



## Bitteswell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

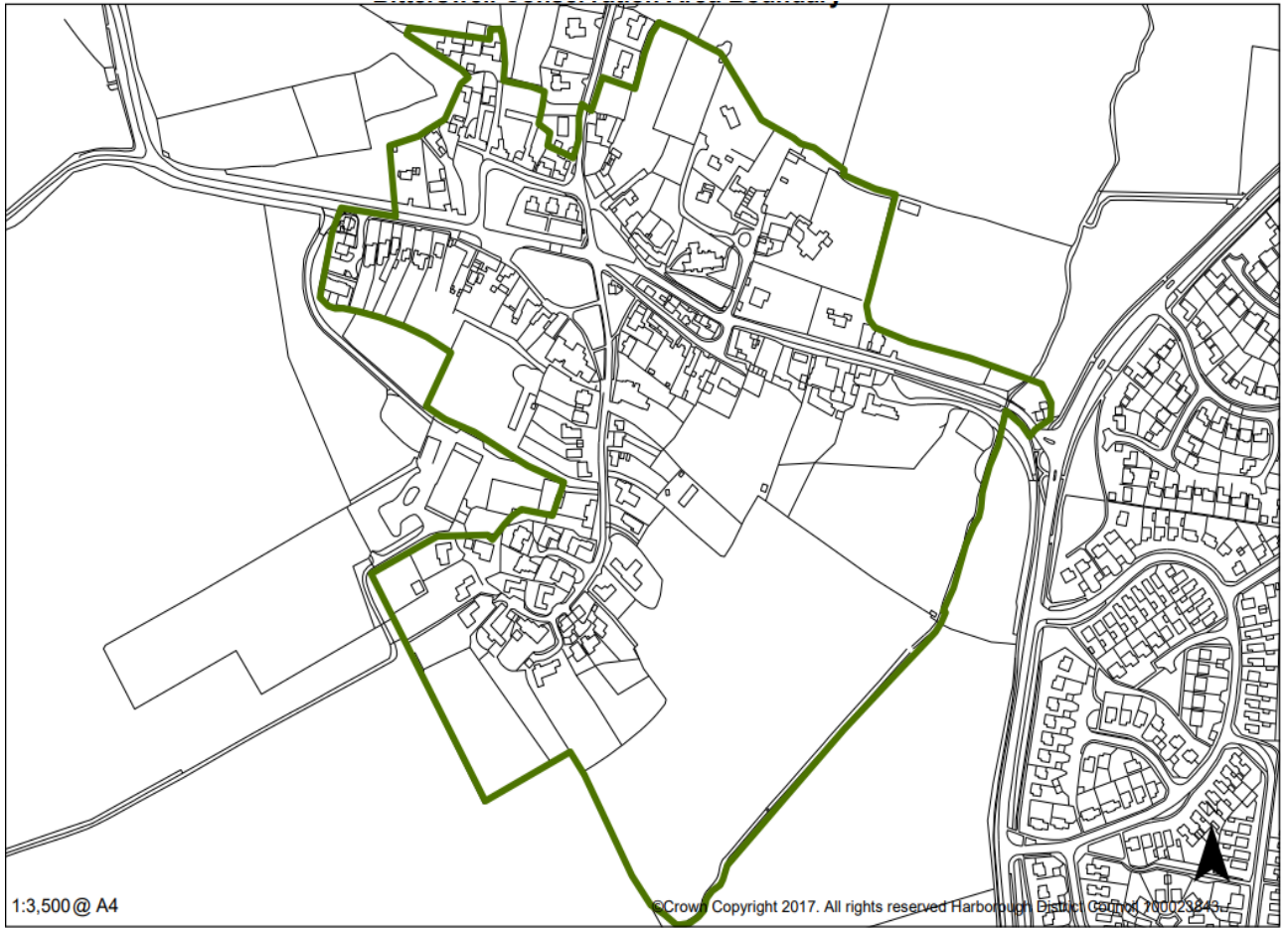


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## Map of Bitteswell Conservation Area



## 1.0 Summary of Special Interest

1.1 The settlement pattern of Bitteswell was formed in medieval times. There is a long history of agricultural land use and the development of Bitteswell is intertwined with the farmland that surrounds it.

1.2 The special interest of the Bitteswell Conservation Area is derived from the following key characteristics:

- The medieval settlement pattern.
- The strong agricultural character of the village and the relationship of the fields and farms to the traditional housing and other buildings.
- The role of the village greens in the character and daily life of Bitteswell.
- The variety of building styles and the use of thatch, brick and slate for buildings, especially for traditional housing and farm buildings.
- The open spaciousness of the village.
- The relationship between the built environment of the settlement and the natural environment both within it and surrounding it which contributes to the rural tranquillity of Bitteswell.
- The public footpaths which relate the village to its hinterland.

## 2.0 Introduction

2.1 Bitteswell was awarded Conservation Area designation in 1972. A boundary amendment was made when the conservation area was re-appraised in 2005. This appraisal has been undertaken from the autumn of 2021 to summer 2022.

2.2 Conservation area status must be justified on the grounds of the special architectural or historic interest of the area. The purpose of this appraisal is to define and record the factors that give Bitteswell conservation area its special interest and justify its designation. This will help improve understanding of the historic importance of the area, how this has shaped its unique character and how it can guide its future development.

2.3 There are no proposals to make any changes to the current boundary of the Bitteswell conservation area.

## 3.0 Policy and Legislation

3.1 Conservation areas contain features and characteristics that make them unique, locally distinctive, historic places. Protection of the historic environment is widely recognised for the contribution it makes to the country's quality of life, cultural and economic well-being. Public support for conservation areas as distinctive places that give

identity to people and communities is well established. Conservation areas protect the nation's unique, local heritage. Legislation and policy guidance reflect this.

3.2 The concept of 'conservation areas' was first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 which defined a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change but to manage change in ways that maintain and strengthen an area's special qualities. The definition remains unchanged in current legislation, set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Act places duties on local planning authorities to:

- Identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas;
- Review past designations from time to time;
- Prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas;
- Pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas.

3.3 Designation of a conservation area recognises the character of an area worthy of preservation and enhancement and ensures the safeguarding of the best of our local heritage as represented by both the buildings and the ambient environment, ie: the spaces between and around buildings when viewed as a whole. Each area contains a number and variety of elements which combine to create its significance. Within the District of Harborough Bitteswell is one of 63 conservation areas. Details of all the conservation areas can be found at

[https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory/20/conservation\\_areas\\_in\\_harborough\\_district](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory/20/conservation_areas_in_harborough_district)

3.4 Government policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It requires the significance of heritage assets – both its historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by wider public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in guidance published by Historic England.

## 4.0 Living and Working in a Conservation Area

4.1 Living and working in a conservation area does mean some extra planning considerations but it does not mean that everything must stay the same. The protections given to conservation areas help to manage change in such a way that it conserves and enhances their special character and significance. The effect of designation means that planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings, with some minor exceptions; there are also stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land, and there is automatic protection for trees. These controls are most likely to affect owners who wish to undertake works to the outside of their building or trees on their property.

4.2 For more detailed information on the alterations that require planning permission in a conservation area please see <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/conservation-areas>

## 5.0 Character Location and Uses

5.1 Bitteswell lies in the southwestern corner of Leicestershire, approximately 14 miles from Market Harborough, 13 miles from Leicester and one mile from Lutterworth. The Conservation Area embraces the compact village core located around the crossroads in the centre of the village greens and includes The Nook, Manor Road and Valley Lane. It also extends into Ashby Lane, along Ullesthorpe Road to the western edge of the settlement and east along Lutterworth Road to include the Tollgate Cottage and the pastures to the east which are seen from the east and form a foreground to the village core (see map on page 3).

5.2 The medieval settlement pattern is evident with the village clustered around the medieval church of St Mary. Bitteswell is a traditional farming village which consists of mainly residential properties in a rural setting, reflecting the history of agricultural land use in the village. Much of its historic character comes from the relationship of farms and fields to the housing and other buildings which form the settlement. It is located amid attractive countryside in south Leicestershire. Although only a mile from Lutterworth, Bitteswell retains a 'more rural feel' attributed to the southern part of the Leicestershire Vales in Natural England's National Character Area 94.<sup>1</sup> The trees and hedges leading into the village, as well as those within it, contribute to the feeling for rural tranquillity and close proximity to nature.

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<sup>1</sup> Natural England, *National Character Area Profile 94: Leicestershire Vales*, (2014), p. 3.

- 5.3 The eastern boundary of the conservation area includes the Tollgate Cottage on the Lutterworth Road and the pastures to the east which mark the foreground to the village core. Although Tollgate Cottage is in the Parish of Lutterworth it relates to Bitteswell and has historic links to Turnpike Cottage at the western end of conservation area. Turning from the urban road of Bill Crane Way to enter the conservation area at the eastern boundary on Lutterworth Road highlights the sharp contrast between neighbouring Lutterworth and the rural conservation area of Bitteswell. This is enhanced in the spring by the daffodils planted in the grass verges along the side of Lutterworth Road.
- 5.4 Just before Lutterworth Road reaches the main crossroads at the heart of the village, two small roads lead off it – The Nook and Manor Road. The Nook is a short, narrow, cul-de-sac which winds around the east of the church and contains a small grouping of eighteenth and nineteenth-century properties, including the Grade II-listed Russett Cottage. Manor Road is a short road running parallel to Lutterworth Road which includes a terrace of Victorian artisan cottages. Manor Road also contains a Grade II listed K6 telephone kiosk at one end and a George V pillar box in the wall of Clifton House at the other end of the road, both of which contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- 5.5 The spacious, picturesque village green is central to village life in Bitteswell. The green comprises of four open spaces which surround the main crossroads at the centre of the village. Buildings, a number of which are listed, are grouped around the large central green and extend along the Lutterworth Road and the cul-de-sac Valley Lane. There are several mature trees on the green and a number of wooden benches dotted around this green space to provide the opportunity to quietly reflect and take in different views of the village.
- 5.6 The mature trees on the greens are a prominent feature of the conservation area and provide a visual reminder of the changing seasons. The character of the village greens also changes during the day. This is particularly noticeable around the timings of the school day as the village school sits in the south eastern corner of The Green. Parents congregate on the village greens to collect children from the school or pupils alighting from the school bus which stops near to the crossroads and children play in small groups or seek shelter under the mature trees.
- 5.7 In addition to the central role of The Green in everyday life it has always been a place for village celebration, with events such as ‘The Bitteswell Mop’ or Whitsuntide dancing and it is also the focal point for local celebration of national events such as royal coronations and jubilees from the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887 to the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022. Although the greens are well used they are all also well maintained and respected by its

users as there was no evidence of litter problems or damage as a result of irresponsible parking.

- 5.8 Location at the centre of a crossroads can result in periodic interruptions to the rural tranquillity of the space, especially by traffic on the old turnpike road between Ullesthorpe and Lutterworth, although the loudest noise tends to be from agricultural vehicles which pass through from time to time.
- 5.9 From The Green the conservation area extends north down Ashby Lane to incorporate Corner Cottage to the west and Newstead House and Ashby House to the eastern side of the road. Another George V pillar box is situated in one of the gate piers of Ashby House. There are a few further dwellings along Ashby Road before open countryside is reached but they are outside the conservation area.
- 5.10 Heading west from the central crossroads the conservation area extends along Ullesthorpe Road where buildings range in date from the Grade II listed Almshouses of Powell Row (1847) to twentieth-century buildings including the 1930s Man at Arms Pub and the 2013 properties of Deacon Close.
- 5.11 Valley Lane is the remaining road to lead off the central crossroads on The Green. This is a long, narrow, attractive cul-de-sac which includes the village school, the early nineteenth-century Grade II listed Royal Oak pub and Dowell House (formerly Valley Farmhouse). It also includes Bitteswell House (1800) and properties from throughout the twentieth century. There has been considerable development in Valley Lane over the last forty years, some of which is of higher density and more suburban in character, however, the quality of the lane remains. There are two footpaths leading directly from Valley Lane into surrounding open countryside within and outside the conservation area boundary, both of which are well used.

## 6.0 Definition of Special Interest

- 6.1 In April 1971 an exhibition entitled 'Bitteswell – Our Village a Local History Exhibition' took place in St Mary's Church. Residents (and former residents) of 1970s Bitteswell lent material to illustrate the past history of Bitteswell, its daily life and its people.<sup>2</sup> This demonstrated the level of interest residents had in the value of their local environment. In 1848 Bitteswell was described as having, 'no pretensions to celebrity' and being a 'pleasant and social place of residence' and such a description is equally fitting in 2022.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, DE3519/255 Papers for Leicestershire Local History Council.

<sup>3</sup> E. Bottrill and Son, *A Reply to the Question (if it should ever be asked) 'Where and What is Bitteswell?'* 1848, pp. 3 & 12.



- 6.2 In 1972 Bitteswell was designated as a conservation area. Such designation would help to preserve and enhance the qualities residents recognised and celebrated in the exhibition the previous year.
- 6.3 The development of Bitteswell is intertwined with the farmland that surrounds it. This is evident in the relationship between the farms, fields and traditional housing and farm buildings and is reflected in property names within the village. The development of the settlement has resulted in a diversity of building styles and materials which contribute to the character of the conservation area. It is an open spacious village where the relationship between the built environment of the settlement and the natural environment both within it and surrounding it are integral to its rural character.
- 6.4 Bitteswell conforms to Natural England's description of rural villages in south Leicestershire whose settlement patterns formed in medieval times remain evident with 'separate villages clustered around a tall church spire' and having a long history of agricultural land use.

## 7.0 Historic Development of the Area

- 7.1 Excavations within the Parish of Bitteswell with Bittesby have revealed pieces of flint, sherds of Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery which all point to long history of the area. With Bitteswell's close proximity to the High Cross, the point where the Roman roads of Watling Street and the Fosse Way crossed, it is not surprising that excavations at West End Farm in 2019 discovered several Roman ditches and gullies. The 4<sup>th</sup> Century Roman pottery, animal bones and Roman brick discovered, all provide evidence of Roman activity within the conservation area and demonstrate Bitteswell's long history.
- 7.2 In the 8<sup>th</sup> Century Bitteswell was recorded as being within the Saxon Kingdom of Mercia and was part of the Guthlaxton Wapentake. Cultivation has taken place around Bitteswell since Saxon times, when the greens at the centre of the village would have provided secure grazing for sheep and cattle.
- 7.3 There is reference to Bitteswell, as 'Betmeswelle', (broad valley spring) in the Domesday Book of 1086. It has been a continuously occupied settlement since this entry.
- 7.4 The 12<sup>th</sup> Century church has been at the heart of the settlement throughout its development. The first vicar of 'Betmeswelle' was Jordan in 1220 and subsequent vicars are listed in the church until 1989. The north transept was added to the church in 1852 by W Parsons and further alterations were made by Walter F. Lyon in 1881-2. Lord Denbigh was the titular Lord of the Manor, but residency was never established.

7.5 In 1630 the parish of Bitteswell recorded 38 families. The Grade II listed Dunlis House, located towards the western end of the village greens, is a half-timbered property which, in places, dates from circa 1540, although the majority is seventeenth century which was extended in the early nineteenth century.

7.6 By 1760 the Lutterworth to Ullesthorpe road was part of the national road network of turnpikes initiated by George III. With extensive grazing and fresh spring water the village provided facilities for changing and resting horses. Tollgate Cottage at the eastern boundary of the conservation area and the Grade II listed Turnpike Lodge at the western end of the village greens both link Bitteswell to its heyday when stage coaches and the mail coach all passed through the village on the way to and from London and Chester or Holyhead. Published in 1848, the image below shows Tollgate Cottage where coaches stopped to pay the levy and pass through the turnpike gate to enter Bitteswell.



Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland DE3736 – image copied from 'Bitteswell' (1848).

7.7 Following the Enclosure Act passed in 1773, the open and common fields and pastures of Bitteswell were enclosed in 1787. Enclosure brought to an end the open field farming system and divided the open fields into the patchwork of fields and hedges we recognise today. Evidence of the medieval open field arable farming system used prior to enclosure can still be seen in the ridge and furrow earthworks in fields within the locality, including those behind Valley Lane which lied within the conservation area boundary.

7.8 By 1801 the Return to Parliament showed that the population of Bitteswell had risen to 69 families dwelling in 68 properties, giving a total population of 398 (192 males, 206 females). Within a decade this had risen to 88 properties occupied by 94 families. The agricultural history of Bitteswell is evident in that

61 of the 94 families residing in Bitteswell in 1811 were chiefly employed in agriculture. Both the growth of the settlement and its agricultural heritage are reflected in a number of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings (now Grade II listed) such as the farmhouses of West End Farm and Green Farm on The Green and Valley Farm on Valley Lane. Valley Farmhouse is now known as Dowell House as it was the home of the Dowell family until 1936. A century on from the 1811 census, the image below from circa 1910 shows the continued role of agriculture with hay making in Bitteswell.

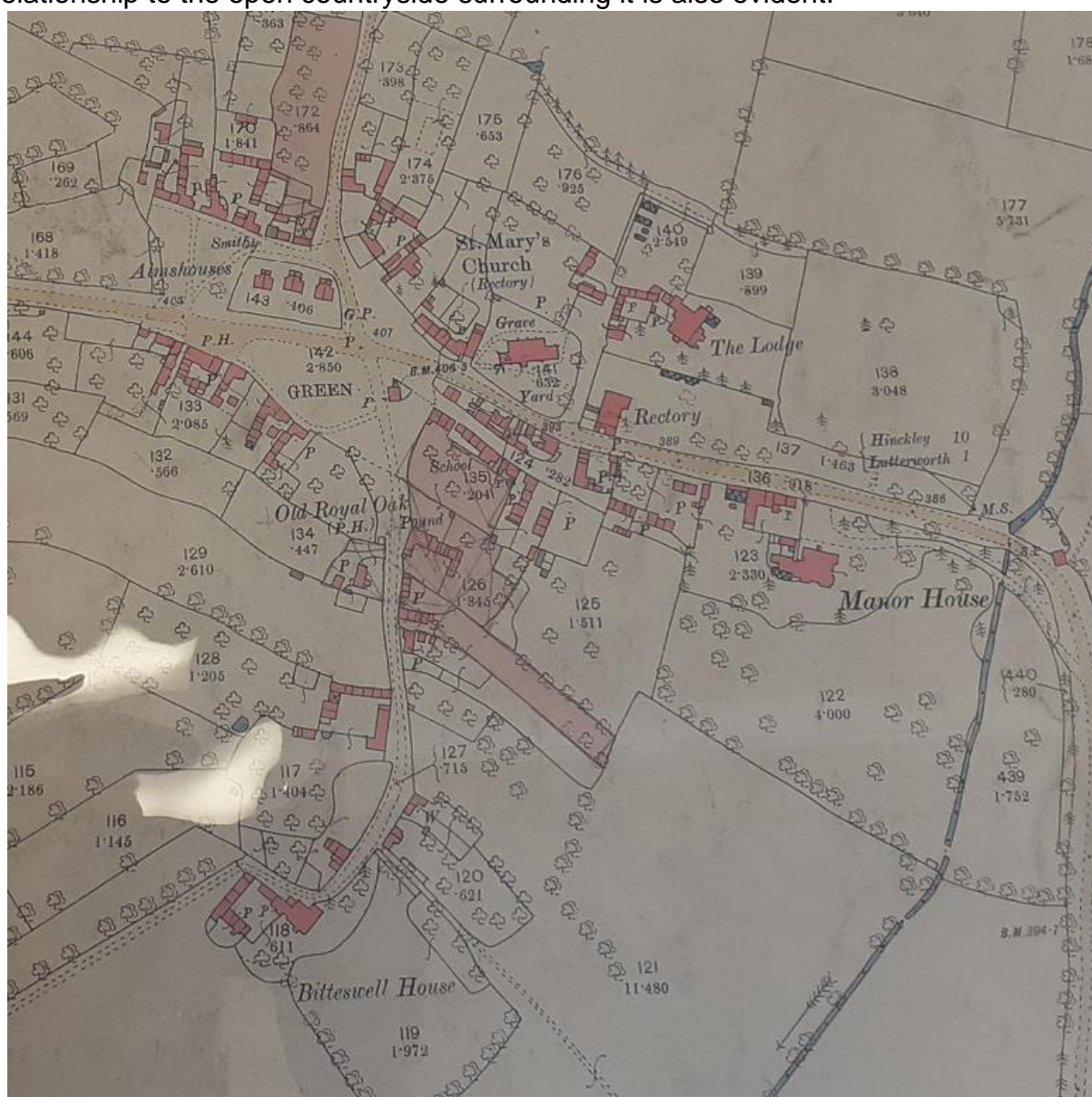


Hay making in Bitteswell circa 1910 (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland: DE 3736).

7.9 In 1789 Reverend James Powell became vicar of St Mary's Church. He served in this role until his death in 1844. Reverend Powell was married to the daughter of the tea merchant Richard Twinning (1749-1824). The impact of Reverend Powell and his relatives on the historic built environment of Bitteswell can still be evidenced today. This is most prominent in the Grade II listed Almshouses of Powell Row, built in the centre of the village greens in 1847 and in the lychgate to St Mary's Church which was erected by Richard Twinning in 1888 in memory of Reverend Powell. Just outside the conservation area boundary on Ullesthorpe Road is a cemetery which is an extension of the churchyard of St Mary's Church. This is recognised as an important open space within the Bitteswell Neighbourhood Plan (Pre-submission version, February 2021). The land was a gift from Richard Twinning and was consecrated in 1902.

7.10 The 1800s was a period of change for Bitteswell. *Pigot's* Directory of 1822 lists a boarding school for boys in Bitteswell. The advert for which mentioned daily coaches to London. However, the frequency of stage coaches passing through Bitteswell declined with the construction of the Midland Railway in

Ullesthorne in 1840. Before his death Reverend Powell founded The Boys Free School which opened in 1844 and was funded by the late vicar and his sister. This was replaced by a mixed Public Elementary School in 1871 and the Old School House became a private residence. In 1838 Bitteswell Hall was built approximately a mile from the village. This was a mansion set in extensive landscaped parklands with an ornamental lake and fox covert as well as its own farms and kitchen garden. The construction of such a large estate may have accounted for the population increasing to 495 in 1841. Two other large houses with wooded gardens had been built within the village in the first half of the nineteenth century – the Manor House on Lutterworth Road (re-built in 1938 in a French-villa style) and Bitteswell House on Valley Lane. With the building of The Lodge and two cottages (now Russett Cottage) on The Nook and the location of the Almshouses in the centre of the village green, the street plan and significant heritage assets of the conservation area can be identified in the Bitteswell map of 1887 (below). The open spacious nature of the conservation area and the relationship to the open countryside surrounding it is also evident.



Map of Bitteswell 1887 (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland).

7.11 By 1931 the population of Bitteswell had fallen to 293. The demolition of Bitteswell Hall in 1928 and the increasing use of modern farming methods may have been responsible for this reduction. In 1940 RAF Bitteswell was constructed close to the village in the south of the parish. From 1943 to 1987 the area was also home to a Hawker Siddeley factory which assembled and tested aircraft. In the 1980s this became the Magna Park distribution centre. By 1951 the population of Bitteswell had increased to 346. From the 1962 map below it is clear to see that Bitteswell is developing with housing extending west on the Ullesthorpe Road and away from the village core down Ashby Lane. It also shows twentieth century development commencing down Valley Lane.



1962 Map of Bitteswell (Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland)

7.12 In the 60 years since the 1962 map development has continued down Ashby Lane and Ullesthorpe Road, new properties have been built behind Green Farmhouse and the Old School House at the western end of the village, and considerable development has taken place in Valley Lane. The 2011 census recorded 554 residents living in 199 households.

## 8.0 Assessment of Special Interest

- 8.1 Much of the special architectural interest in Bitteswell has been recognised through the Grade II\* listing of the Church of St Mary and the Grade II listing awarded to 13 other heritage assets within the conservation area boundary (see Appendix A for full details).
- 8.2 Special interest in a conservation area is not only formed by the buildings but also the spaces between them and other features of interest. These can include the settlement layout, green infrastructure, open spaces, views and public realm. Bitteswell is a spacious open village where traditionally houses were built on spacious plots which included trees and hedging all of which contribute to the natural environment and rural character of the conservation area.
- 8.3 Entering the conservation area at the eastern boundary into Lutterworth Road follows the route the route of turnpike road and passes Tollgate Cottage (seen in the historic image on P.10).



Tollgate Cottage on the corner Lutterworth Road at the Conservation Area Boundary.

Enclosure of the farmed landscape in 1787 transformed this route into the village. Not only did the road get ‘the luxury of a well-kept raised footpath’ but it was noted in 1848 that, ‘since the village has become well wooded with hedge-row timber and plantations, - intermixed with roofs and gables of houses, barns and cottages amongst them, - the spire in the midst peering over all, the approach is extremely pleasing.’<sup>4</sup> Leaving the urban environment of Bill Crane Way, passing Tollgate Cottage and heading into

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<sup>4</sup> E. Bottrill and Son, *A Reply to the Question (if it should ever be asked) ‘Where and What is Bitteswell?’* 1848, p.9.

Bitteswell along Lutterworth Road, it is still possible to experience the mix of natural and built environment of the village described in 1848. To the east are the pastures which form a foreground to the village core and contribute to the tranquil rural character of the conservation area. Glimpses of the church spire can be still seen at points throughout the conservation area.

- 8.4 The road to the right is The Nook. This contains development around the east of St Mary's church which links to Reverend Powell and the Twinning family. On the corner is Deanston House. This was originally built as the vicarage in 1720. Offices were added in 1789 and Reverend Powell enlarged and laid out the garden and erected brick boundary walls. This property remained in use as the vicarage until the mid-twentieth century when a new vicarage was built at the end of the garden.



Deanston House

- 8.5 Next to Deanston House Reverend Powell built The Lodge in 1834 as a home for his daughter. The property was occupied by various members of the Twining family until 1906. The 1919 sales particulars for the stuccoed brick Lodge described it as a desirable freehold residential property or hunting lodge with a stone-built entrance lodge. Today these properties are the separate dwellings of the Gate House and the Hunting Box in the Nook.
- 8.6 These sales particulars included an image looking down the Nook towards two cottages which today form the Grade II listed Russett Cottage.



1919 Image showing the Gate House to the Lodge and two cottages in the Nook.

The sale also included 4 cottages on Manor Road (now 2, 3 and 4) and three cottages overlooking the church (1-2 and 3 Church View Cottage). Next to 4 Manor Road is the Village Hall, this was built in the late nineteenth century as The Church Reading Room. It became the Village Hall in 1976.

8.7 Manor Road contains a number of buildings that historically link to the small enterprises of the village. On the corner of Manor Road is the white rendered Cedar Cottage, which has a decorative chimney. Until 1862 this was the Plough Inn but has been a private residence since then. Opposite Cedar Cottage is red brick Clifton House which was originally a slaughter house and butchers shop. Until 1997 it was also the village post office and the George V pillar box in the wall is an attractive feature of the conservation area. Also located in Manor Road is Tithe Cottage which was originally a stable with sluices used by stage coach horses during the eighteenth century. Next to this is the old bakery although there have been millers and bakers in the village since the 1600s the house dates from the early 1900s when the original was burnt down.





View into Manor Road with Cedar Cottage on the right and The Old Bakery in the distance.

- 8.8 From the crossroads at the centre of the village greens the mixture of building styles and materials is evident as is the open spaciousness of the village. With no dominant architectural style, it is possible to see the historic development of the settlement. There is an attractive grouping of buildings around The Green's edge, 9 of which are nationally listed at Grade II (see Appendix A).
- 8.9 Next to St Mary's Church is a terrace of simpler eighteenth-century buildings comprising the original 4 messuages of 'The Chestnuts'. The horse chestnut tree and St Mary's Church with its lychgate make a fine closure to the eastern end of the greens.



Further along the row and into Ashby Road are Tilt House which was originally built in 1721 but has been altered over the years. It is reported that bricks from the old Bitteswell Hall, demolished in 1928, were used in the construction of the garage and outbuildings in the 1930s. Next to this is the Georgian brick-built Newstead House which is a prominent feature on the bend as Ashby Road reaches The Green.



Newstead House

8.10 The Grade II listed Almshouses of Powel Row form a striking centre piece to the village. The three sets of semi-detached cottages are set in spacious gardens on The Green. This allows for views through from the village greens to the properties behind and provides a good example of the relationship between the built and natural environment of the conservation area.



Cottages of Powell Row with glimpses of properties in the West End seen between the cottages.

- 8.11 Across the Green from the Almshouses is the Man at Arms public house. Designed in the 1930s with a mansard roof and located between two of the oldest buildings on The Green (Dunlis House and Turnpike Lodge) this building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. The 1887 map of Bitteswell (see p.13) shows a public house on this site. It had previously been known as the Fleur-de-Lis and the New Royal Oak. When the building remodelled in the twentieth century it was re-named the Man at Arms. The choice of name links to a charitable donation to the parish from Robert Dowse in 1534. One third of the monies was allocated to supplying one armoured man when the King was at war and the payment was still made during the First World War.



The Man at Arms located between Dunlis House and Turnpike Lodge – decorated to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022.

8.12 Westfield is another early twentieth century addition to the conservation area that makes a positive contribution to it and shows the development of the settlement. Set in a mature garden this property marks the western end of the conservation area on Ullesthorpe Road. There are late twentieth and early twenty-first century buildings on the other side of Ullesthorpe Road opposite Westfield. These properties are more suburban in character and are in closer proximity to each other, unlike the space surrounding Westfield or the Powell Row cottages however, they do not detract from the quality of the conservation area.



The suburban character of properties on the south of Ullesthorpe Road



The more spacious setting of Westfield on the other side of Ullesthorpe Road.

8.13 Valley Lane is the remaining road to lead off the central crossroads on The Green. This long cul-de-sac which includes the village school, the early nineteenth-century Grade II listed Royal Oak pub and Dowell House (formerly Valley Farmhouse). The 1887 map (see p.13) shows Bitteswell House (1800) to be the last property in the cul-de-sac before it peters into a footpath leading to open countryside. For over a century Bitteswell House sat at the far end of Valley Lane overlooking open countryside.



Bitteswell House

In the last decades of the twentieth century new properties were built in Valley Lane. The additions to Valley Lane in the last forty years have generally been of higher density and more suburban in character, however, the quality of the lane remains. There are two footpaths leading directly from Valley Lane into surrounding open countryside within and outside the conservation area boundary. The image below is from the footpath just before Bitteswell House

which demonstrates that although housing density in Valley Lane has increased its rural setting within the conservation area has remained.



View from the footpath on Valley Lane looking east over the open countryside of the conservation area.

## 9.0 Opportunities for Enhancement

9.1 Bitteswell conservation area is generally well cared for. The village greens are all well maintained. They provide pleasant environments in which to sit, and they contribute to the rural tranquillity and proximity to nature that is characteristic of Bitteswell. A similar level of respect for the conservation area is evident in the individual properties which are generally in good order. Boundary treatments, the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers in gardens, or in tubs and hanging baskets all contribute to quality of the conservation area.

9.2 Within the conservation area boundary there is opportunity to further enhance the conservation area. The K6 telephone kiosk is nationally listed at Grade II, however, the area immediately around it does not reflect the general care and attention that is generally evident within the conservation area.



Area around the Grade II listed K6 telephone kiosk

9.3 The fingerpost sign is located at the heart of the conservation area and makes a positive contribution to it. Given such a prominent position on the well tended Green seems to highlight the state of the paintwork on the main post. Repainting the post would bring it in line with the current quality of its setting.



Image showing peeling paint on fingerpost



## 10. Management Plan

- 10.1 Local planning authorities have a duty placed on them under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Conservation area appraisals help to identify threats to the character of the conservation area and opportunities for enhancement. Potential threats to the character and appearance of the conservation area arise from the loss of traditional features of value. Such threats can range from the loss of historic fabric to unsympathetic public realm and the impact of highway works.
- 10.2 The character and appearance of both the conservation area and of individual buildings and structures are at risk from the loss of historic fabric and traditional features. Regular ongoing maintenance limits deterioration to buildings of any age or materials. Efforts should be made to repair or replace historic fabric with appropriate materials. Generally, UPVC is not an appropriate replacement for historic timber windows and doors. It is difficult to achieve the necessary standards in design and the use of UPVC can lead to environmental problems due to reduced breathability in materials. More information of materials for historic building repairs can be found on the Historic England website <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-materials-for-historic-buildings/>
- 10.3 The treatment of the public realm impacts on the character and appearance of a conservation area. The loss of features of value or the introduction of unsympathetic street furniture poses a threat to the character and appearance of a conservation area. Bitteswell Conservation Area generally has an uncluttered public realm with features such as the finger post, the K6 telephone kiosk and the historic post boxes making a positive contribution to the conservation area. These features should be maintained and retained wherever possible. Applications for development should ensure that any alterations to the public realm preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 10.4 The character and appearance of a conservation area can also be threatened by unsympathetic highway works and by traffic and car parking. The pavements and pathways are generally neutral in colour and character. The example below shows that even differing shades of tarmac used after works can impact negatively on the conservation area.



Image showing the negative impact of differing shades of tarmac.

- 10.5 Site visits to Bitteswell in 2021/22 indicated that the demand for parking is high at points in the day and in the evening when people return from work. Parents on the school run tend to make use of the parking facilities at the two local pubs for those short periods in the day. However, this is not an option at evenings and weekends when patrons need to use the car parks.
- 10.6 The roads within Bitteswell conservation area are often lined with hedgerows and verges. Works to highways and footways risk the loss of historic traditional materials such as kerbstones, setts and pavements or the introduction of modern surfacing and boundary treatments and signage, all of which pose a threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Loss of such historic fabric should be discouraged. The Highways Authority should, as far as possible, seek to ensure that works to highways and footways makes good any historic surfaces and that completed work does not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 10.7 Any proposals for new development should consider the impact of alterations to highways and footways. With the existing high demand for on-street parking careful consideration should be given to the effect of increased traffic and parking provision on the character and appearance of the Bitteswell conservation area.
- 10.8 As a result of the historical development of the settlement there is a diverse mix of buildings and building materials with no common architectural theme. However, boundary treatments of hedges and red brick garden walls (often with blue brick or ceramic copings) are a feature of the conservation area. Any proposals for development should consider the impact on these existing

features and how such features can be incorporated in order to preserve and enhance the rural character of the conservation area.

## 11.0 Council Contact Details

11.1 If you need to discuss this document please contact the Conservation Team.

By Email: [planningpolicy@Harborough.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@Harborough.gov.uk)

## Sources

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Websites:

[www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)

[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

## Appendix A: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

Church of St Mary – Grade II\*

*List Entry Number: 1292319* [CHURCH OF ST MARY, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1292319 | Historic England](#)

Bitteswell War Memorial, St Mary's Churchyard - Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1464644* [Bitteswell War Memorial, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1464644 | Historic England](#)

Vine House, The Green - Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1210166* [VINE HOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1210166 | Historic England](#)

Green Farmhouse, The Green - Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1292799* [GREEN FARMHOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1292799 | Historic England](#)

Russet Cottage, The Nook – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1210172* [RUSSET COTTAGE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1210172 | Historic England](#)

West End Farmhouse, The Green – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1209150* [WEST END FARMHOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1209150 | Historic England](#)

Turnpike Lodge, The Green – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1209149* [TURNPIKE LODGE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1209149 | Historic England](#)

The Royal Oak Public House, The Green – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1210158* [THE OLDE ROYAL OAK PUBLIC HOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1210158 | Historic England](#)

Dunlis House, The Green – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1210152* [DUNLIS HOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1210152 | Historic England](#)

Valley Farmhouse – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1209147* [VALLEY FARMHOUSE, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1209147 | Historic England](#)

1 and 2 Powell Row – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1292798* [1 AND 2, POWELL ROW, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1292798 | Historic England](#)

3 and 4 Powell Row – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1210146* [3 AND 4, POWELL ROW, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1210146 | Historic England](#)

5 and 6 Powell Row – Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1209148* [5 AND 6, POWELL ROW, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1209148 | Historic England](#)

K6 Telephone Kiosk, Manor Road - Grade II

*List Entry Number: 1391414* [K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK, Bitteswell with Bittesby - 1391414 | Historic England](#)