

1 Barton-le-Clay - A Picturesque and Historic Village

1.1 Barton-le-Clay History

1.1.1 To produce a dynamic Neighbourhood Plan and achieve our vision, it is necessary to have a good understanding of both the neighbourhood area and the local community's views about what should be done to improve and protect it. This section of the Plan provides a brief history of Barton-le-Clay and an assessment of its rural anthropology character.

1.1.2 The village of Barton-le-Clay is in the county of Bedfordshire, situated midway between Bedford and Luton on the A6 and between Hitchin and Harlington on the B665.

1.1.3 Barton-Le-Clay, literally, Barton in the Clay – see Map 4, derives its name from its position being sited where the clay soil starts under Barton Hill. The overlordship was vested in the Crown at the date of the Domesday Survey¹, remaining so until the Dissolution when the manor was taken in hand by the King and annexed to the manor of Ampthill in 1542. The manor formerly belonged to the monks of Ramsey; it was given to the Ramsey Abbey, Huntingdonshire in 1044 by Eadnoth, bishop of Dorchester. The grant was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in 1066, by William the Conqueror in 1068 and again by Edward III in 1334. At the time of the Domesday in 1086 the manor was assessed at eleven hides worth ten pounds. Barton had many mills which took advantage of the numerous streams which rose in the hills.

1.1.4 The original church of St Nicholas, first mentioned in 1168, consisted of an aisleless nave and small chancel. Little of this twelfth century building remains, the church being rebuilt in the thirteenth century with fourteenth century alterations and the addition of a fifteenth century tower. A free school was founded in 1806 by Edward Willes. The Village's population in 1801 was 448 rising to 915 by 1851, dropping to 816 in 1901. The twentieth century saw continued expansion, the population rising from 1,125 in 1951 to the present-day population of approximately 4,9370.

1.2 Barton-le-Clay and its Heritage

1.2.1 Barton-le-Clay Parish is rightly proud of its historic environment and heritage assets² and recognises the need to conserve and enhance all these important features.

1.2.1.1 Scheduled monuments. Moated site at Faldo Farm.

¹ Barton [-in-the-Clay] was a settlement in Domesday Book. It had a recorded population of 33 households in 1086.

² Heritage Assets include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Historic Landscapes, Archaeological Sites and Monuments, and other non-designated historic features.

1.2.1.2 Barton Hills AONB (see 10.6).

1.2.1.3 Listed Grade 1 & II buildings within Barton-le-Clay³.

Grade I

Church of St Nicholas, Church Road – Photo 1. The Church of St Nicholas, built c1168, is notable as the only building constructed of stone, an excellent combination of rubble limestone with a tower constructed of flint and clunch⁴ and limestone chequer-work. The churchyard is bounded by quality nineteenth century iron railings, listed, together with a lantern, at Grade II.



Photo 1 - Church of St Nicholas.

³ [Historic England - National Heritage List for England \(NHLE\)](#)

⁴ Clunch is a traditional building material of chalky limestone rock used mainly in eastern England and Normandy.

Grade II.

The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) lists 30 Grade II listed building in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. Photographs of a selection of notable listed buildings are at Appendix 7.

1.3 Conservation Area

1.3.1 There is a large conservation area in the village that comprises of two parts (Map at Appendix 2):

1.3.1.1 Part 1 - The rectangular area of land in the south is focused on Old Road, Hexton Road and Church Road including the hamlet surrounding the Church of St Nicholas and meadows, and,

1.3.1.2 Part 2 - The long narrow area to the North comprising the village centre on Bedford Road and houses on Sharpenhoe Road,

1.3.2 According to Historic England - [Historic England](#)

“Conservation area designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides a basis for planning policies whose objective is to conserve all aspects of character or appearance, including landscape and public spaces, which define an area’s special interest.... The special character of these areas does not come only from the quality of their buildings. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries and characteristic building and paving materials all contribute to the familiar and cherished local scene.

Designation of a conservation area gives broader protection than the listing of individual buildings. All the features listed or otherwise, within the area, are recognised as part of its character. Conservation area designation is the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that planning decisions address the quality of the landscape in its broadest sense.”

1.3.3 A Barton-Le-Clay Conservation Area Appraisal⁵ carried out in Dec 2009 recommended two enhancements to the existing Conservation Area:

1.3.3.1 Enhancement One. Area of Green Space enclosed by Bedford Road, Manor Road and Lime Close. This important tree lined open space forms part of the setting to historic buildings which make a positive contribution to this part of the conservation area and also forms part of the gateway to the older sections of Barton-Le-Clay from the north.

1.3.3.2 Enhancement Two. The east side of Bedford Road adjacent to and including the entrance to Old School Gardens

⁵ [Barton-Le-Clay Conservation Area Appraisal Draft December 2009](#)

1.3.4 Enhancement One is discussed as a candidate Green Space in the Green Infrastructure Plan. The Parish Council will work with the Planning Dept CBC to include Enhancement Two into the existing Conservation Area.

1.4 Assets of Community Value

1.4.1 An Asset of Community Value is a building or piece of land that is used to further the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. Examples of community assets include village shops, public houses, community centres, children's centres, allotments, and libraries.

1.4.2 A building or piece of land is deemed to have community value if:

1.4.2.1 The use of the land or building currently, or in the recent past, furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. This includes cultural, recreational, or sporting interests.

1.4.2.2 The use of the building or land will continue to further the social wellbeing or interests of the local community.

1.4.2.3 Meeting the interests of the community must be the principal purpose of the land or building.

1.4.3 Through the BLCNP consultation process, the BLCNPSC will be open to nominations for consideration of Non-Designated, Heritage Asset and/or Asset of Community Value⁶.

1.5 Protecting our Heritage Assets

1.5.1 Building on the background of the previous chapter, Barton-le-Clay Parish is an attractive area and village that brings residents to live here for many varied reasons. Barton-le-Clay Parish Council recognises the need to conserve and enhance all these important features, and this is embraced by our vision for Barton-le-Clay.

1.5.2 The NPPF Dec 24⁷ sets national planning policy that requires planners to recognise and seek to sustain the significance⁸ of individual heritage assets. This national policy is supported by CBLP 2015-2035 Policy HE3: Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Built Heritage and the CBC Design Guide (latest reiteration). In particular:

⁶ N.B. The Bull Public House was considered but does not meet the necessary criteria as it is not the only public house in the Village, and it is already protected by being a listed building.

⁷ [NPPF Dec 24 - 16. 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' that our Heritage Assets](#)

⁸ Significance (for heritage policy) - The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

1.5.2.1 Development proposals that affect the significance of any heritage assets must be accompanied by a Built Heritage Statement. The Built Heritage Statement must:

1.5.2.1.1 Describe the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected by the development;

1.5.2.1.2 Assess the level of impact that the development proposals will have on those assets, including where necessary an assessment of the impact of the development proposals on their setting; and

1.5.2.1.3 Demonstrate that opportunities to avoid harmful impacts have been explored, and where this is not possible, set out necessary mitigation measures.

1.5.3 The village's long history as an historic and picturesque village is a cornerstone of our BLCNP Vision.