

Response to Committee Report – Ainthorpe Yard, Ainthorpe – NYM/2020/0054/FL

For consideration by Members – Members Update

In summary, the applicant wishes to put forward the following information:

- The proposed dwelling is not outside of the main built up area of Ainthorpe - it is adjacent to and between 35 other dwellings which can be seen on the partial map of Ainthorpe within the National Park officers report.
- When the authority originally went through every single village in the Park for the new Local Plan proposals to proactively identify 'open spaces' which are important to the 'character and special qualities' of the village, they did not identify this space as one which would be to the detriment of the environment and landscape. I attach the map which outlines the site shown not to be included.
- There are many existing dwellings to the East and North of the proposed house along with many to the West going up to The Fox public house and Fryup, whilst there are numerous dwellings towards the School and Castleton.
- The loss of open space referred to is only around 30% of that space leaving 70% split around 40 / 30 to each side of the proposed dwelling which ensures that a significant proportion of the existing open space is maintained.
- In addition, the views created by the open space are very limited to the immediate rising ground and no far reaching views exist in that location.
- The criticism that the dwelling would be out of keeping with the grain and pattern of development within the local area is not correct in our opinion because the properties adjacent on Easton Lane to the East, being Nos 8, 10 and 12 are also built into the same hillside / rising ground and those to the North, namely Nos 19, 21 and Creak Hill are also built into the ground. These are all split level or sat in a hillside to accommodate the existing ground levels. Therefore, the proposed dwelling is a reflection of those adjacent properties.
- The Officers report states the houses on Easton lane sit on flatter land, this is not factually correct. All of those houses either have steep drives up from the road and/or are dug into the bank.

- There are historic photos showing the adjacent land / field before the housing was built on Easton Lane and Creak Hill. The development of this land has already in effect extended the village envelope and therefore the built up part of the settlement to which the LPA claim the proposed development is out with. The development of this land (being a much steeper gradient) and the assimilation of properties would have required far more 'land alterations' to be accommodated in the wider environment than that proposed at the application site which in our opinion is deemed to be 'flatter land'.
- There are many examples of previously approved dwellings within the National Park locally which required engineering solutions to enable the build and the evidence is available to support this point together with the accompanying engineer's statement recently submitted.
- The ridge height of the proposed dwelling sits below the height of No 8 Easton Lane to the East and the barn to the West and therefore is neatly positioned visually between the two and does not look harmful or out of character.
- The statement that other potential properties are available for the applicants in Botton cannot be corroborated. The applicant can however confirm that Botton do not and will not, offer housing to employees.
- The LPA's emerging Local Plan Policy CO9 acknowledges that 'Botton Village is owned by Camphill Village Trust, a registered charity that provides care, support and housing to people with learning and other disabilities'. Additionally, 'community facilities and houses in which community residents live, some with carers under a 'Shared Lives' arrangement, are located in eight neighbourhood areas, originally centred around established dwellings or farmsteads. Residents receive support to participate in the life of the community which provides opportunities for work, social interaction, education, training, and cultural and leisure activities'.
- Paragraph 7.51 of the draft NYM Local Plan advises that 'Botton Village is an evolving community, physically and socially different to all other settlements in the National Park. It is placed in a separate category in the National Park settlement hierarchy as the dispersed settlement of Botton'. This being the case, why is it stated in the LPA's report that the applicants housing need would be 'better met by locating in Botton itself' when clearly the current and emerging Local Plans (for many years) confirms that housing in Botton is specifically set aside by planning policy for other users / residents and is not available for the wider local community.
- For the proposal to receive unanimous support proves there is a real sense of local identity perceived by the Parish Council and residents (neighbourhood).
- Change can often be seen locally as a threat but there is a real sense of community cohesion for this local family and their businesses and the proposal to infill the site within the built up part of the village is seen as a healthy process of physical community evolution.

- The point here is not to be preoccupied by difference but by the appropriateness of the development and to expressiveness of time and place. At the heart of this scheme there is a real sense of neighbourhood planning.
- With regard to the siting, the land immediately adjacent to the site (west) where the agricultural building is accommodated is not a within the applicants ownership and therefore would not be an option.
- It is confirmed, the site is actually steeper at the lower part and therefore the dig and amount of excavation would be greater as the levels on **Dwg. D11655-11D** show.
- There is also a spring water supply located in the lower part of the site as seen on the same plan **Dwg D11655-11D** which must not be disturbed or altered.
- For both of these reasons the positioning of the dwelling on the site is constrained by the existing site and ground conditions.
- Additionally, given the above we feel a suitable building line (infill) is maintained between the agricultural building and No. 8 Easton Lane so that views through the site are maintained either side of the dwelling, the scale and plot size matches the adjacent plots (east/west) and visually the proposed traditional and vernacular dwelling is one that we feel would not look out of place between these adjacent buildings.
- Based on all of the evidence submitted by the applicant with regard to other engineered development in the Park their preference would be to retain the dwelling in the location as proposed as we do not feel it would be misplaced and the level of digging out is proven to be less so in the proposed location.
- The LPA's report to Members highlights the word 'Refused' under the section titled 'Consultations' concerning NYCC Highways response to the application in connection with the site access when in fact this aspect has been resolved and is factually recommended for Approval.

Additional Supporting Information – Ainthorpe Yard, Ainthorpe – NYM/2020/0054/FL

For consideration by Members – Explanation of why the officers' suggested reasons for refusal are erroneous.

Here we would like to thoroughly demonstrate why the reasons for refusal as outlined in the officers' report to the Planning committee may be discounted.

1. *“The site is considered to lie outside of the main built up part of the settlement of Ainthorpe and does not constitute an infill plot as defined by Core Policy J of the North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Plan Policies in **that the site does not constitute a small gap within a continuously built up frontage** within the main built up area of the settlement. If permitted, this development would not only result in the loss of this important open space, it **would represent harmful sporadic development and extend outwards the main built up form of the village to the detriment of the character of the environment and landscape of this part of the North York Moors National Park.**”*

The assertion that our proposed dwelling would ‘represent harmful sporadic development and extend outwards the main built up form of the village to the detriment of the character of the environment and landscape of this part of the North York Moors National Park’ overlooks the fundamental cultural history of Ainthorpe village’s centre which this plot lies immediately next to. In contrast, we would emphasise that this dwelling enhances the amenity, character and setting of Ainthorpe. The character and setting of Ainthorpe are literally built around the neighbouring Ainthorpe House and Ainthorpe Farm, the very first buildings in the village. The dwelling would be clearly contained within the established main body of the village, within existing established development that is already an integral part of the village.

Furthermore, the Authority’s recent recognition that the neighbouring agricultural building (not owned by the family) would garner ‘support in terms of a beneficial re-development’ further emphasises that this land parcel can be considered an appropriate small gap. The proposed site exists as a small space between the continuous frontage of this agricultural building (where the Authority itself indicates it would support domestic development in the future) and the immediate neighbouring dwelling. Where, considering this support, the building may well in the future be earmarked for such development, this space should also be considered as potential infill.

2. *“The development, by virtue of the siting and land alterations required to accommodate the scheme is considered to be **wholly out of keeping** with the form and grain of the pattern of development within the locality and quality of the wider environment. As a result, **the development would result in the loss of an open space which is considered to contribute to the amenity, character and setting of the wider settlement of Ainthorpe** contrary to the provisions of Development Policy 3 of the North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Plan Policies”*

We would refute both parts of the justification given in reason 2 as unfounded, demonstrated in the National Park’s existing appraisals of this piece of land as a site for future development. The claim this development is ‘wholly out of keeping’ with the wider environment’s quality and locality is a mischaracterisation of the architectural and environmental considerations which were made in the design of this application. The proposed development is a modest and sensitively designed building which would be constructed with high-quality local materials, incorporating sustainable construction features.

More significantly, we would question the assertion that the house would result in the loss of an open space ‘which is considered to contribute to the amenity, character and setting of the wider settlement of Ainthorpe’ when the National Park Authority has never previously considered the space as such, despite given ample proactive opportunity to do so in the recent past. Indeed, this was the case when the Authority developed proposals as a part of the Local Plan Preferred Options to ascertain which open spaces within the village should be considered visually important undeveloped spaces. A map of these proposed spaces has been attached (figure 1), which shows that when the Authority went out into the villages to make a comprehensive record of the spaces which:

- “1. The space makes a positive contribution to the overall form, character and appearance of the settlement;*
- 2. The space makes a positive contribution to the setting of a building or groups of buildings either listed or of historical or architectural interest;*
- 3. The space provides a vista/viewpoint into the surrounding countryside;*
- 4. The space provides a visual relief in a settlement where there is a change in the pattern or character of development*
- 5. The site has archaeological or historic interest;”*

(p.7, Draft Local Plan, Preferred Options, ‘Visually Important Spaces’ Topic Paper)
(since renamed ‘Important Undeveloped Spaces’)

Of the relevant criteria which directly relate to the reason given for refusal, highlighted, **our site of the application was not at any period during the proposal's development identified as such a space.** Furthermore, the number of spaces eventually recorded in the preferred policy (since deleted following public consultations) was also understood to be overzealous, where at a public meeting in 2018 a planning officer confirmed that 'we have been slightly over what we may be in the future in terms of having as many sites in the future'. If the officers were overenthusiastic in their identification of hypothetical important spaces, and still did not identify this site as such, we maintain that this site does not constitute the loss of a significantly important open space utilising the Authority's own assessments.

3. *"If approved, the proposal would make it increasingly difficult for the Local Planning Authority to resist future applications for new housing on inappropriate sites which would **cumulatively pose a significant threat to the character, special qualities and distinctiveness of the more rural settlements of the National Park** and therefore have a detrimental impact the wider landscape of the Park, **contrary to the aims of Core Policy B** of the North York Moors Core Strategy and Development Plan Policies."*

Finally, in contrast to the Committee's assertion that this development would cumulatively pose a 'threat to the character, special qualities and distinctiveness' of rural settlements, we would like to emphasise that to allow our application would be to **enhance** the cultural landscape of Ainthorpe, rather than be to the detriment of the village's character. It is unfounded to claim that our individual application, for the many positive and unique reasons detailed here and elsewhere, may set a difficult precedent for the Authority in unknown future applications when in all other respects it would be a worthwhile contribution to the village.

The two main criteria for Core Policy B directly related to our application (Other Villages) are 'identified local need' and 'housing which will improve the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the settlement'. We believe that we have conclusively met both of these criteria, as a local young couple who will live and work on this land and around the village and are truly embedded members of the immediate community.

Where we have already demonstrated strong and significant need for local housing, and that our home will not have a significantly detrimental environmental impact, we also believe that our new home would actually increase the 'social and economic sustainability' and cultural heritage of the village. We are longstanding and active voluntary members of many local groups, from Danby Agricultural Association to the local cricket team. We supply sustainable and high-welfare homegrown poultry from our doorstep for local families' Christmas tables. Elizabeth's ancestors have owned and farmed this particular land (at what was Ainthorpe Farm) for many generations, and lived in the village since at least the early 1700s.

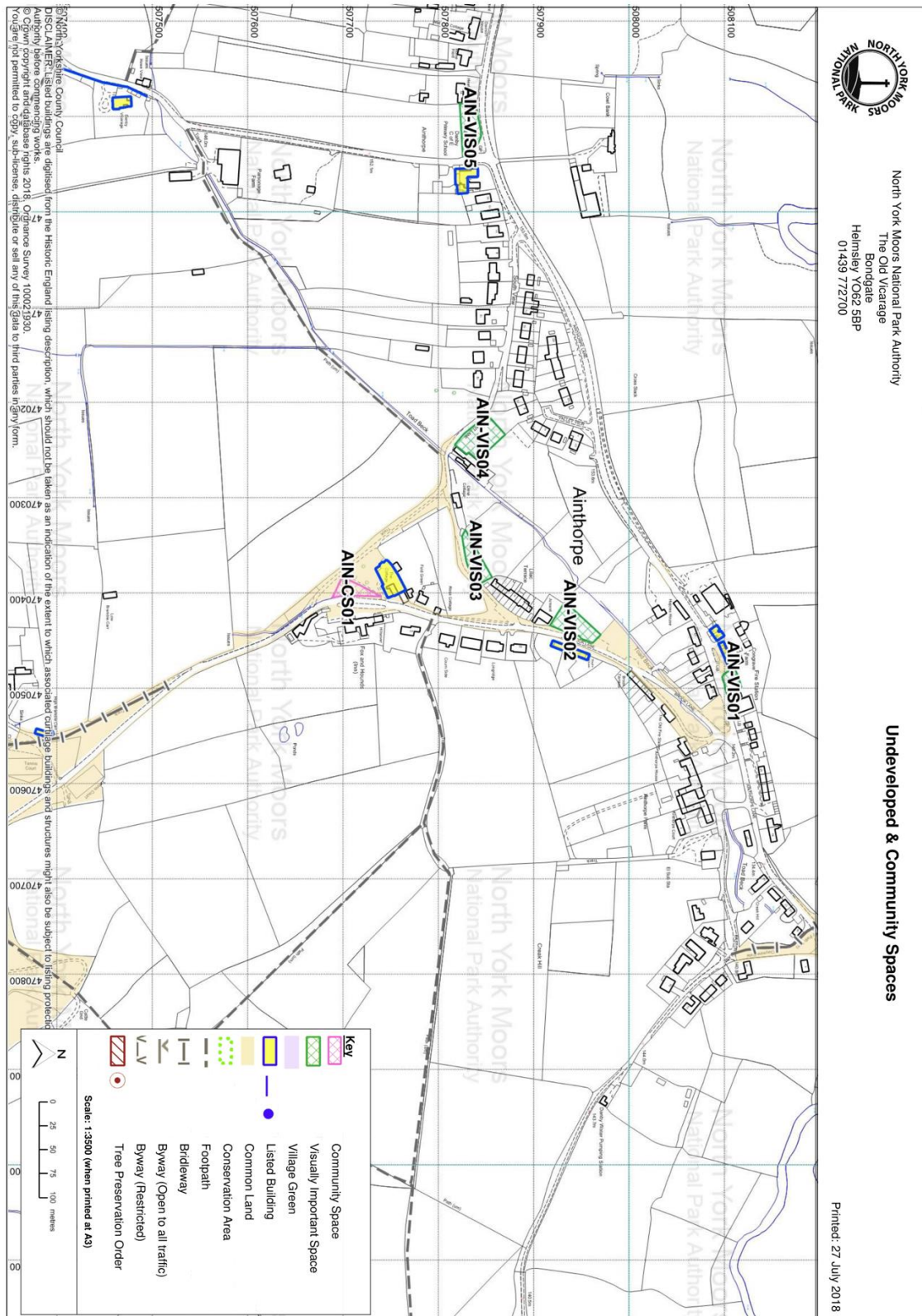
We are the remaining descendants of an old local family still in Ainthorpe, slowly building a family-run business and keeping alive traditional, sustainable methods of farming.

As we have previously mentioned, the Authority has invested considerably in projects which rightly aim to highlight and celebrate the vital role of cultural heritage in the North York Moors, such as the current 'This Exploited Land of Iron' project. We believe that this application constitutes a vital example of sustaining cultural heritage, by enabling our family to continue the very practices which maintain the special landscape that visitors come here to see.

The current Covid-19 outbreak has brought into sharp relief the vital role that local, sustainable farming plays in the fabric of society, and the importance of a beautiful and traditionally maintained countryside for the public to visit and enjoy. We have dedicated our livelihoods to working the land, being producers of food and supplying the local community with our produce, further generating a small amount of local employment.

This development will allow us to deliver both the landscape and the produce which are highly valued by the NPA. Without this permission, we will genuinely no longer be home owners, and will be left renting smaller premises with very limited options to buy not only properties which may be not suitable but which are also unaffordable, and none are more suitable than this proposal.

Figure 1: Map of 'Visually Important Spaces' In Ainthorpe, as Identified by North York Moors National Park Authority.

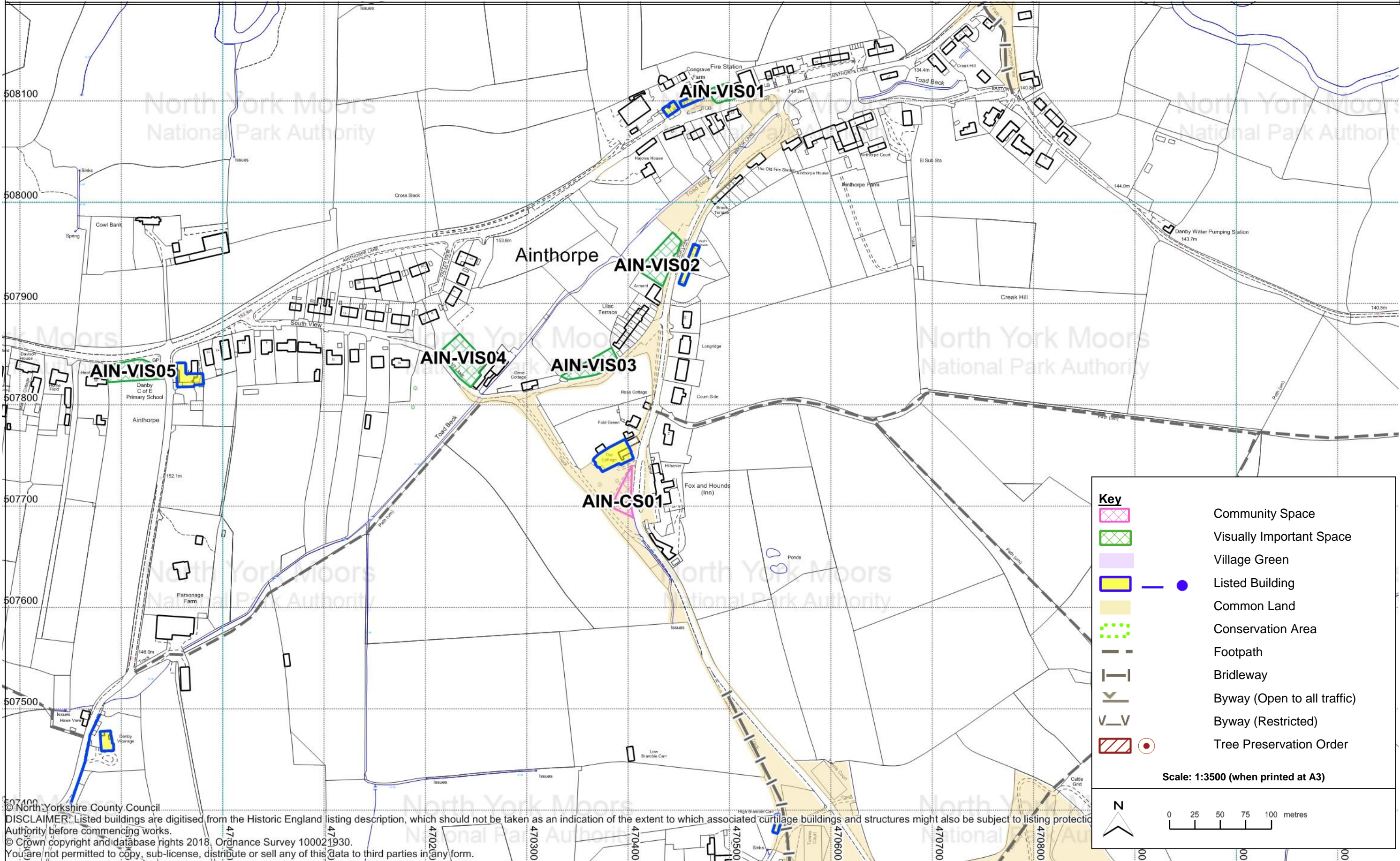




North York Moors National Park Authority
 The Old Vicarage
 Bondgate
 Helmsley YO62 5BP
 01439 772700

Undeveloped & Community Spaces

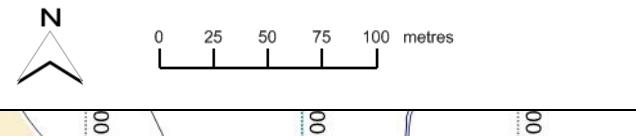
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Key

- Community Space
- Visually Important Space
- Village Green
- Listed Building
- Common Land
- Conservation Area
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway (Open to all traffic)
- Byway (Restricted)
- Tree Preservation Order

Scale: 1:3500 (when printed at A3)



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Ainthorpe	Visually Important Space
AIN-VIS01	The space makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Listed Building (Congrave Farm) by providing the farmstead with a natural open setting emphasising its historic pastoral character which enables its significance to be full appreciated.
AIN-VIS02	The space is prominent in the streetscene located on rising ground towards the edge of the village and adjacent to an area of open Common Land. The form of development to the western side of the road in particular is characterised by large open gaps which have a wooded and natural appearance and therefore the space makes a positive contribution to the overall form and character of Ainthorpe and the more open and natural feel of Brook Lane.
AIN-VIS03	The space makes a positive contribution to the overall form and character of the village and the rural and open character of Strait Lane providing views of the important undeveloped corridor along Toad Beck. The space provides views into the surrounding countryside and long distance views of Danby Low Moor which provides context for the village and its setting within the wider landscape.
AIN-VIS04	The space makes a positive contribution to the overall form and character of Ainthorpe providing a natural gap between the two main streets (Brook Lane and Ainthorpe Lane) and affords views of the natural valley running along Toad Beck.
AIN-VIS05	The space provides an important viewpoint into the surrounding countryside which provides context for the village and its setting within the wider landscape. The space also makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Listed Building (Danby C of E School) especially from the approach into the village from the west.

Ainthorpe	Site Ref	Community Space	Assessment	Shown on Map?
	AIN-CS01	Quoits pitches	In use and fit for purpose	Y
	AIN-CS02	Playing Field to S/E, Easton Lane	Well maintained and fit for purpose	Y (just)
	AIN-CS03	St Hilda's Church, Danby Dale	Not assessed	N