



**Woodhouse Parish
Neighbourhood Plan 2020- 2036
Referendum version
August 2021**

Farming and Rural Land Use

137. The parish comprises two broadly different areas in terms of topography and land use. The eastern part from Woodhouse Eaves, Main Street to the boundary with Quorn forms part of the Soar Valley and land use is largely mixed agriculture. To the west of this lies a much hillier area, part of the Charnwood Forest. The land is much less suited to cropping and there are considerable areas that are used purely for grazing and pockets of woodland are common throughout. It is here that there are also two country parks and two golf courses.

Woodland

138. Aerial views show that the parish has a number of woods and a network of hedgerows. The western part of the parish is in the National Forest (the boundary comprises Brand Hill, Main Street and Breakback Road). The parish has benefitted from National Forest planting schemes over the last 30 years. The trees, now mostly broad-leaved native species, contribute to CO₂ reduction and bio-diversity. They also benefit residents and visitors by enhancing the landscape and another benefit to residents and visitors is their enhancement of the landscape. Most of the woods are too small to have much commercial value. The number of trees in traditional hedgerows has declined, due to old age or disease and farming practice, and the parish would like to encourage re-planting where feasible and also tree planting generally.

Farming

139. The lower land in the north and east of the parish is more suited to arable than the rockier land to the south and west where grazing is more common. It is notable that many hedges have been lost in the arable area since OS surveys around the 1960s, but the grazing land has generally retained its hedgerows. The number of working farms has significantly declined, with many farmhouses being sold and, in some instances, adjoining farm buildings converted into private dwellings. These small acreages are often used for keeping horses or as extended gardens or maintained as parkland (grass with scattered trees).

Currently the working farms based in the parish are:

- Rushey Fields Farm based in the south east of the parish. This is a mixed use arable and dairy farm.
- Upper Broombriggs Farm in the west comprises mainly sheep grazing with some arable.
- Brook Road Farm is now mainly a livery yard but arable and grazing on some outlying fields
- The Brand comprises mostly grazing and woodland
- Thorntree Farm and Longhill Farm both situated near the Breakback Road/Dean's Lane corner, mainly grazing.

- There are also several other farms based in adjoining parishes that have land that extends into this parish (including Whatoff Lodge Farm and Bowler's Farm)
- Broombriggs Farm Country Park, immediately west of Woodhouse Eaves, is run by a tenant of the County Council as grazing for a herd of cattle but with arable fields on the flatter land near the village. This is set out as a visitor attraction with maintained paths around fields with signage providing information on farming practice so visitors can experience a mixed farm.
- Conservation grazing by Longhorn cattle, sheep, alpacas and sometimes pigs, is practiced on Beacon Hill Country Park.
- The Brand comprises mostly grazing and woodland

140. The UK is coming out of the Common Agricultural Policy and the signs are that the subsidy scheme which will replace it, will focus on environmental actions taken rather than acreage held. The parish welcomes this in principle but realises that this could alter the current farming pattern.

Land Use - foreseeable changes.

1. Tree planting is likely to expand with government encouragement to combat climate change. Generally speaking, this is likely to be acceptable to the parish although there may be site-specific issues about accommodating leisure use alongside planting, e.g. where the landholding could contribute to getting Vulnerable Road Users off the parish's narrow and busy roads.
2. Agriculture will probably continue as the major land use. The changes are likely to be the further decline of small farms and the conversion of their buildings to other uses, possibly alongside further building at the one or two larger farms remaining.
3. There is the possibility that there is a proposal to construct renewable energy generating facilities for example a 'Solar Farm', wind turbine or biomass fuelled generator. This is discussed further in the section on renewable energy.
4. The most extensive area for potential change of use is Welbeck DSFC in Woodhouse, due for closure in 2021. As it is MoD land, the parish may only be able to give advice if and when a planning application is made, using relevant policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.

POLICY BE5: FARM DIVERSIFICATION - In order to support farm diversification and the sustainable growth and expansion of businesses, where planning permission is required, the conversion of existing agricultural buildings and/or change of use of agricultural land e.g. for tree planting and, equestrian businesses will be supported where:

- a) The use proposed is appropriate to the rural location;
- b) Conversion/adaptation works does not have a detrimental effect on the distinctive rural character of the Parish;

- c) Any development will not have an adverse impact on any archaeological, architectural, historic or environmental features;
- d) The local road system is capable of accommodating the traffic generated by the proposed new use and does not adversely affect the Parish infrastructure, particularly local road networks, water supply and sewerage, and provides adequate parking facilities; and
- e) There is no significant adverse impact on neighbours through noise, light or other pollution, increased traffic levels or increased flood risk.

Tourism

141. The Parish attracts many visitors drawn by several key sites which collectively contribute to a regular flow of visitors. The majority arrive by car with the largest numbers destined for Beacon Hill which has its own substantial fee-charging car parks. A recently constructed cafe adds to the park's attractions. Part of the attraction of the Park are two circular tracks, one of which is multi- use for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
142. Some visitors use the free village car park in order to walk or run around the adjoining countryside. A small number park on the streets particularly the upper parts of Maplewell Road in order to access Broombriggs Farm and Windmill Hill. Broombriggs is owned by Leicestershire County Council and operated as a working farm by long term tenants. It has a system of rights of way and signing to encourage visitors to engage with the farming activities. Windmill Hill was once the location of a working mill of which just the base now remains. This was renovated about fifteen years ago and is a popular attraction.
143. Walkers regularly come through the centre of the village as they follow the Leicestershire Round, National Forest Way, and other attractive rights of way in the area.
144. Cyclists pass through the village enjoying the attractive scenery and the challenges of the hilly topography.
145. Located in the centre of the village is a rocky outcrop with a cave which attracts a small number of visitors, especially rock climbers for whom this represents an interesting challenge.
146. There are two golf courses within the parish boundary. Charnwood Golf Course lies to the north of Beacon Road and east of Breakback Road. It is directly opposite the lower part of Beacon Hill. It is a small nine-hole private club complete with clubhouse and car park.
147. Lingdale Golf Course adjoins the south west parish boundary on Joe Moore's Lane. Originally a nine-hole course, it later acquired further land and is now an eighteen-hole course. It has a substantial clubhouse which is also used for hosting other functions.
148. The consultation events did not reveal any particular views either supporting or opposed to visitors to the parish. There are times when the car parking facilities in the centre of Woodhouse Eaves are stretched and attracting more visitors may exacerbate this issue. In general, we would seek to neither encourage nor discourage tourism to the centre of Woodhouse Eaves, but an element of control is required to ensure that in the