Objective – To enhance the unique nature and history of each area by protection and preservation of valuable architecture and existing greenspace

St Marychurch, Babbacombe, Plainmoor and Maidencombe make up the community Ward and are all very special and unique places in their own right.
The Neighbourhood Plan for the Community Partnership is focused on **Protection and Preservation,** as once land is given up for development it is lost forever, and for the local residents -**preservation** is more important and of far greater significance than development for present and future generations.

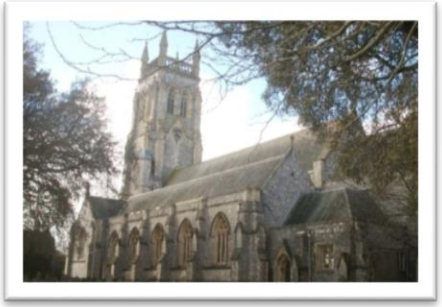
ABOUT THE AREA
St Marychurch is one of the oldest settlements in South Devon with records dating from around 1050 AD. Its name is derived from the church of St Mary the Virgin which was founded in Anglo-Saxon times with its high tower and Saxon font dating from around 1110 AD.

The early 19th century architecture of villas and terraced buildings fall within a conservation area and contain a number of listed buildings and many others of significant interest, such as is the former Town Hall built in 1883. The former town stretches from Plainmoor to Maidencombe and is known for its scenery, shopping precinct and neighbouring churches. The conservation area largely defines the historic development of what is now a significant suburb of Torquay.

Tourism
Babbacombe Downs with its fine views across Lyme Bay is an area of natural beauty appreciated year round by both residents and visitors alike. This area supports a substantial number of local businesses of large and small hotels that cater to visitors all year round.

Retail business
The main shopping area in Fore Street also consists of a small precinct market area. Other major shopping areas include Babbacombe Road, Reddenhill Road and St Marychurch Road in Plainmoor.

These shopping areas, based in the midst of our hotel and B&B district, also serve a large residential area with a wide range of independent traders and businesses.


St Marychurch Parish Church

Old St Marychurch & Babbacombe Town Hall

Oddicombe Beach from Babbacombe Downs

St Marychurch Precinct

Reddenhill Road

Plainmoor

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Protect from greenfield development all green open spaces and the coastline from Walls Hill to Maidencombe, and to include Babbacombe Downs and the beach areas, Tessier Gardens, King George V playing fields and Cary Park.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION

- Increase the maintenance of all areas, including coastal paths and pathways for public use and safety ensuring they are fit for purpose.
- Refurbish Petitor Downs and the Great Rock area to bring them back into public use.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Secure a long term commitment from the Local Authorities to preserve all protection plans (including covenants) and ensure SSSIs are respected.

- Obtain Covenant protection from Torbay Council for Babbacombe Downs from future development/building
- Protection and preservation of coastal paths, identify and record public rights of way; green lanes, alleyways and established paths in and around the area and increase maintenance for public use and safety.
- Protect and identify public rights of way throughout the ward and increase maintenance for public use and safety.

HOUSING

As the area attracts a large number of senior residents there is a need to have sufficient places to cater for supported independent living and also, as demand increases, more places that cater for those who are no longer able to be independent. We need to ensure that there are sufficient Nursing/Care home facilities by a combination of new development, adaption of existing buildings and re-furbishing existing homes.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Ensure that any development considers the need of all residents, existing and new, and that

- The re-develop existing suitable properties in appropriate style and scale for housing as long as they are not likely to have an adverse impact on neighbours the immediate environment or the area as a whole.
- By identifying and secure appropriate sites for good quality and affordable housing to meet the projected demographic needs for this Ward and not allowing development of housing on any **g**reenfield site.
- By ensuring that any significant development of new homes in the area (5 or more in one application) is allowed only if a reasonable proportion of new (medium and long term) jobs are made available.
- The development of properties for senior residents to enable independent living for as long as possible. Because the area has a large number of senior residents there is a need to have properties to develop that cater for those who can manage on their own (i.e. warden controlled) and also develop properties that cater for those who can't
- The possible development of the Football Ground (subject to the Club having a better alternative accommodation), for community use, with the possibility of land for school playing fields and that appropriate building with sufficient amenity and infrastructure only is considered, that the plans should include the development of swimming, sports and play facilities – sheet 9
- The possible development of the Golf Course or part there of *(subject to the Club having a better alternative accommodation).* The housing in this area

should benefit a cross section of residents and be a mixture of sizes, e.g. 1, 2, 3 & 4 beds and include affordable starter homes, shared ownership property and retirement apartments. If the development is large enough perhaps it could incorporate a 'village' design. However, particular attention needs to be made to the local infrastructure and the impact on surrounding communities in terms of erosion, flooding and rain run-off. To this end any established trees should not be removed – map sheet 6.

COMMUNITY USAGE

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
To protect the amenity that is provided by

- Plainmoor Swimming Pool and play park, and have those areas improved for community use. Ensuring that any development of the football ground is tied to the improvement of this and other amenities in the immediate area. Plainmoor swimming pool is the only public swimming pool in Torquay
- The retention of key bus routes serving the area, and to ensure access to and from the main retail areas of the ward, town, harbour, hospital and outlying districts.
- The refurbishment of shopping and retail areas, and the standardization of street furniture and street signs.
- Maintaining/refurbishing existing public conveniences at Babbacombe Downs and Hampton Avenue, and keep them open all year. Re-open those that have been closed on Reddenhill Road for the use of children and residents using the play area on Cary Park

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Additionally there must be an on-going commitment to improvement in the following local amenities – if necessary through partnership working with developers:

- To maintain standards of cleanliness and litter removal
- Local schools to provide opportunities for adult education
- Play and Youth facilities
- Leisure and facilities/opportunities
- Beaches, Planting, Signage
- Litter and Cleanliness

RETAIL AREAS

There are three significant local retail areas. The area has four major tourist attractions, three excellent beaches, significant areas of green spaces and good local amenities, all adding to the value of the area as a tourist destination.
The economy of this area is generated mainly through three sectors – Retail and Financial Services, Care Services and Tourism – map sheet 9.

COMMUNITY APIRATION
To ensure the continued success of the business and retail areas by

- Investing in improving the standard of retail areas and the properties therein and standardization of street furniture and street signs to continue the unique theme of Black and Silver as on finger posts.
- Removing unnecessary 'street clutter' in the form of excess street furniture and signage – where possible 'doubling up' signs to avoid proliferation.
- Making sure that we maintain plenty of free and unrestricted on-street parking and secure, easily accessible and affordable off -road parking for visitors, local residents and businesses. This should include identifying spaces that need no longer be restricted. Coach access and parking is available, and improving the 'arrival and departure' experience of drivers and passengers.
- Tying any significant development with a financial contribution to improvement or maintenance of local amenities.

Part B – Maidencombe

BRIEF HISTORY
Maidencombe makes up the Community Ward and is a very special and unique place in its own right. Situated at the northern most part of the Ward, it consists of approximately 408 acres of predominantly agricultural land. The entire coastal strip has been designated a **Countryside Zone and Coastal Preservation Area** and an **Area of Great Landscape Value**.

The historic hamlet of 'Medenecombe' is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 as a tiny manor with a population of about twenty. Nestling in a hollow surrounded by dramatic coastal scenery, it was originally orchard groves which over time evolved into a small number of farmsteads.

In 2015 registration for Village Green status was awarded.

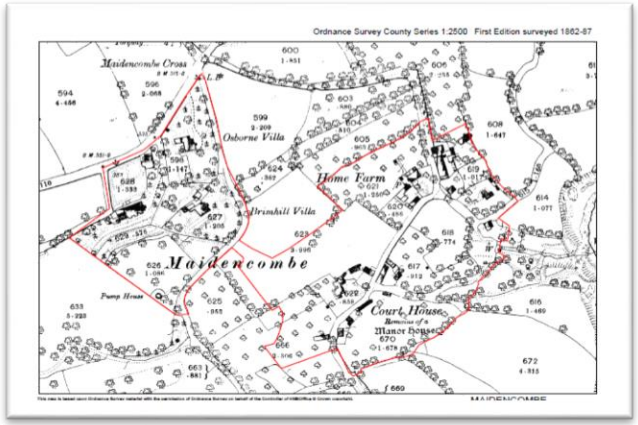
CHARACTER OF AREA
The steep access lanes into the combe serve to emphasise the remoteness of the area set amidst the outstanding natural beauty of a dramatic coastline.

The field systems of Maidencombe have survived since medieval times and early boundary walls are in evidence today.

The chief threat to Maidencombe is the continual pressure to change farming practices or even to develop the farmland, which, if allowed could dilute attempts to nurture a dynamic and successful 'Geopark' and set in motion the further urbanization of Torbay to the detriment of tourist numbers to the area.

GEOPARK:
The Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust has emphasised the importance of Maidencombe as a vital component of the Bay's global Geopark status to attract visitors and residents alike to the area. To this end, a proposed cycleway would facilitate pollution-free access.

Old Maidencombe



The Maidencombe medieval field systems

Cirl Bunting

Lesser Horseshoe Bat

Maidencombe's particular areas for protection

Maidencombe has a particularly flower rich bio-diversity which depends on the survival of its extensive farmland environment and the traditional practices employed in its permanent pasture management and upkeep of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, cider orchard and lower-rich meadows.

Fragile Nature:
A Senior Archaeology and Historic Environment Officer for Torbay Council, has voiced concerns over the possibility of destroying the fine balance that exists in the combe with any further development.

The presence within the boundaries of Maidencombe of extremely rare UK species, such as the Cirl Bunting and a roosting/breading colony of Lesser and Greater Horseshoe Bats demonstrates the current, albeit delicate, well-being of the environment.

The combe and the village itself present a very difficult scenario. Any future development would need massive new infrastructure improvements (e.g. mains sewage and substantial rainwater attenuation); this may be achievable perhaps, but at the brutal cost of destroying the fragile balance of the comb

The area surrounding the Village Envelope of Maidencombe, is largely identified in the Torbay Local Plan as Countryside Area (Local Plan Policy C1) and/or Undeveloped Coast (Local Plan Policy C2). The landscape is sensitive to developmental change and proposals for new developments must be managed in accordance with these policies with particular reference to development only being acceptable where it does not harm (either on its own or in combination with other development) the special landscape character in this area, particularly with reference to integrity of landscape character, sense of remoteness of the Combe/village and scenic beauty.

The Landscape Character Assessment of Torbay (2010) comments on the unique quality of the landscape in this area and makes the following analysis regarding the capacity to accommodate change within character type 8 – Coastal Slopes and Combes (8a and 8b):

8a - "The area forms an integral part of the coastal landscape and new built development or other significant changes are likely to have substantial adverse effects"

8b - "The land forms an important setting for the village and Conservation Area and any changes should only be limited in nature, and strictly controlled to ensure that the secluded character of the area and setting of the village is not harmed. Infilling should be resisted."

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Protect green open spaces and coastline

- There is a need to increase the maintenance of all areas, pathways, for public use and safety ensuring they are fit for purpose.
- Refurbish Great Rock area to bring it back into public use

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Secure a long term commitment from the Local Authorities to preserve existing protection plans (including covenants) and ensure SSSIs are respected and to

- Designate Maidencombe Community Orchard as a Local Green Space
- Protect and identify public rights of way throughout Maidencombe and increase maintenance for public use and safety.
- Protect and preserve the coastal paths, and identify and record public rights of way; green lanes, alleyways and established paths in and around the area and increase maintenance for public use and safety.
- Ensure full protection for endangered species of bats and birds

COMMUNITY USAGE

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Public transport

- Retain key bus routes serving the area to ensure access to and from the main retail areas of the Ward, Town, Harbour, Hospital and outlying districts.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATION
Improvement to local amenities

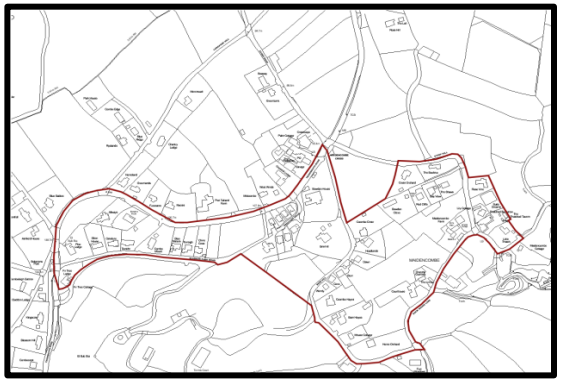
- There must be an on-going commitment to improvement in the following local amenities – possibly through partnership working with developers –
  - Play and Youth facilities
  - Leisure and facilities/opportunities
  - Beaches,
  - Planting,
  - Signage,
  - Litter and Cleanliness

HOUSING

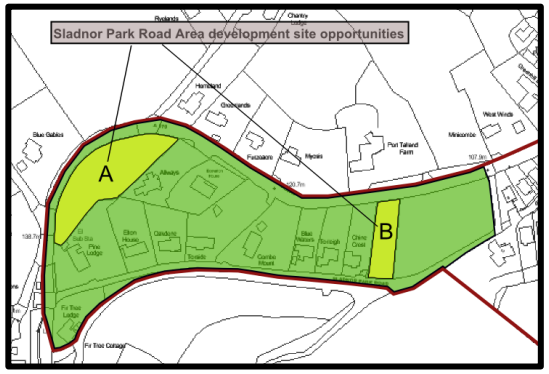
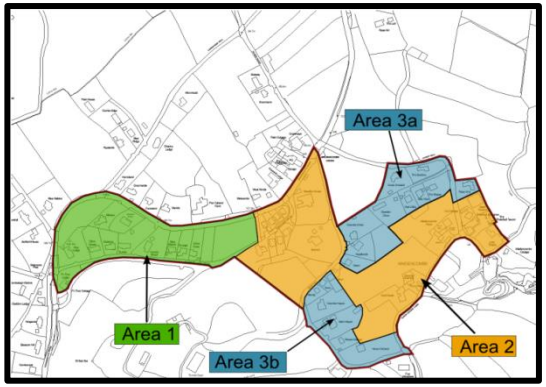
COMMUNITY ASPIRATION Developments
VILLAGE ENVELOPE
AREA 1
Within Area 1, opportunities have been identified for a single dwelling on each of sites A and B
AREA 3A AND 3B
Within these two areas, development proposals should be managed in accordance the development design criteria outline in Policy H19
AREA 2 - CONSERVATION AREA
Area 2 reflects the part of the Maidencombe Conservation Area which overlaps with the Village Envelope. This area has particularly special historic significance and development. Any development proposal must positively sustain and enhance the special qualities of this area. Because of the special historic and landscape significance proposals should be managed in accordance with *Policy SS10 Conservation and the historic environment*, contained in the Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030.
SLADNOR PARK
Sladnor Park (defined by the blue boundary line on the aerial photograph) has an extremely high environmental sensitivity and any major redevelopment of the site would have a serious adverse impact on key protected species (an existing Greater Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe bat nesting and roosting cave, badgers, deer and Cirl Buntings). The topography of wooded areas currently constrains rain water runoff and helps prevent soil erosion, coastal erosion and local flood issues. While it is acknowledged that there are existing structures (as outlined in red) on part of the site the scope of any new development must be within the policy umbrella for the whole of the Maidencombe area and constrained to that part of the site that would have least impact visually and environmentally. The typical design of properties in the Maidencombe area comprises one or two storey detached houses of individual and historic designs.

Aerial View of Maidencombe and Sladnor Park

The defined Village Envelope



Development sites within Area 1 of the Village Envelope



Development Areas within the Village Envelope