

# Binegar and Gurney Slade (Secondary Village)

## Working Draft of Emerging Preferred Options

### Village assessment

Local Plan Part I designates Binegar and Gurney Slade together as a Secondary Village. They are expected to deliver a minimum of 40 new homes and given the residual requirement for 10 houses it is considered that some small allocation(s) would be appropriate if suitable sites could be found.

12 sites were put forward for consideration. 2 sites were dismissed at the initial assessment stage, BIN002a for its impact on the Grade II Listed Church and its open setting, footpaths and the need to replace recreation space and GS011 for issues with flooding, highways and character. The remaining sites were assessed in detail.

2 further sites were put forward in the Issues and Options consultation: GS012 Land at Overdale and BIN003b Land East and West of Station Road (the latter assessed as two sites, one on either side of Station Road).

In terms of broad areas for development, Binegar is a very sensitive location. It is very rural in nature and sparsely developed over a series of small narrow country lanes. Development of any scale here would significantly alter the “green” and open rural nature of the village and the protecting the setting of the landmark Church is also a serious concern.

Gurney Slade less sensitive in landscape terms, but sites here are constrained by the proximity to Gurney Slade quarry and access issues with the busy and dangerous A37.

There are several village level considerations that apply to all sites and should be considered in any allocations:

- Natural England comments that all sites in Binegar have the potential to impact on the Mells Valley bat SAC.
- Both villages lie in Groundwater Source Protection Zone.
- Local issues with surface water flooding and drainage.

### Parish Council Comments

The Parish Council hosted two public events which attracted more than 80 residents from the three parishes of Binegar, Ashwick and Emborough. The Parish Council have based their response on those consultation events and believe the response accurately represents the view of the local community.

The response is summarised below:

- Gurney Slade and Binegar have developed along local lanes and roads in ribbon or linear fashion. Dalleston (Emborough) and Kingscombe (Ashwick) are exceptions but do not detract from this general character as they lie at each end of the villages.

- No reason to plan above the allocated 40 homes in the villages. There is little local employment to generate need.
- Future development should avoid high density estates and be in stone to reflect the village's quarrying history.
- All Binegar sites are affected by issues of surface water drainage, sewage disposal and restrictions of narrow lanes. GS sites same issues but affected by A37. Response rates the sites and specific issues.
- PC support additional employment. Consultation raised ideas of small business bases and home working.
- Development Limit will need to be changed to encompass allocated sites, not possible to suggest exact changes at this stage.
- Supports existing OALS sites and puts forward additional site - Binegar Fair Field (shown as BIN002a) to be designated as LGS. This is the site of the historic Binegar Fair from 1348 to 1951. It offers fine views of the Grade II\* listed Holy Trinity Church.
- Highlights devastation of local flooding and urges both Mendip and Somerset to take the local flood risk seriously. The need for this issue to be resolved before further development can happen.
- Parking also an issue, as is closure of the school, lack of public transport and lack of faster broadband.
- Public transport - There is no public transport to the catchment school in Oakhill or to the nearest general medical practice in Oakhill. Public transport (bus route 173) is limited and requires a change of buses to go anywhere other than places on the route between Wells and Bath. Residents were doubtful about the security of provision of this service. Its withdrawal would alter the status of Binegar and Gurney Slade as a "secondary village".

## **Public Comments**

### **Summary of issues raised in the consultation:**

10 individuals and organisations commented on the issues and options put forward in Binegar and Gurney Slade.

Other comments received include:

- Somerset County Council advises that the availability of land for development and type of sites should be considered in the context of mineral operations. Sites may be affected by noise and vibration or have mineral planning implications.
- One respondent questioned the identification of Binegar quarry as Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), stating that Part 1 did not identify a RIGS here.
- Improvements needed to surface water drainage, sewage disposal, the A37, the lanes through Binegar in order to support new housing.
- Volvo Trucks due to relocate to Frome and residents strongly support redevelopment of this site.
- One respondent feels that Gurney Slade is the more suitable location for development as is more sustainable location, having road access, facilities, and is not a sensitive location environmentally. Binegar has surface water flooding issues, ground water source protection zone and historic interest. They promote a site on Tellis lane is unconstrained, available and deliverable.
- It was also argued by a site promoter that the 40 dwelling requirement for the village(s) is arbitrary. This is a sustainable location with capacity for more growth. It is socially

sustainable, with facilities and road access, economically sustainable, with employment in the village(s) and environmentally sustainable, being mostly free of constraints.

### **Preferred Options**

In terms of broad areas for development, Binegar is a very sensitive location. It is very rural in nature and sparsely developed over a series of small narrow country lanes. Development of any scale here would significantly alter the “green” and open rural nature of the village and the protecting the setting of the landmark Church is also a serious concern.

Gurney Slade less sensitive in landscape terms, but sites here are constrained by the proximity to Gurney Slade quarry and access issues with the busy and dangerous A37.

In spite of the Local Plan Part 1’s allocation of 40 houses, on consideration of the available sites it is not felt that the villages are suitable locations for large scale development and none of the sites put forward could be developed without significant impact on the local landscape and infrastructure. Some small scale development could be accommodated at the junction of Station Road/A37 (GS001), however the site lies adjacent to a designated wildlife site and there are a number of other considerations including sewerage and access. Consultation responses suggested that the Volvo Truck Depot is due to relocate. Whilst loss of employment ordinarily discouraged, it is not an ideally located employment site and due to the site’s central location and established access, this may be a preferable option to accommodate housing over the villages. However, the site has since been occupied by a driver training company and the site has not been put forward for redevelopment.

### **Site allocations**

Allocate GS001 for a small development that respects the amenity of neighbouring properties subject to appropriate resolution of the following issues:

- Amenity of existing properties
- Consideration of the village’s situation in Groundwater Source Protection Zone
- Provision of appropriate sewerage as there is no mains sewerage in the village
- Ecological impacts, specifically the impact on Mells Valley SAC (the site is a very suitable habitat for the Greater Horseshoe Bat, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Daubenton’s Bat and Barbastelle Bat) and impact on the adjacent stepping stone (Broad Leave Wood) of the ecological network and Binegar Quarry Local Wildlife site.
- Appropriate consideration of flooding and drainage as the site lies 20m from an area of flood zone 2 and 3 along Station Road. Also, while site falls within the “very low risk” category of surface water flood risk, however an area of “high risk” runs along Station Road and the impact of development on this should be considered accordingly.
- Consideration of safe access onto the A37 from Binegar Lane.

### **Local Green Spaces**

4 sites were currently designated as OALS and have been assessed in terms of their ongoing designation as Local Green Spaces. It is felt both warrant designation as LGS.

A further site was put forward by the Parish Council, proposed housing site BIN002a Land to the rear of Holy Trinity Church. Whilst the LGS designation should not be used purely to stop development, this site does have demonstrable merit as an LGS and makes a significant contribution to the street scene. It has historic value as the venue for the Binegar Fair and provides the setting for Holy Trinity

Church – a landmark feature in the village. It is therefore proposed that the site should be designated as an LGS.

Identify the following sites as LGS in the preferred Options Paper:

- **OALSBIN001** – Church and Churchyard Holy Trinity Church (new ref: **LGSBIN001**)
- **OALSGS001** – Play area and field (new ref: **LGS GS001**)
- **OALSGS002** – Field, bordered by wall and trees (new ref: **LGS GS001**)
- **OALSGS003** – Green seating area near the western entrance to Gurney Slade (new ref: **LGS GS001**)
- **BIN002a** Land to the rear of Holy Trinity Church (new ref: **LGSBIN002**)