

3 Portrait of the Parish

3.1 Location and natural landscape

Chelveston-cum-Caldecott is located on the south eastern border of the East Northamptonshire District and hence borders Bedford Borough, a unitary authority once part of Bedfordshire. This position on the south eastern border of Northamptonshire has had implications for planning matters relating to the old Chelveston Airfield which straddles both counties. The future of the Airfield is a key issue considered in this plan.

The Parish is a semi-rural setting with three discrete settlements, each with distinct characters:

- Chelveston (altitude 61m) has 154 properties positioned at the low point of the surrounding landscape;
- Caldecott (altitude 71m) has 21 properties 0.5km from Chelveston;
- Chelston Rise (altitude 88m) has 50 properties 1.0km from Caldecott.

The highest point in the Parish is the plateau on which the old airfield RAF Chelveston was situated at an altitude of 90m. This area is now partially occupied by a series of renewable energy installations.

Outside the three settlements and farm yards the majority of the Parish is arable or grazing land with a few small areas of private woodland. At the southern end of the Parish there is a small industrial estate. A summary of land usage is given in figure 3.1

3.2 Regional context

Northamptonshire has excellent rail and road connections and this has driven commercial development over the last 20 years. Historically seen as the county of “Spires and Squires”, Northamptonshire is now more noted for its role as a distribution hub. Warehousing and distribution centres have been built in clusters along the main roads which run through the county – the M1, A5, A14, A6, A45, A43, A508. There are two major road/rail heads at Daventry and Corby to complete the mix.

The West Coast Line (Northampton branch) and the Midland Main Line run through the county with half hourly train services of 50-55 minutes to London and Birmingham. To the east, Cambridge and Peterborough are easily reached with the A1/M11 and the East Coast Line providing ready access the North East and South East. Four regional airports can be reached within 70 minutes allowing business trips to most parts of Europe to be completed in a day.

The excellent transport links in Northamptonshire have opened up the county as a viable, low-cost base for commuters. The cities of London, Birmingham, Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Coventry, Peterborough and Leicester are all within an hour’s train or car journey. Wellingborough was seen as one of the first London overspill towns but in the 1990s the Regional Spatial Strategy created the Northamptonshire “arc” with Northampton, Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby all seen as “growth” towns. Each of these towns has seen significant development of housing and service infrastructure in the last 20 years. This has offset some of the employment losses from the traditional industries of agriculture, light manufacturing and shoe making.

The East Northamptonshire towns of Rushden, Higham Ferrers, Raunds, Irthlingborough and Thrapston have also all increased in population by 15-30% as commuting and the local employment opportunities in the distribution and service sector created a demand for housing. Stanwick has also expanded with the addition of the Mallows Grange estate so that it is now one of the largest villages in East Northamptonshire.

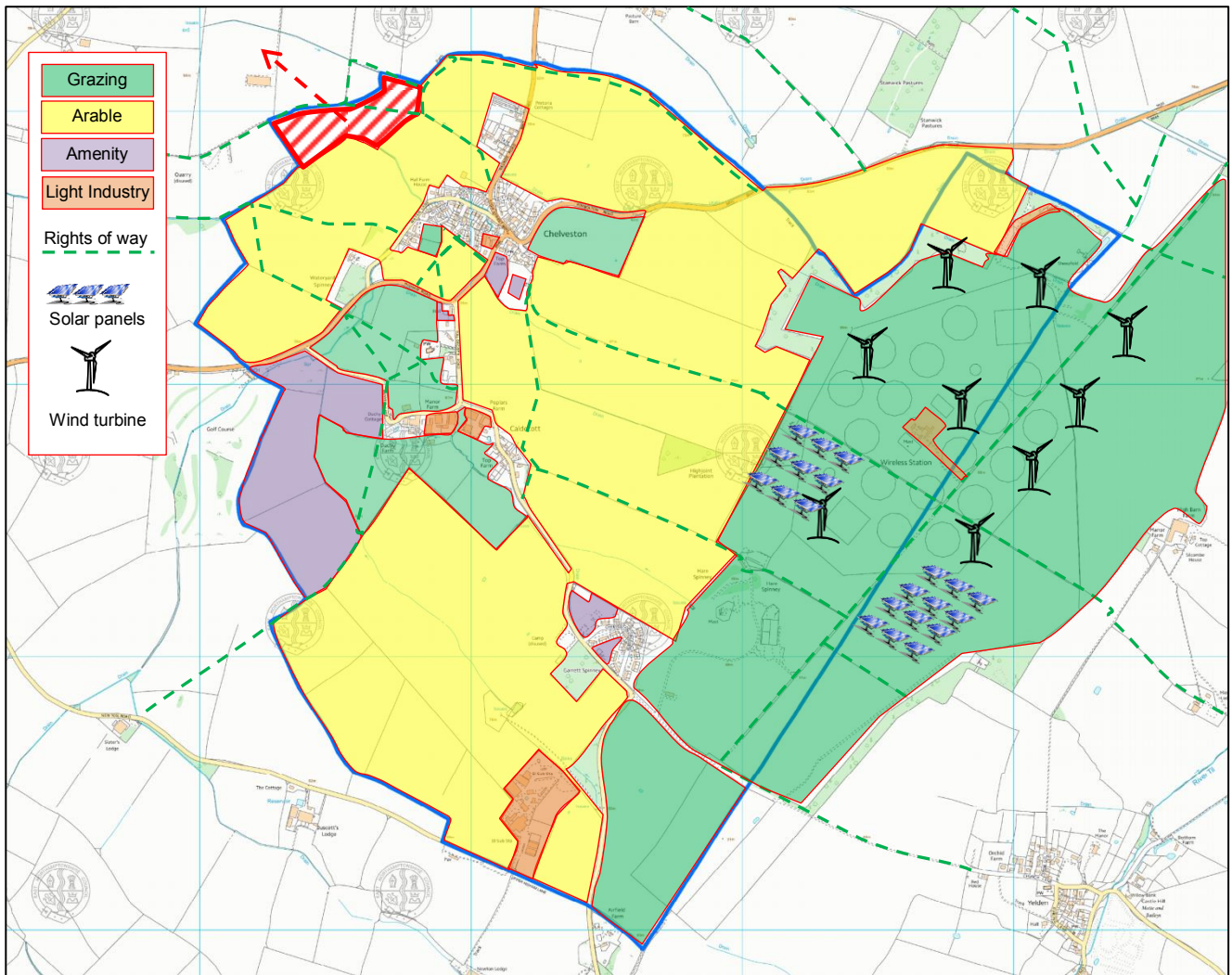


Figure 3.1: Land usage summary

3.3 Development the Parish 1975-1985

Rapid expansion

In the decade from the mid 1970's to the mid 1980's the Parish accommodated significant growth with 41 properties being built in Water Lane, Duchy Close and Britten Close. This represented a 35% increase in population over the period, a major perturbation to the Parish. The impact was particularly noticeable in Chelveston which accommodated most of the growth and changed most in character. The addition of Duchy Close and Britten Close significantly changed the settlement boundaries and the shape of village. By contrast, only four in-fill properties were added in Caldecott over this period and that settlement was able to retain more of its traditional character.

The new housing in Chelveston occupied the site of two farms, with a resulting loss of tied housing and local employment. A significant proportion of the new residents worked outside the local area. This created areas of Chelveston which were essentially "dormitories", with residents working, shopping and sourcing entertainment elsewhere. All school children were bussed out of the Village and the Petrol Station, Post Office and General Store only survived because of through traffic generated by the A45 which used to run through Chelveston. When this road was downgraded to the B645, none of these amenities were viable and all closed permanently by the end of the 1980s.

Whilst Caldecott remained a close knit community, Chelveston was more fragmented with a clear distinction between the older and newer parts of the settlement and with the busy Raunds Road creating a divide between the newer houses of east and west Chelveston. To some extent this divide remains today.

Although situated within the Parish, the 50 houses occupied by the US Air Force were not perceived as part of the community at that time, although they were recorded as part of the 2001 census. The site had its own community centre until 1997 and all children were bussed daily to school on one of the American bases in Cambridgeshire. As a result there was limited integration between American families and the rest of the Parish.

3.4 Development of the Parish 1989-2014

Limited in-fill

It took nearly 5 years for the next wave of children to arrive in the early-mid 1990s. Nearly 25 children of similar ages created a different dynamic with a thriving mums/tots group and much more integration between families in Caldecott and Chelveston. This wave of children is now maturing and it is noticeable again that young families are now very much in the minority in Chelveston and Caldecott.

The Parish has been designated as a restricted in-fill Village for the last 25 years with no large scale developments being permitted as part of the local plan (1996). Nevertheless 24 new properties were built in Chelveston during this period (18% growth), all as in-fill with the exception of Disbrowe Court. The 6 houses of Disbrowe Court were developed in 1997 with community and District Council support to replace a set of barns that had recently burned down.

There was no development in Caldecott during this 25-year period until the three barn conversions at Duchy Farm were started in 2014.

The re-opening of Chelston Rise

“Chelveston Base Crescent” was occupied by US Air Force families until security concerns after the 9/11 events of 2001 effectively closed the base housing for nearly a decade. The settlement of 50 high quality houses is nearly 1.0km from Caldecott.

The site was purchased by William Pears Group in 2009 and re-opened in 2010. It was initially the intention that the houses would all be let on short term tenancies. However, there was significant interest from couples and families who wished to purchase the properties. To date approximately half of the properties have been purchased on a freehold basis.

These houses were competitively priced in the local market and were recently refurbished to a very high standard. As a result they have been attractive to young families and there are now more children in this settlement than in the rest of the Parish combined. There is still relatively little integration of these children with the rest of the Parish, largely because of the distance from Chelveston and Caldecott and the absence of a safe walking route. A car is required for all journeys to the rest of the Parish.

For adult residents from Chelston Rise integration is improving through shared use of the rights of way on the airfield, church attendance, use of the village hall, allotments and the pub. This level of integration is encouraging after such a short space of time, especially given the short term nature of the tenancies which makes it less attractive for residents to invest time in their community. The Parish Council is very keen to encourage candidates from Chelston Rise to stand at the forthcoming elections to ensure full civic representation for the settlement.

3.5 Parish population

The census data from 2011 and 2001 show a clear trend which was certainly echoed in the 2010 Parish Appraisal [ref xx]. - the population profile is ageing quickly. Even with the change in occupancy of Chelston Rise, the two census periods can be almost directly compared. Chelston Rise was nearly fully occupied during the census of 2001 with most of the 50 houses then occupied by the families of service personnel. There were similar occupancy levels for Chelston Rise during the 2011 census.

The numbers of young people aged 18 and below has declined by 30% in 10 years and the numbers of adults between the ages of 19-34 declined by 38%. By contrast the population aged 35-49 increased by 17% and the population aged 50-65 aged increased by 9%. The population aged 65 and above increased by a significant 35%.

Table 3.1: 2011 Census ¹ – population 566											
Age range	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
Count	31	24	38	26	24	31	26	40	58	49	
Summary	119				81			147			
Age range	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-100	
Count	48	35	47	36	21	18	8	5	0	1	
Summary	130				75			14			

Table 3.2: 2001 Census ² – population 612											
Age range	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	
Count	56	57	37	21	25	49	56	45	40	41	
Summary	171				130			126			
Age range	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90-94	95-100	
Count	52	40	27	22	11	14	10	6	3	0	
Summary	119				47			19			

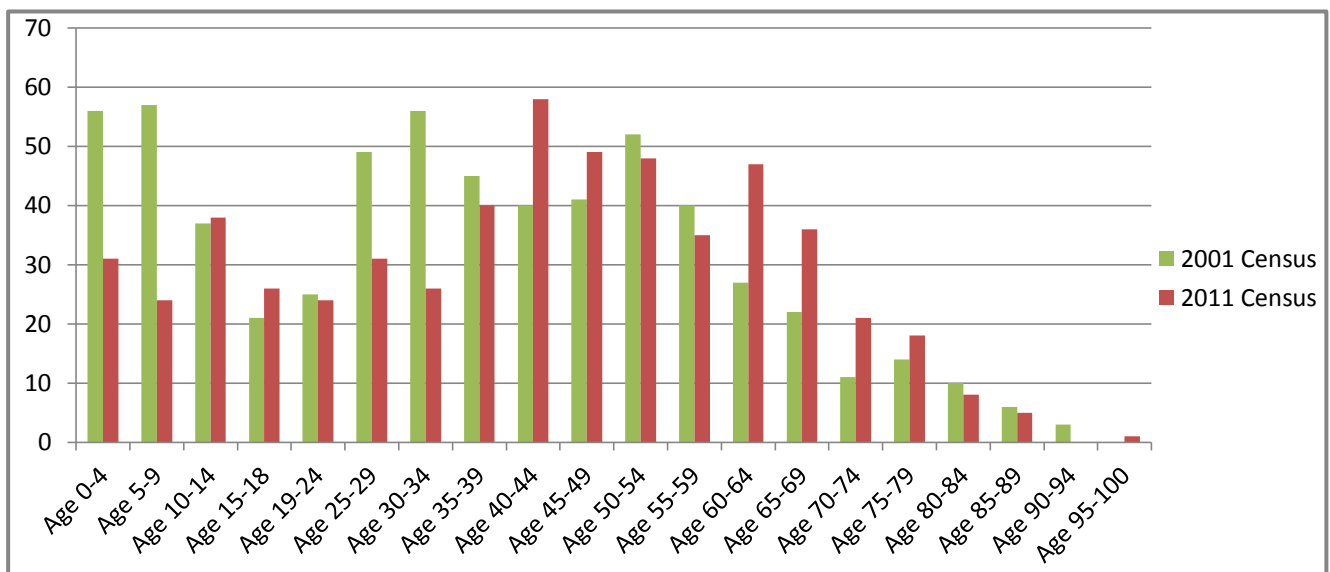


Figure 3.2: Resident Age Profile 2001-2011 Census Data

¹ Table 2011:QS103EW

² Table 2001:UV04

3.6 Household size

The 2011 & 2001 censuses provided the following data for household size in the Parish.

Table 3.3: Household size, 2001-2011 census							
Household Size	1 person	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 persons
2011 census ³	39	109	32	33	6	6	1
2001 census ⁴	35	90	34	52	13	0	0

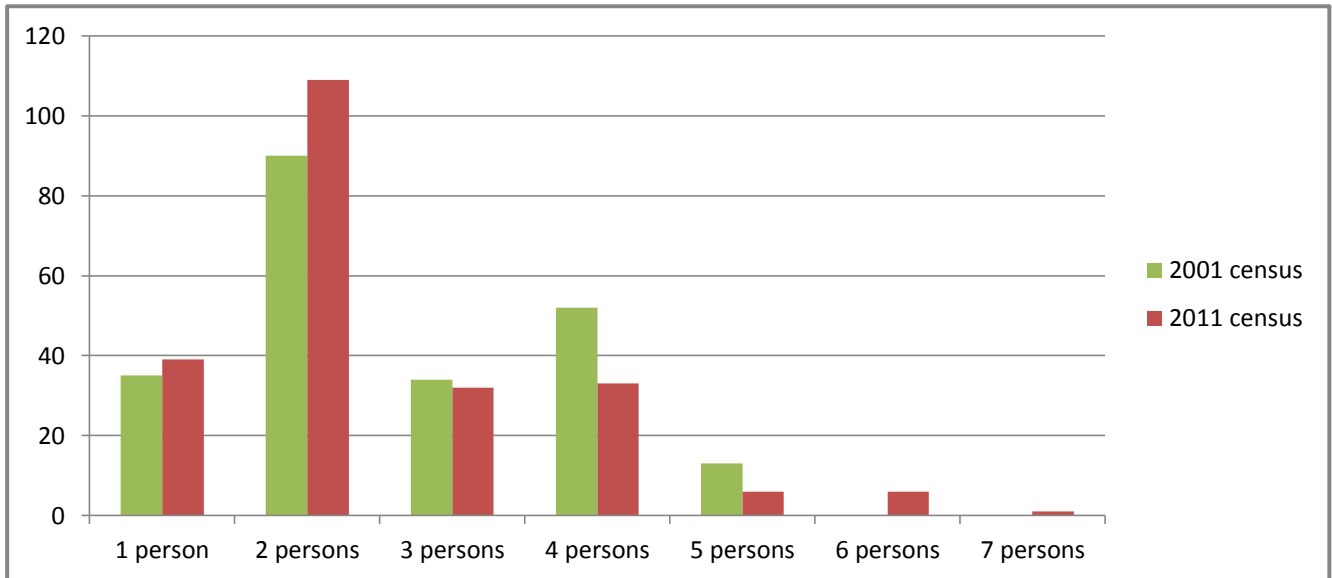


Figure 3.3: Household occupancy 2001-2011 census data

The Parish has a significantly higher proportion of 2 person households (48%) than at a district, regional or national level. This proportion has increased significantly since 2001. Together with the population data, this supports the anecdotal evidence from the 2010 Parish Appraisal – the children of the 1980s and 1990s have left home and not returned. Meanwhile, their parents have not moved or downsized and very few families have been able to move into the village to maintain a stable population.

The re-occupation of Chelston Rise has brought in many new families, but only one family has moved into Caldecott in 10 years and only 11 families with new babies or young children have moved into Chelveston over this same period.

The evidence from the last Parish appraisal in 2010 was that the majority of households (70%) had lived in the Parish for more than 6 years and most of the adults in these households had no intention of leaving. This proportion will certainly have changed with the re-occupation of Chelston Rise but there is no evidence that established residents of Chelveston and Caldecott are planning to move. It is therefore likely that the age and residency profile will continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

The number of single person households in the Parish (17%) is well below the district, regional and national averages (26-30%). This reflects the fact that houses in the Parish are larger and more expensive than average for the district and therefore less likely to be occupied by young, single people.

³ Table 2011:QS406EW

⁴ Table 2001:UV51

It also reflects the fact that the village housing stock and village amenities are not well suited to single very elderly residents unless they are healthy and independently mobile. There are only 17 bungalows, minimal public transport and no local amenities or support services.

Data from the 2011 census⁵ shows that the population considers that it has slightly better health than the national average but not significantly so. This coupled with the increasing age profile of residents and average life expectancy suggests that the next 20 years will sadly see an increase in the proportion of older single person households. Many of these residents might wish to remain in their original family homes but others might prefer to down size whilst still remaining in the Village.

3.7 Housing stock by house type

Until the re-opening of Chelston Rise, the Parish was dominated by detached housing. Most of the properties built in the Parish from 1970 onwards have been 3, 4 or 5 bed roomed detached properties.

The housing boom of the late 1980s essentially priced out new families. House prices in Duchy Close, previously an entry point for young families, trebled in 5 years. These houses were then bought by professional commuting couples from outside the area and the residents of the larger houses opted to stay in the village even after their children had left. There was very little housing turn over and very few families moved into the village. The dormitory village returned with few young children and some teenagers who left the village at every opportunity.

	Detached House	Semi-detached House	Terraced House	Detached Bungalow	Semi-detached Bungalow	Maisonette or Flats	Total Properties
Totals by type	94	38	69	11	6	6	225
Caldecott	14	7					21
Bidwell Lane	2	2					4
Caldecott Road	12	5					17
Chelston Rise		4	45	1			50
The Crescent		4	45	1			50
Chelveston	80	25	27	10	6	6	154
Britten Close	8						8
Disbrowe Court	6						6
Duchy Close	25	2		1			28
Foot Lane	2			3			5
High Street	5		3				8
Higham Road	2						2
Hillside	1	2	3		6	4	16
Kimbolton Road	4			2			6
Pokas Cottages		2	3				5
Raunds Road	8	2	4	4			18
Sawyers Crescent		10					10
St Georges Row	1		4				5
The Green	4	4	7				15
Water Lane	14	3	3			2	22

⁵ Table 2011 QS302EW

3.8 Estimates of the existing housing stock by bedrooms

Household occupancy levels are much lower in the Parish as compared to local, regional and national averages. Data from the 2011 census⁶ shows that 77% of residents in the Parish have at least one bedroom available per person in the household – 10% above the national average.

Table 3.5: Housing stock by numbers of bedrooms							
Bedrooms (NDP survey)	5+	5	4	3	2	1	Total Properties
Totals	5	17	52	96	52	3	225
Caldecott	1	6	5	6	3		21
Bidwell Lane	1	1		2			4
Caldecott Road		5	5	4	3		17
Chelston Rise		1	4	24	21		50
The Crescent		1	4	24	21		50
Chelveston	4	10	43	66	28	3	154
Britten Close			8				8
Disbrowe Court	1		5				6
Duchy Close	1	2	3	22			28
Foot Lane				4	1		5
High Street			3	1	4		8
Higham Road		1		1			2
Hillside		1		5	10		16
Kimbolton Road			3	3			6
Pokas Cottages					4	1	5
Raunds Road	1	1	8	4	4		18
Sawyers Crescent			1	9			10
St Georges Row			2	3			5
The Green		2	3	6	4		15
Water Lane	1	3	7	8	1	2	22

Based on our detailed survey (rather than the census aggregate) 33% of properties have 4 or more bedrooms. The district average is 27% and the national average 19%. 10% of properties have 5 or more bedrooms, nearly double the district and national averages.

At the other end of the scale, only 24% of properties in the Parish have 1-2 bedrooms, well below the proportions at a district (29%) and national (40%) level. Excluding the recently re-occupied Chelston Rise properties, this figure falls to 19% for Chelveston and Caldecott. Many of the two bedroomed properties in Chelveston and Caldecott are situated in difficult locations for access and parking. Nevertheless, they do sell or rent at a premium as compared to neighbouring towns as there is a strong demand.

3.9 Community and leisure facilities

3.9.1 The Star and Garter Public House

A pub is often the centre of village life and for many residents this is true of the Star & Garter. It has been serving the community for the last 300 years in a building that dates partly from 1650. Currently it

⁶ Table 2011:QS413EW

is owned by the Charles Wells Brewery, with Andrea Claydon its tenant since 2008. It is now the only public house in the village, but it used to have competition from the the Chelveston Working Mens Club and an off-licence. Under its current tenant, the pub has moved to all day opening and has a thriving restaurant business which is well used by residents and also attracts customers from around the District.

The amenity field behind the pub is used to host community and charity events and the Parish Council nominated this site under the *Community Right to Bid* scheme in 2013.

3.9.2 The Village Hall

Chelveston Village Hall has occupied the old school building since 1972. The building is owned by one of the old village charities, The Educational Foundation of Abigail Bailey and Ann Levett and is run by a body of Trustees and a Management Committee drawn from residents in the Village. An off road car park was added in 2013 and the building was refurbished in 2014 with the addition of a new toilet and kitchen block to replace the “temporary” facilities installed in 1976.

Although the building is situated between the Chelveston and Caldecott settlements, it is well used as a venue for clubs and parties. It is also used as a civic venue for all Parish Council meetings and Annual Parish Assemblies. Residents of the Parish have priority booking rights and preferential hire rates to encourage local usage. Nevertheless the Hall is a very popular children’s party venue for families from Raunds, Higham Ferrers and Rushden.

The running costs of the Village Hall are largely self-financing but the maintenance of the fabric of the building is underwritten by the Trustees of the charity. The extension and car park were financed by the Trustees with matched grant funding from BIFFA, East Northamptonshire Council and the Garfield Weston Foundation. These grants recognised the role of the Village Hall as the only public venue available in the Parish, and the need for the facilities to be upgraded to meet the changing demographic in the Parish.

3.9.3 The Parish Church of St John the Baptist

The Church largely dates back to 13th century (1220—1250), with additions in the 14th & 15th centuries (the porch has a datestone of 1685). Restored and extended in 1849, the Church is a grade II* listed building. Electricity arrived during 1951-2 and in 2004 a water supply was laid in to provide a servery area for functions. A toilet and sewage treatment plant was also installed at that time.

The Parish shares its priest with the Parish of St Mary the Virgin in Higham Ferrers, further underpinning the civic links with the nearby town. Under its constitution, the incumbent priest of St John the Baptist is always the chair of trustees for the Educational Foundation of Abigail Bailey and Ann Levett (the village charity that owns the Village Hall).

The congregation averages **XX** a week with a Parochial Church Council electoral roll of **XX**. Many of the congregation are drawn from outside the Parish. Although regular attendance by residents is low, Parish Appraisals have consistently shown that residents value the existence of the Church and the church yard. Events held in the Church are generally well attended and there has been a resurgence in interest in the church yard. The annual “Snow Drop” weekend attracts hundreds of visitors from within the Parish and much further afield. A majority of respondents in the neighbourhood development survey supported the need for an extension to the church yard and the role of the Parish Council in providing this. A small charity “The Friends of St John the Baptist” has been formed to look after the fabric of the church and the church yard. Some of the Trustees are non-church going residents, interested simply in maintaining this valuable amenity for the village.

3.9.4 Allotments

At the Annual Parish meeting in May 2008, a number of residents expressed interest in the Parish Council using its powers under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 to provide allotments for the use of the Parish. The last known allotments in the village, along the Raunds Rd, closed in 1959.

A survey of possible sites within the Parish, near to the main residential areas, was conducted in 2008 and, after some initial set-backs, a site was chosen and lease terms agreed with the landowner in 2009. The allotment set-up costs were covered by external grants and they are now entirely self-financing with no net impact on the Parish Council finances.

The site is well placed in Parish, next to the pub amenity field and near the public rights of way used regularly by walkers and dog owners. There is now regular interaction between allotment holders and other residents who are out taking exercise. The pub has also become the regular meeting point for allotment holders. All meetings of the Allotment Association are held in the pub and the annual signing of leases is also held there.

3.9.5 Rights of way network

Figure 3.1 shows the extensive rights of way network which crosses the Parish. This network was significantly enhanced in 2006 with the re-opening of historical rights of way which crossed, or connected with, the old airfield. Before the airfield was sold to its current owners, the Parish Council had worked with neighbouring councils, the ramblers association, local farmers and the MOD to re-instate the paths which had been closed when the airfield was acquired in the 1930s for war time activities. As a result we now have an excellent amenity which allows walkers to connect with many of the neighbouring towns and villages without using much of the highway.

3.9.6 Children's playground

With the re-opening of Chelston Rise, residents had access to a children's playground for the first time in living memory. Although primarily for use by Chelston Rise residents, it is available for use by any resident in the Parish. In practice the need to use a car to reach the site with young children has limited its use by residents from Chelveston and Caldecott.

Surrounding the play area is an open amenity space used for Chelston Rise community events as well as children playing ball games. In 2013, this area was listed by ENC, following successful nomination by the Parish Council, under the *Community Right to Bid* scheme as it was considered to be a key Parish amenity.

3.9.7 Benches, verge maintenance, dog bins and street lighting

The Parish Council is the street lighting authority and owns the network of 58 lamps across the Parish. This now includes the footway lighting on the unadopted private road within the Chelston Rise estate. As part of efforts to integrate Chelston Rise, the Parish Council decide that its residents (all of whom pay a contribution to the Parish Precept) should have the same level of lighting service as the rest of the Parish. There is approximately one lamp for every 4 houses in the Parish costing an average of £10 per household per annum to run and maintain.

The Parish Council is responsible for verge maintenance in the residential areas of Chelveston and Caldecott paying for 8 monthly cuts at a cost of around £1,700 per annum, again around £10 per household in Chelveston and Caldecott per annum. The Chelston Rise estate has a large grassed areas rather than roadside verges. As a private estate its maintenance is the responsibility of a management company to which residents pay an annual management fee in addition to their Parish Precept.

With dog walking being such an important past time in the Parish, the Council has provide a network of dog refuse bins which are emptied weekly with the litter bins by the District Council. There are also 5 public benches around the Parish at key resting points. These benches were all funded by grants or donations and are now maintained by the Parish Council.

3.9.8 War Memorials

There are three memorials in the Parish maintained as community commemorative amenities by the Parish Council:

- The Cross of Sorrow erected in 1920 is located in the church yard and is the venue for the annual act of remembrance for those residents lost in World Wars I and II.
- Attached to the church tower is a large plaque installed in 1980 to commemorate the 769 men lost flying from RAF Chelveston during World War II as part of the US Air Force 305th Bombardment Group. The US Air Force lays a wreath each year at this memorial as part of the annual act of remembrance.
- A second memorial to the 305th Bombardment group is located in the centre of Chelveston. This was built by public subscription in 2006/2007 and unveiled in May 2007 at a major civic event as a new centre piece for the village. The memorial incorporates a mast recovered from the last World War II hanger demolished on the airfield by the MOD before the airfield was sold. This memorial continues the long association between the Parish and the US Air Force and continues to draw many visitors from home and abroad.

3.9.9 Rushden Golf Club

The club house for the golf club is situated on the B645 on the Parish border with Higham Ferrers. The land is leased from the Duchy of Lancaster. When Duchy Farm was closed in 2012, the Duchy reallocated some of the land released in the Parish as an extension to the course.

3.10 Business and employment

3.10.1 JST Lift Trucks

Based on Higham Road opposite the American Memorial, JST Forklift Trucks is a thriving business engaged in the maintenance and supply of fork trucks. The site was first used as a garage and service station in 1959 but the current business has been on the site since 1978. The business employs a number of skilled staff, all currently living outside the village. The location is not ideal, particularly for the articulated lorries which deliver to, or are based at, the site. The owners of the site have expressed a wish to move from the location to a more suitable site at the junction of the B645 and A6 in Higham Ferrers.

3.10.2 Chelveston Airfield

The old Chelveston Airfield is now the site of a renewable energy installation with 9 wind turbines (125m high) and some 40,000 solar panels. This site also has planning permission for an anaerobic digester plant for the processing of food waste and for three bio-diesel generators, housed in buildings in the centre of the site. The District's waste collection service also currently operates from these buildings. Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service has a specialised training facility hidden within one of the copses on the airfield. They have erected some ISO containers on an area of hard standing to be used as fire structures and have refurbished some of the war time Nissen huts as storage areas.

The airfield site is crossed by miles of public rights of way and the conversion to a renewable energy installation was the subject of significant local opposition because of the perceived loss of amenity and the visual impact of the turbines on the plateau which now dominate the open sky line.

3.10.3 Manor Farm and Poplar Farm Caldecott

There are now two working farms in the Parish, both based in Caldecott, who between them own and farm the majority of the Parish, either as arable or grazing land. Two other farms ceased local operations in 2013, one selling their land to farmers from neighbouring parishes and the other moving into Stanwick Parish from where they continue to farm in Chelveston-cum-Caldecott on a tenancy basis.

A close working relationship with our farmers is an important part of life in the Parish. The Parish has miles of public rights of way, all crossing farm land. These are a vital amenity for residents and their effective maintenance by the farmers is essential. In return residents keep a watch over the land they walk, reporting incidents and problems (broken fences, escaped live stock, blocked culverts) to the farmers concerned.

3.10.4 Carr's Haulage Yard Caldecott

Based in the centre of Caldecott this site (Link to [Map](#)) was historically the yard of Poplar Farm before becoming the operating base for Carrs Bros Haulage business. Although still used as a maintenance yard for this business, the majority of the haulage operation has now moved to the site on Upper Higham Lane (Link to [Map](#)). The haulage yard is now the base for maintenance and for a smaller distribution business. In addition the offices are now leased out to small businesses.

3.10.5 Manor Farm Workshops

Once part of the farm yard for Manor Farm, these workshops provide light industrial/fabrication facilities. In addition there are agricultural storage facilities available to rent.

3.10.6 Manor Farm Livery

This new venture was established with the assistance of a LEADER rural development grant to promote rural diversification. It provides high quality stabling and livery services and there are private facilities available for the exercise of horses both within the yard and on a series of dedicate private tracks around the farm's land.

3.10.7 Star and Garter Public House and Restaurant

As well as being a valuable village amenity, the Star and Garter provides accessible employment opportunities for local young people, initially waiting at tables and working in the kitchen and then for some, serving behind the bar.

3.10.8 Bed and Breakfast Accommodation

There are two Bed and Breakfast businesses based in the village with a total of 5 available bedrooms. They are well used by transient and regular clients working in nearby towns. Many of these clients also make use of the village pub.

3.11 Traffic and transport

Although only 3km distant from Higham Ferrers and Raunds, the Parish is to an extent isolated by the fact that there are no footways or cycle ways to either town and no regular public transport. Chelston Rise is further isolated by the fact that there is no footway connecting it to Caldecott. Residents living in the Parish are wholly dependent on private transport with the result that car ownership exceeds one car per adult on average. This has important planning and amenity implications.

Further discussions needed