

# Eldersfield Parish Plan 2021



St. John The Baptist, Eldersfield



Eldersfield Lawn C.E Primary School



The Butcher's Arms

# **Introduction**

by District Councillor Bronwen Behan

In April 2012, the Localism Act (2011) amended the Town and County Planning Act 1990 introducing new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape development in their community by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The Parish Council set out to draft a NDP for Eldersfield. The area was designated as such by Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019. On reflection, it was felt that the implementation and delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan would not be suitable for a small Parish, given the planning constraints held within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). In order to provide a contribution which would capture the nature of, and the future requirements for the needs of the Parish, a proposal was made instead to revise the existing Parish Plan.

Eldersfield Parish lies in the Worcestershire Severn Valley, the highest point about 186ft. above the Ordnance Datum (Gadbury Bank); the soil is loam and clay and the subsoil Keuper Maris. It is part of Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) Longdon Ward which contains a total of seven parishes across an area of 23.7 sq. miles. At the last survey (2014) the population of the Parish was 582 (298 males and 289 females). Over the next ten years the proportion of elderly residents over the age of 75 within the Parish is expected to increase significantly which is likely to result in an increased demand for health and social care. The health is reported as good in Eldersfield Parish for 82% and only 4% receive housing or Council Tax (CT) benefit claims compared to 16% within the District (Parish Profile 2014). It will be important to keep a living record of how the Parish changes and to maintain a dataset for the use of future generations. By obtaining and utilising local knowledge and expertise this Parish Plan will provide a useful resource and point of reference for the future of the Parish.

When compared with the wider country and regions of similar character, Malvern Hills District has a statistically higher level of fuel poverty (Health and Wellbeing Profile September 2015). This is likely to be intrinsic to the housing stock across the District and the decreasing incomes of older people. Eldersfield Parish remains one of the highest areas within the District for fuel poverty as there is no gas supply and 51.4% (2018) of properties rely on a delivered oil supply. The nearest hospital is 9km. (52 mins. on public transport) and the nearest GP is 3km. from the centre of the Parish. Based on the data from 2011 there are 240 dwellings in the Parish at the time this data was collected.

The Parish lies within open countryside which is defined as land beyond any development boundary (Policy South Worcester Development Plan 2). Instead, it contains mainly ribbon development, small clusters of nucleated houses and various farmsteads, which have evolved over the years to provide housing for local workers and family growth. The area is primarily comprised of small settlements which include, Long Green, Eldersfield, Corse Lawn and Gadfield Elm. By definition it is currently classed as a Category 4 Parish. This reflects the lack of services which are necessary for daily life where travel is important. There is, however, one primary school, but no bus service to a town and the nearest secondary school is 14km. away from the centre of the Parish.

Any new development in open countryside is restricted within the District, as new housing should be directed to locations which remain sustainable and already have easy access to services. In the open countryside, development will be strictly controlled and will be limited to policies contained within the SWDP. The Parish has seen some slow growth in new dwellings. The census of 2011 showed an increase over the previous 10 years from 215 to 231. Growth has mainly made use of disused barns and out-buildings which no longer serve a purpose, providing housing that is not isolated in the environment and which does not alter the rural setting.

South Worcestershire's economy is characterised by the dispersed location of a number of employment sites and small businesses, including home-working arrangements, which exist throughout our rural areas. There are a number of smaller employment sites which characteristically centre mainly around equestrian activities and a number of farmsteads. Scattered across the Parish are individual work units, as well as places for visitors and tourists to the Malverns and Gloucestershire to stay. Tourism and leisure play an important part in the economy of the whole area.

The Parish contains part of the marsh lands of Longdon and Eldersfield as well as the Regulated Pasture lands of Corse Lawn. These create the environmental character of the area and contain many examples of rare plants and insect species. The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) seeks both to protect and enhance these areas and most, within the Parish, are maintained by Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (Poolhay Meadow, Hardwick Green Meadows).

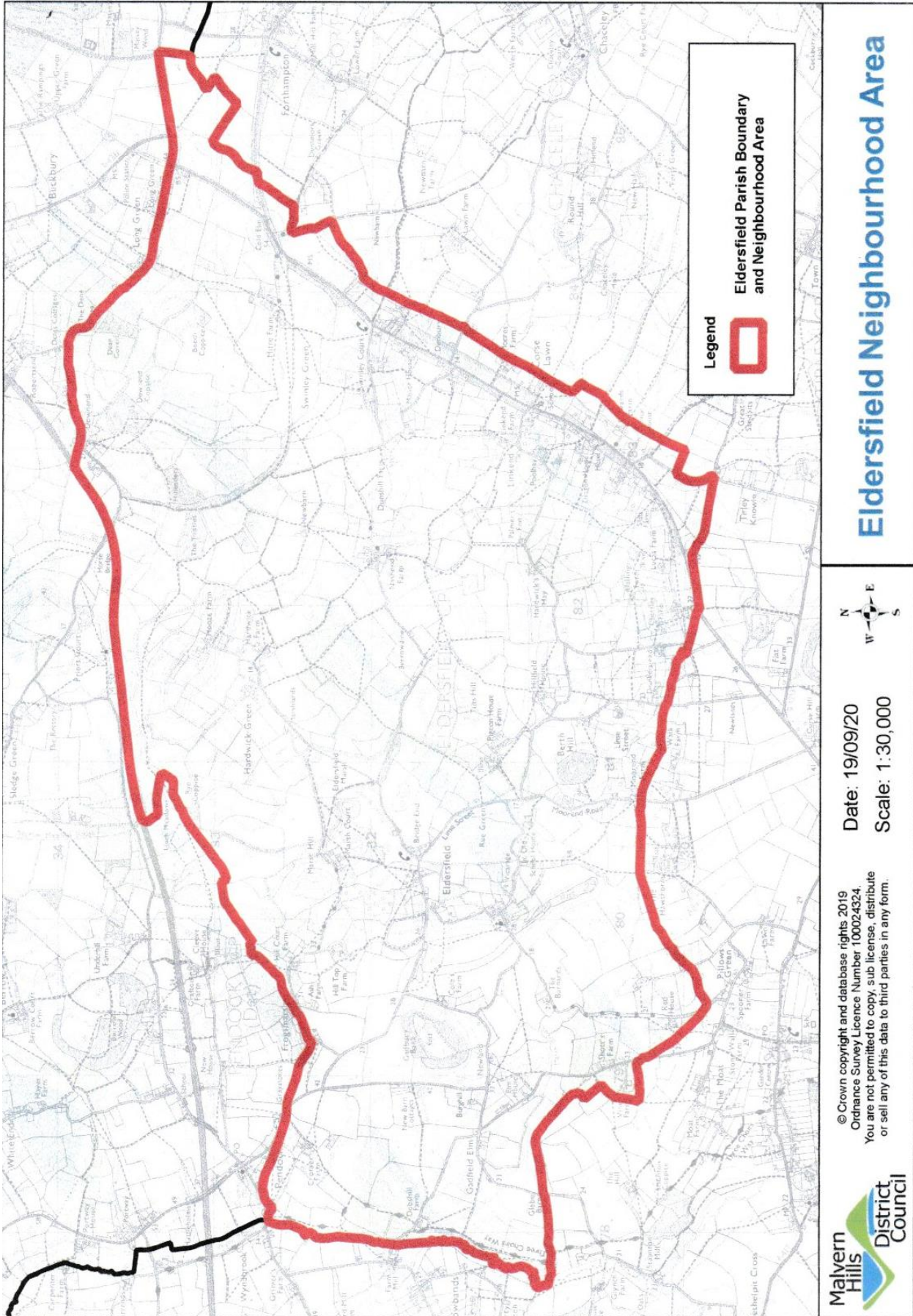
National Planning Policy seeks to preserve heritage assets in a manner applicable to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. There are no identified conservation areas within the Parish but there are many examples of non-designated heritage assets, valued landscapes and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The Parish is home to two scheduled monuments (Lucas Farm and Gadbury Bank) and a variety of Listed assets including Grade 2 Listed Milestone in Corse Lawn, in addition to the Parish Church which is Grade 2\* listed.

A characteristic of the area is the numerous Public Rights of Ways and Bridle Paths which help to connect people with a greater ease than by road and also provide access to the countryside. This green landscape is further characterised by narrow lanes bounded by hedges and soft verges which depart from the straighter larger road connections. The B4211 road between Upton upon Severn and Gloucester skirts the Parish to the East, while the boundary to the Forest of Dean can be found to the North. The Parish is also home to four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a number of sites of Regional and Local Wildlife importance.

Housing and employment need within the Parish are limited due mainly to distances away from larger settlements and the lack of infrastructure such as effective broadband connection and major roads. Property in the Parish relies mainly on non-mains drainage systems such as cesspools and septic tanks. Existing small, localised, waste treatment works have limited capacity for future development as the volume that can be catered for is set by the established size of the treatment plant.

Policy SWDP 2 "Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy" identified Corse Lawn, which is the largest settlement within the Parish, as a Category 3 settlement with limited services, unable to meet the locally identified housing and employment needs within the District. In 2019, Corse Lawn was reclassified as a Category 4 settlement.

# Map of Eldersfield Neighbourhood Area



## A History of Eldersfield

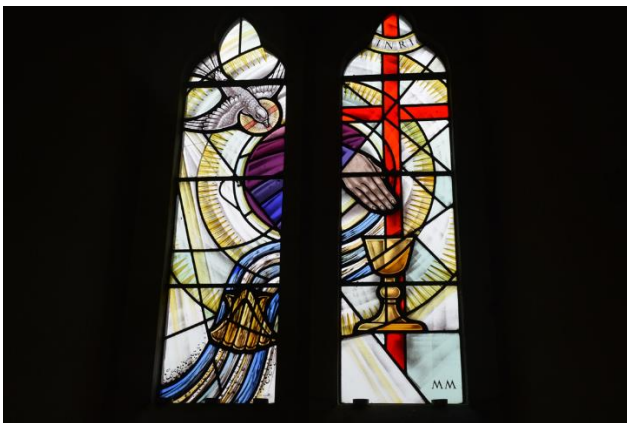
It is said that Eldersfield derives its name from a Saxon chief called Helder, when the Britons left or were driven off Gadbury Bank. The site was clearly chosen for its strong, defensive woodland. No ruins of fortifications now remain, though there are a number of stones from local quarries to be seen dotted around, indicating they were taken there for one purpose or another.

Following the Norman Conquest, the Manor of Eldersfield had strong connections with many people of note and their coats of arms were at one time recorded in the stain glass windows of Eldersfield Church but sadly only a few remain.

The village has been the centre of a number of conflicts for many years. Being close to the Welsh border, raiding parties from both sides ranged along the border between the two countries. This was followed closely by the War of the Roses when in 1471 at Tewkesbury there is a story that at the time of the battle men set off from Eldersfield intending to join one or the other side, but got totally lost in the forest, only to arrive when the battle was over!

During the English Civil War Eldersfield was in the centre of the strife between the Royalist and Parliamentarians, suffering from one or other of the raiding parties. It is well recorded that in the neighbourhood, people's property was plundered, their houses and corn burnt, cattle taken and young men pressed into service on one side or the other. The result was poverty and distress for many years.

Eldersfield Church is dedicated to St. John the Baptist and is situated in about the centre of the Parish, on the slope of a hill and near to the old Manor House. It is an ancient site and the church was built in Norman times. The chancel arch is Norman, and there are parts of an ornamented Norman doorway still to be seen in the south wall over the present entrance. It is said that Dick Whittington held land at Rue Green in the Parish, and this appears to be the reason for the Whittington shield being on the font. Sir Richard Whittington was born only five miles away at Pauntley Court, and his mother in Staunton.



**Millennium Window, North Aisle**

The spire is one of the finest in the area. It has had to be extensively repaired and partially rebuilt many times. Further restoration of the church took place in 1876 when the south wall was largely rebuilt. For further details: <https://berrowbenefice.org.uk>

In the fields near the Church, the sites of a number of medieval cottages have recently been found, showing that there were once many more dwellings close to the Church than there are today. There is said to be a plague pit nearby; if so, it has never been found, but it does seem possible, noting that the owners of the deserted cottages died at the time of the Black Death in 1347 – 1351. A new centre of population sprang up elsewhere, at Drinkers End and Corse Lawn and an unusual pattern of 'stint holdings' (see page 9) developed at the edge of the county and the Diocesan boundary.

At one time the woods of Eldersfield formed part of Malvern Chase, being so important they were mentioned in the Domesday Survey. In 1189 the Knights Hospitallers had a charter from King Richard I granting them the rights to collect firewood in both Eldersfield and nearby Pendock.



Eldersfield Court, the old manor house, is a two-storey brick building with a red tiled hipped roof. Close to the manor house is a square dovecote of timber and plaster resting on a stone foundation. Half a mile due east is Pigeon House Farm, a two-storey brick building with tiled roof, with traces of a moat. The farm has a square brick dovecote of unusual design with four gables, surmounted by a timber lantern, there are two sundials, one dated 1705, and the other bearing an inscription.

At one time there was Methodist Chapel on the main road from Upton to Gloucester.

Dovecote, Pigeon House Farm

There are a number of farms on the south-east boundary of the Parish in Corse Lawn, one of these Lucas Farm has the traces of a moat. Another moat is to be found at Hardwick Court. The front of the building is of red brick, but the rear and sides are half-timbered. Within the building is a very interesting trussed timber roof similar to one found in Worcester Cathedral now preserved at Avoncroft Museum of Building at Bromsgrove.

Near Gadbury Bank is Dobs Hill Farm, which was formerly known as Chantry Lands; for one time the chantry priests had a house there. Dobshill was the home of Henry Savage, born 1604 and Chaplain to King Charles II.

## Commons Marsh and Protected Flora

The commons field and common meadows of the Parish were enclosed in 1845, but no move was made to enclose the waste land of the manor until 1860, when a provisional order was made. However, the lands were not enclosed and an award was made in 1865 turning The Marsh and Corse Lawn (The Lawn) into regulated pasture. These two areas are believed to be the only two regulated pastures in the whole of Worcestershire.

The rights of pasturage are known as 'stints' and there are a number of these: under the Act these pasture owners must meet on the first Monday every February to elect 'Reeves' who regulate the land.

The Award of 1865 also parcelled out two acres of Corse Lawn to be used for exercise and recreation by the inhabitants of Eldersfield, and six acres for allotments for the labouring poor. These two acres are held to this day by charitable trustees. One further acre was granted as a site for a Chapel of Ease and school.

The Parish is also rich in notable and protected sites. In the Parish there are three nature reserves (Poolhay Meadow, Marshlands and Hardwick Green Meadow), local nature sites and also SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest). Corse Lawn Common is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site. It contains rich grass swards with dry meadow flora – adder's tongue fern, green winged orchid and corky fruited water dropwort are among rarer species recorded. The Common also includes eight ponds with populations of protected great-crested newt, fine old pollards of black poplar and crack willow (home to bat roosts) and is bounded by ancient hedgerows and old orchards. Worcester Wildlife has produced an excellent booklet focussing on Hardwick Green and Eldersfield Marsh and have kindly offered to provide copies for anyone who wishes (see <https://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk/blog/hardwick-green-meadows/hardwick-green-meadows-project-final-thoughts>)



Great-crested newt



Green winged orchid

The character of the wildlife is mainly dominated by ancient grassland with wildflowers such as great burnet, meadow foxtail, meadow barley, knapweed and pepper saxifrage and their associated wildlife. This wildlife includes skylark, lapwing, curlew, brown hair and otter. In Poolhay Meadows there are several plant species that are scarce in the County; rushes, cuckoo flower and ragged robin grow in the wetter areas; orchids, great burnet and adder's tongue in the remainder. Corse Lawn also contains some areas of damp ground, with a number of black poplar pollards. To the south of the Lawn is Avenue Meadow, a rich unimproved grassland with orchids and cowslips.

Gadbury Bank Fort to the west is a Scheduled Ancient Monument with an abundance of box and unusual calcareous plants, including varieties of orchids and scabious. To the north of the Parish

Coombe Hill Meadow shows signs of ancient ridge and furrow pasture scattered with cowslips, adder's tongue, common milkwort and yellow rattle.

Notes from Worcester Wildlife state: "Maintaining an inter-connectivity between the Longdon Brook floodplain wet meadow, the Corse Lawn Common wedge and the Pendock/Eldersfield ridges is vitally important to wildlife – flora and fauna. Birds and especially pollinating insects need to be able to move between the habitats. If such habitats become isolated, either by intensive farming or inappropriate development then there will be no refuge, for example in the face of climate changes."<sup>1</sup>

Many footpaths traverse these areas dating back centuries when people travelled through the area on foot for work, pilgrimage or movement of livestock.



Meadow barley



Barn Owl



Ragged Robin



Wild Flower Meadow

1. Michael J.S. Liley – Conservation Officer: Wildlife Sites and Grasslands (Worcester Wildlife)



## Corse Lawn Pastureland

The common fields and common meadows of the Parish of Eldersfield were enclosed in 1845 and were converted into “regulated pastures” under the Enclosure Award for the Parish. They are beautifully described as:

“Corse Lawn regulated pasturelands is divided into 342 stints (sheep pasture). Each sheep pasture allows one sheep to pasture on the regulated pastureland. Two sheep pastures allow pasture of one other animal under one year old, three sheep pastures allow pasture of one other animal under three years and five sheep pastures allow pasture of a milk cow or other animal over three years. No pigs are allowed to pasture on the regulated pastureland. Pasture owners can de-pasture their animals over the whole of the pastureland.”<sup>2</sup>



**Milestone on B4211, Corse Lawn Common, Grade 2 listed**

Some stints are attached to parcels of land and cannot be sold separately from the land. If the land is sold, the stints transfer with the sale. Others are not attached and can be sold separately. The “Reeves” hold a list of the ownership of the stints.

The Award of 1865 awarded private roads of 12 feet width for the benefit of old enclosures adjoining the pastureland. Cost of maintenance of the road is a responsibility of the owners of the enclosures. These private roads should be stoned. Apart from these roads, which are clearly defined on the Award map, the construction of any other road across the pastureland to give access to land or new houses bordering on the regulated pastureland is unlawful.



**Floods on Link End Road near Poolhay January 2021**

The area around the Parish is very low-lying and is often prone to surface flooding, which can make life difficult for local people. There is occasional ingress into residential property.

<sup>2</sup> *Corse Lawn Regulated Pastureland. Information sheet for all residents and pasture-owners on Corse Lawn.*

## Corse Lawn House Hotel

Originally there was a Tudor Inn and Coach Wash on the current site of the Corse Lawn House Hotel which was then known as the Green Dragon Hotel (as shown on Malvern Hills District Council OS map of Eldersfield Parish Boundary dated 2019). The Inn was a strategically important staging post between Gloucester and Worcester in Tudor times, being roughly halfway between the two cities, and there is a mention of the building in the Battle of Worcester. The Coach Wash, which is now a feature duck pond at the front of the building, is the only remaining one in England and is fed by a natural spring.

The Tudor Inn burnt down in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and around 1745 a new building was erected on the site in the “new” Queen Anne Style. The building is Grade 2 listed.

The building has a colourful history, including being a butcher’s shop, nightclub and bar. In 1912 the Green Dragon lost its licence for reasons unknown and was given to the Plough Inn which was just a few doors away at the time (now a private residence). The building was renamed “Corse Lawn House” in 1970. Previous owners of the building include a number of local families who still live in the Parish today.

In 1978 Mr. and Mrs. Hine purchased the building and applied, successfully, for a full licence to operate as a Hotel and Bar. Alterations started in 1986 to the south wing and in 1990 to the north wing to turn the premises into a successful nineteen bedroomed hotel and very much a feature of Corse Lawn in the Parish of Eldersfield.

Today it has suites, bars and restaurants along with a swimming pool, tennis court and various other outdoor facilities: there is also a helipad. Corse Lawn House Hotel is still owned and run by Mrs. Hine and keeps very much to the original Tudor Inn tradition of accommodating travellers and tending to their needs.



## **Eldersfield Church of England Primary School**

Eldersfield Lawn Church of England Primary School, is located on the Worcestershire and Gloucestershire border. The children who attend the school live in Eldersfield, Corse Lawn and surrounding villages.

The old original stone-built part of the building, fronting onto the main road, was designed by the architect Richard Norman Shaw and built in 1872. A few years later, in 1883 the small pinnacle was removed and a chancel was added to the northern end. This is still present today and is used for Sunday services every month. In 1960 a newer extension was added, which provided two additional classrooms, cloakroom space and a kitchen area.

The school is well supported by a thriving Parents, Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA) which regularly raises funds, most recently contributing towards an outdoor gym and a running track. The school has recently been recognised as Outstanding by Ofsted and is regularly over-subscribed.



## **Eldersfield Jubilee Walk**

This is a circular walk, starting and finishing at Eldersfield Church car park, as a permanent memorial of Eldersfield's celebration for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

It has beautiful views of the countryside and takes one and a half hours. The Eldersfield Jubilee Walk has no stiles and is suitable for dogs as long as they are kept on a lead throughout.

Taking the clockwise route, go through the gate (marked Eldersfield Jubilee Walk) at the top right-hand side of the car park, and identify the midfield path – take this, aiming for the opposite side of the field (to the right of Ryeland cottage). Please avoid the temptation to walk around the edge of the field as this would disturb the wildlife.

Go through the Eldersfield Jubilee Walk (EJW) marked gate (1) onto Hoggs Pitch and turn right, walking 50 yards up the road. On the left you will find a reverse slope (2), with EJW sign pointing up the slope to a gate.

Having passed through the gate walk straight ahead for 450 to 500 yards until you reach an open gateway with an EJW sign close by. Go through the open gate (3), ignoring the bends to the right before the open gate.

Bend round to the left along the ridge with woods on the other side of the small valley. Carry on through another open gate (4) to reach the top of the ridge. Keep to the left of the fenced horse-jumping enclosure and then turn towards the right and walk diagonally towards a small fenced enclosure on the left.

Go through the gate into the enclosure, walking the left-hand side of the field and go through an EJW marked gate (5) in the left corner. Walk around a further fenced enclosure for horses following the arrows. Follow the black arrows on the fence on the left-hand side to reach the next EJW marked gate. Through the gate walk down the field to the right-hand side of the field to go through an EJW marked gate (6). On the other side of the gate there is a short wall and fairly gentle slope – walk down the slope onto the road and turn right. You now have Hill Court Farm and its buildings on your right.

Walk along the road for approximately 400 yards, turning left before the entrance to Hilltop Farm (marked EJW 7) this brings you into a longish bower, 750 yards. Carry straight on at the end of the bower, if you wish to go on the longer walk to the north of Marsh Court.

Go through the gate in the farmyard (EJW marker on your left – 8) and keep to the left, going past the farmyard buildings and also the cattle housed on the left.

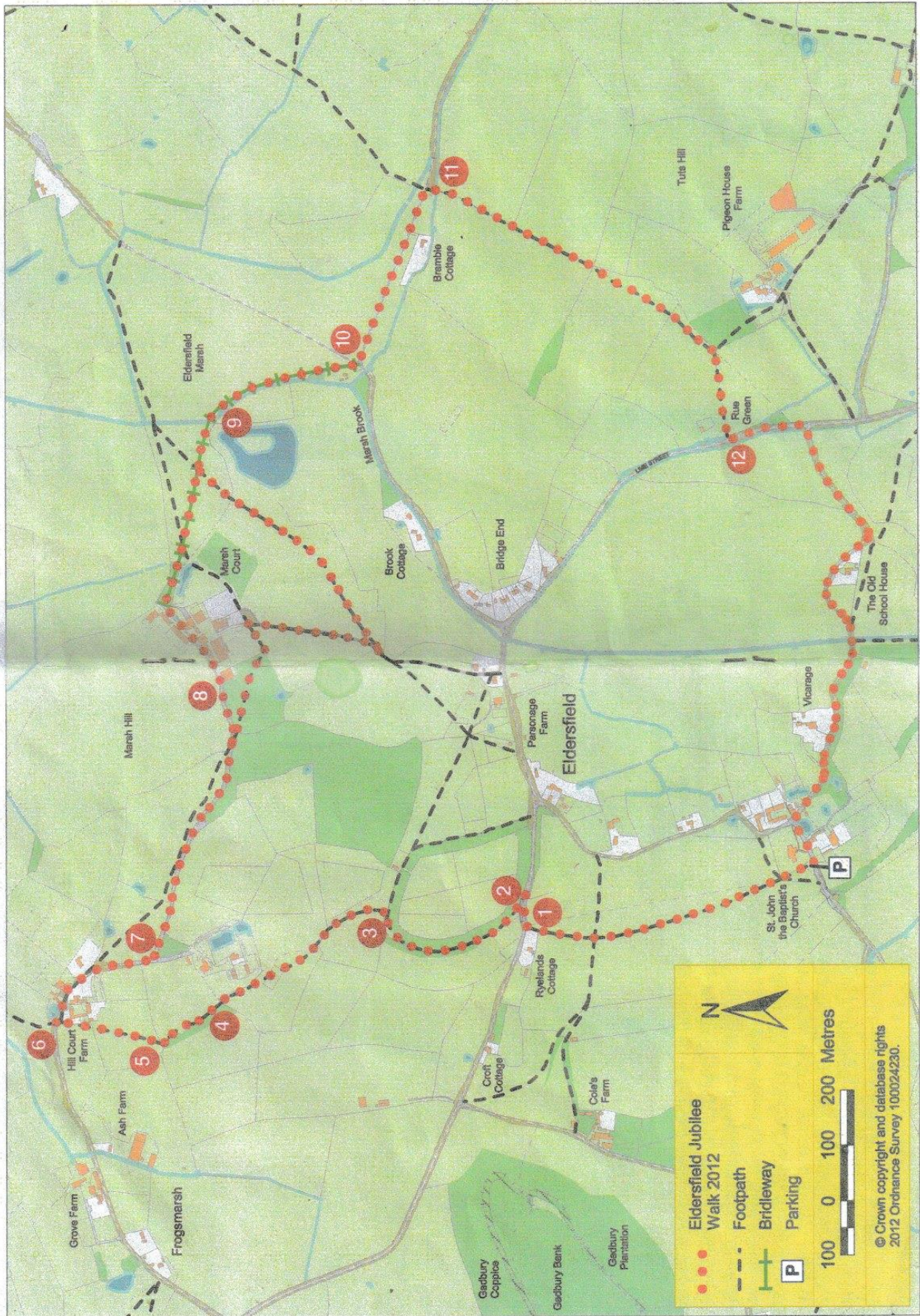
Just before the gate at the north end of Marsh Court there is a signposted gate on the right – walk through this, crossing the next field on the left-hand side to reach an EJW gate to cross a stream via a small bridge (9).

After crossing the bridge, turn right and walk along the right-hand side of the field, passing the lake on your right and continue until you reach an EJW signposted gate and the road (10).

Go straight ahead on the road; approximately 50 yards after Bramble Cottage on your right there is an EJW marked gate (11) which leads to a small bridge crossing a stream to take you into a field.

Walk along the left-hand side of the next fields going through EJW marked gates; in the last field you will see a marked gate (12) in the middle of the border of the field adjoining the road. Go through this and turn left onto Lime Street, then right onto Church Street making your way back to Eldersfield Church.

# Jubilee Walk



## **Eldersfield Parish Council Future Plans**

- Effective broadband.
- Neighbourhood Watch.
- Litter waste management.
- Consider whether Eldersfield needs a Neighbourhood Plan for the future.
- Consider creating a local resources register.
- Maintaining the flora and fauna of the village including animals' habitats.
- To maintain the unique and tranquil environment of our beautiful corner of Worcestershire.

## **Services in Eldersfield Parish**

For more information on up-to-date services in Eldersfield please visit your local page on the **Country Council website**: <https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish>

### **Library**

The library van comes on the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday in the month and timings are as follows:

11.40 – 11.55 Corse Lawn, The Cotch

12.00 – 12.15 Corse Lawn, Poolhay

For more information on the mobile libraries please contact:

[mobilelibraries@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:mobilelibraries@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### **Defibrillator**

Situated outside Eldersfield Lawn C of E Primary School, GL19 4NZ

Donated by the Parish Council and O'Connor Construction

### **Eldersfield Lawn C of E Primary School**

**Website:** <https://www.eldersfieldlawn.worcs.sch.uk>

**Email:** [admin@eldersfieldlawn.worcs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@eldersfieldlawn.worcs.sch.uk)

**Tel:** 01452 780309

**Post:** Eldersfield Lawn C of E Primary School, Corse Lawn, Gloucestershire, GL19 4NZ

Parent Teacher Friends Association (PTFA), actively raising funds to support the Primary School. Activities ranging from fetes, auction nights & quiz evenings.

**For details on the PTFA please contact the school 01452 780309, or facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/701184856653085>

### **Telephone box book swap**

Based in Bridgend on Moorend Road, by the notice board.

Eldersfield Lawn Parish facebook page bringing together the community.

**For details, please see the Council website:**

<http://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish>

### **Noticeboards**

Situated outside Eldersfield Lawn C of E Primary School, Bridgend (Moorend Road/Lime Street) and alongside the Church boundary wall opposite the entrance to Eldersfield Court.

## **Church**

The beautiful Church of St. John the Baptist is Grade 2\* listed and is open for regular worship. The Church organises a number of community events, giving local people an opportunity to meet up with friends and neighbours including harvest suppers, Christmas and Easter walking trails, quiz nights, concerts, fetes etc.

**Parish Magazine** Issued 10 times a year, listing Church and other local events for Eldersfield, Berrow with Pendock, Hollybush and Birtsmorton.

**Email:** [BAND@POOLHAY.PLUS.COM](mailto:BAND@POOLHAY.PLUS.COM)

**Website:** <https://berrowbenefice.org.uk>

## **Refuse Collection**

Fortnightly doorstep refuse, recycling and garden waste collections (subject to additional cost) supplied by Malvern Hills District Council: <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/>

## **Police**

Community Police presence supplied by West Mercia Police:

<https://www.westmercia.police.uk/>

## **Parish Council**

Parish Council meetings are held every two months at Eldersfield Lawn C. of E. Primary School. The public are welcome to attend. Minutes are available to view on the Parish noticeboards, on the Council website or through subscription.

To have the minutes emailed to you, please contact the Parish Council direct to be put on the subscription list.

**Email:** [eldersfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:eldersfieldpc@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Web page**

<https://e-services.worcestershire.gov.uk/MyParish/Welcome.aspx?ParishID=32&PostCode=GL194PQ&Prop=31449&partner=mhc&MarriedTo=0>

Alternatively goggle Eldersfield Parish Council web page

## **Corse Lawn Cricket Club**

A non-league playing, friendly local cricket team, played on the historic Corse Lawn Regulated pasture. **Email:** [william.spry@btopenworld.com](mailto:william.spry@btopenworld.com) **Telephone:** 07836333457

## **Eldersfield Cricket Team**

Based on Harp Meadow, Eldersfield, GL19 4PH

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/EldersfieldCricketClub/>

**Footpaths Officer:** Simone Bullen [Eldersfieldparishpaths@gmail.com](mailto:Eldersfieldparishpaths@gmail.com)



## Acknowledgements

- Bronwen Behan (District Councillor) – Revised Parish Plan
- A History of Eldersfield by John Sermon – A record of the history of the village and parish of Eldersfield in Worcestershire, from its Saxon beginnings until modern times.

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