WDBC, that local housing is allocated to locals
- To find out what is happening to the partly completed Kings Tor Development, and to encourage a way forward for completion by construction of the affordable housing element of the development
- To ensure that no further development is undertaken in the Walkhampton Community, unless improvements to the current infrastructure and services available are also enhanced
- To find out whether sheltered housing for the elderly might be incorporated into the Kings Tor Development.

### 5.3 Transport and Highways

- **Public Transport**
  - To engage with local transport providers to determine if the services currently provided can be extended to cover more than just core periods to facilitate transport for work and leisure purposes
  - To investigate what other transport services might be available
- **Parking**
  - To consider plans for reducing congestion caused by parking in central Walkhampton:
    - At the Roundabout and Moxham Garage
    - At the War Memorial; and
    - In residential roads subject to congestion
  - To consider whether school transport might be reinstated to minimise parking problems during school run periods
  - To determine whether it is possible to provide additional parking close to the centre of the village
- **Traffic Speed Management**
  - To consider traffic calming measures on the access roads to Walkhampton, in conjunction with DCC
  - To instigate a 20 mph speed limit in central Walkhampton in the centre of the village, especially near the school
- **Highways Maintenance**
  - To engage with DCC to establish whether the existing road infrastructure in the wider Walkhampton Community might be better maintained
  - To establish whether improved gritting might be supported during cold snaps
  - To establish the details of the BPC Snow Warden and how to obtain bags of grit for use on the access roads

### 5.4 Facilities and Services

- **General**
  - To ensure continued support is provided by the community for the facilities and services within the Walkhampton area (Defined in Section 4.5, and listed below)
- **St Mary's Church**

To foster continued interaction between St Mary's Church and the community of Walkhampton
- **Lady Modiford's School**
  - To encourage improved communication between the school and the community, and *vice versa*

- **The Walkhampton Memorial Hall (WMH)**
  - To encourage more support for Project George (the name given to the current fundraising for WMH) and the improvement of the WMH and its associated grounds
  - To seek to encourage wider use of the facilities offered by the WMH
  - To seek more financial funding for Project George
- **The Saturday Market and Coffee Shop (In the WMH)**
  - To continue to support for the Saturday Market and Coffee shop
  - To encourage more volunteers to assist with the running of the Coffee Shop and Market
- **The Roundabout and Moxham Garage**
  - To find a resolution to the parking problems associated with the garage, if still required (See Section 4.4.2)
- **Small Businesses**
  - To establish what small businesses are being run from Walkhampton
  - To determine, where possible, how small businesses operating in the Walkhampton Community may be disadvantaged
  - To seek improved communications for small businesses and others in the community

## 5.5 Leisure Recreation and Community Spirit

- **Leisure and Recreation**
  - To encourage full use of the facilities offered in Walkhampton
  - To enhance the facilities where possible (See WMH above)
- **Community Spirit**
  - To seek to maintain and improve the community spirit within Walkhampton

## 5.6 Other Issues

- To take into account the individual suggestions made during the consultation process to see what would be most beneficial for Walkhampton.

## 6 Summary and Conclusions

At this stage of the Community Led Plan for Walkhampton, it is not practical to produce a detailed time-based programme for implementation of the plan.

The current Walkhampton Steering Group (WSG) needs to be increased in size, with new members providing the necessary skills and energy to take the plan forward to implementation. The current WSG will recruit new volunteers from the community.

Whilst it may not be possible to foresee, at this stage, whether the plan's objectives will be fully met in the future, some significant achievements have been obtained along the way following consultation with key stakeholders:

- new figure post installed at the Walkhampton Bridge
- Surface drain outside of the WMH cleared after being blocked for at least three years
- Sewer overflows reducing in frequency and a full cctv survey of the sewer network planned by SWW for completion by end March 2020
- Surface run-off overflow outside of the old shop has been made safe for pedestrians

## 7 Outstanding actions

### 7.1 Feedback Meeting 2

To be undertaken to present the Plan to the Walkhampton Community and to obtain their approval and feedback. (This meeting will also present the opportunity to recruit new members to the WSG)

### 7.2 Final Action Plan

This is to be prepared, following presentation of the plan to the Community, and incorporation of Feedback from this meeting. Subsequently it will be presented to the Burrator Steering Group for incorporation into a combined community led plan for Burrator.

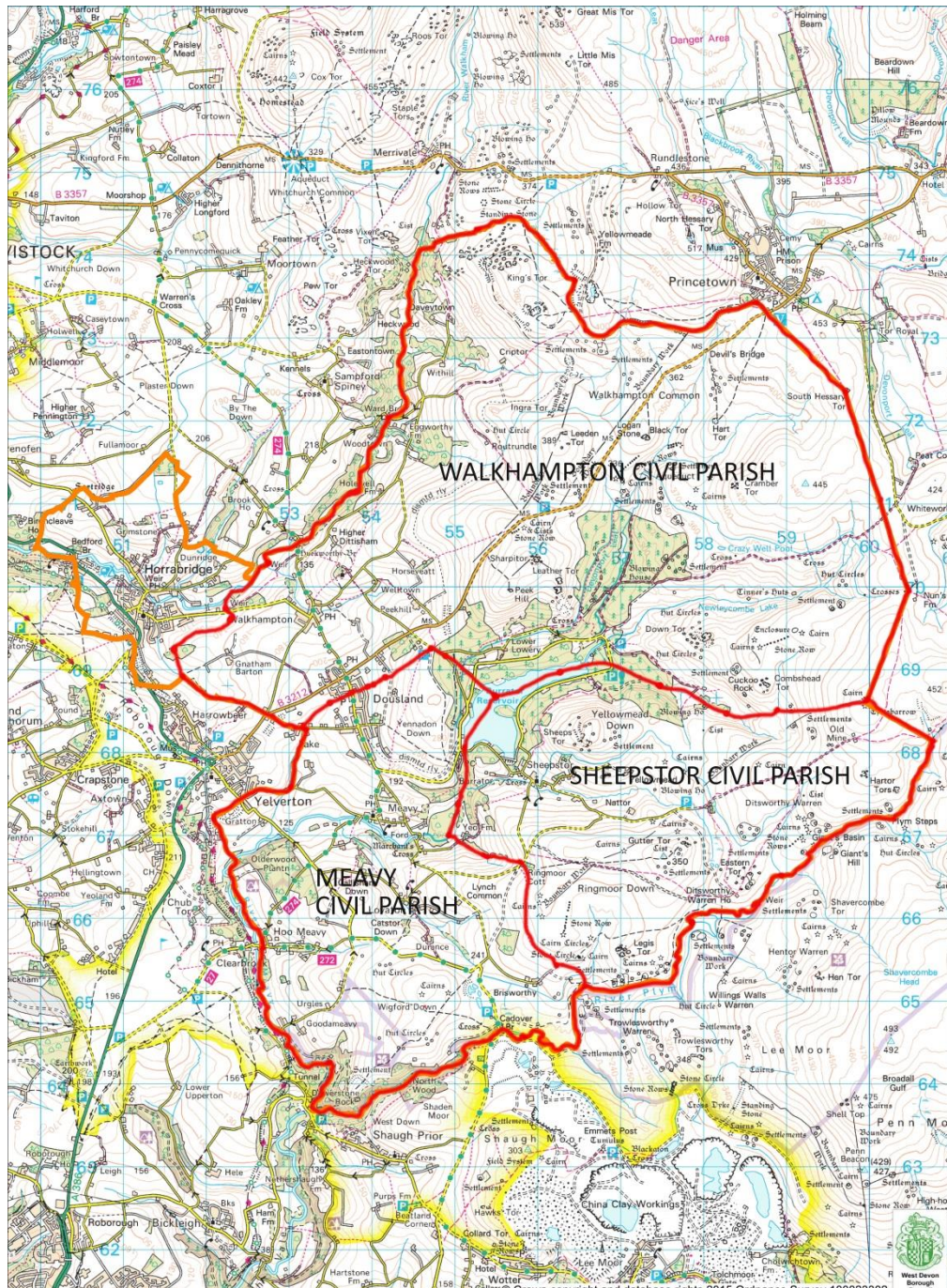
This will then be presented to Burrator Parish Council for incorporation into the new Parish Plan for Burrator.



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Figures

#### A.1.1 Plan of Civil Parishes within the Grouped Parish of Burrator





### A.1.2 Plan of Identified Communities within the Grouped Parish of Burrator

