

Quotes for Groundworks in Wickhambrook 2023 - 24

The Parish Council's Financial Regulations (5. Procurement – excerpt attached as **Appendix A**) require that, (5.6) for every contract entered into of less than £20,000 incl. VAT (and over £3000) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply).

This applies to the council's contract for groundworks – the grass cutting and general maintenance of the village greens, cemetery, recreation ground and six acres.

A revised specification for the grounds contract was agreed by the parish council at its September meeting (Min.24.09.15), with provision for:

- Reduction of cuts on Tennis Court Banks to make provision for the protection of bee orchids in the banks (reduction to 8 cuts per year)
- Reducing cuts of Inner and Outer Banks to once a year – developing these as wildlife areas
- Dedicating specific areas of greens, churchyard and cemetery to wildlife, with appropriate signage, and reducing cut in these areas to once per year following seed setting (there would be an initial cost in durable notices).
- Increase cuts at MSC to 18 per year (consistent with Recreation Ground, Six Acres and other areas).
- Reduce cuts of footpaths to 4 per year
- Reduce brush cut of concrete pad at Six Acres to 1 per year.

The agreed specification is attached as **Appendix B**, and plans as **Appendix C**.

Quotes based on this more detailed specification were sought (from 15 suppliers – **Appendix D**) in the autumn of 2024, of which two advised that they would not be quoting, and three quotes have been received to date, from:

Company	Notes	Location	Price Excl. VAT
Excite Solutions Ltd	Did not quote per specification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not split down to each item No referees were provided	Hoxne, Eye 57 miles each way	£15,380.00
RH Landscapes & Maintenance (previous contractor 2020-2023)	Quote was per specification	Mildenhall 15.7 miles each way	£15,198.00
Top Gardens Current contractor	Did not quote per specification (costs not broken down) Hedge cutting included in price for each specified area Tree pruning included in price Fortnightly March – October Did not include Footpaths	Thetford 23 miles each way	£13,260.00

These have been circulated to councillors under separate cover as a restricted **Appendix E**. All prices quoted are plus VAT @20%.

RH Landscapes & Maintenance Ltd has provided a quote which includes the entirety of the specification and has previously supplied references from other parishes. There is no late payment clause in the current contract or terms and conditions.

Excite Solutions is based in Hoxne (36.7 miles), and Top Gardens Services is based in Thetford (25 miles). RH Landscapes and Maintenance is based in Mildenhall (15.7 miles each way) and has contracts with neighbouring parishes, reducing impacts on the environment through emissions.

A total of £15,500 plus VAT has been budgeted for in the next financial year - an increase over the current financial year of 24%.

Councillors are not obliged to choose the cheapest quote, but (in accordance with Financial Regulations) should satisfy themselves that the choice made represents value for money to the parish. Within this, officer time spent on managing the contract may be considered relevant.

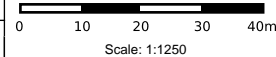
Action:

Identify one supplier to undertake the ground works required for Wickhambrook during the financial year 2025/26 and instruct the Clerk & RFO to issue the necessary purchase orders and contracts.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases, should ensure that the legal power being used is reported to the meeting at which the order is authorised and also recorded in the minutes.
- 5.3. Every contract shall comply with these the council's Standing Orders and these Financial Regulations and no exceptions shall be made, except in an emergency.
- 5.4. **For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.**
- 5.5. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 6.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed [£20,000] including VAT, the Clerk shall {seek formal tenders from at least [three] suppliers agreed by [the council]} 2. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with Appendix 1.
- 5.7. **For contracts estimated to be over £30,000 including VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the Legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than [£3,000] excluding VAT the Clerk [or RFO] shall seek at least [3] fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. Where the value is between [£500] and [£3,000] excluding VAT, the Clerk [or RFO] shall try to obtain 3 estimates {which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.}
- 5.10. For smaller purchases, [the clerk] shall seek to achieve value for money.
- 5.11. **Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.**
- 5.12. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.13. When applications are made to waive this financial regulation to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.14. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.15. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by:
 - [the Clerk], under delegated authority, for any items below [£500] excluding VAT.
 - the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council {or Chair of the appropriate committee}, for any items below [£1,000] excluding VAT.
 - a duly delegated committee of the council for all items of expenditure within their delegated budgets for items under [£5,000] excluding VAT
 - .}
 - the council for all items over [£5,000];
 - the council for all items over [£5,000];
 Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.
- 5.16. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order } or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.17. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the budget for that type of expenditure other than by resolution of the council {or a duly delegated committee acting within its Terms of Reference} except in an emergency.
- 5.18. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to [£1,000] excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to [the council] as soon as practicable thereafter. 5.19. No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless [the council] is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.20. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services {above [£250] excluding VAT} unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.21. Any ordering system can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by [the RFO].

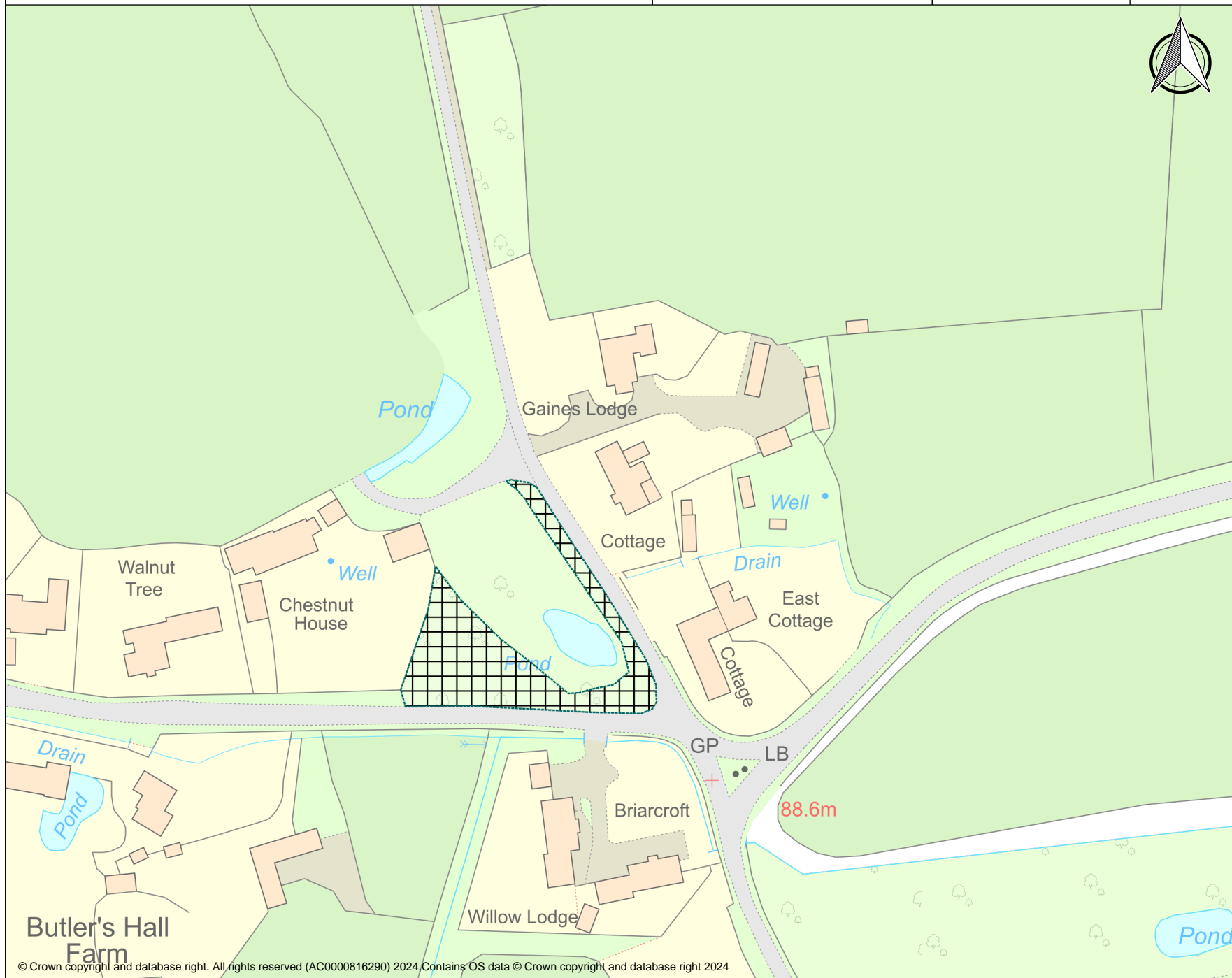
Map Item	Description	No. Cuts	Collect Arisings	Leaf Clearing	Notes	Outdoor Spaces
Greens						
1	Attleton Green	18	No		leave larger triangle at rear for wildflower colonisation - cut toward edges	
WA6	Attleton Green	1	No		Wildlife area	
2	Coltsfoot Green	18	No		leave culvert banks and area behind pond and as a wildlife area (only cut once)	
WA5	Coltsfoot Green	1	No		Wildlife Area - leave culvert banks and area behind pond and as a wildlife area (only cut once)	
3	Meeting Green Verge & Triangle	18	No		small triangle must be trimmed to ensure visibility	
4	Nunnery Green Verges	18			Cut band around edge of green for visibility - leave centre as wildlife area to cut once seed has set	
WA2	Nunnery Green Verges	1			Wildlife area - leave middle as wildlife area - ground rough	
Cemetery & Churchyard						
5	All Saints Churchyard	18	No		Only in Churchyard, not verges or car park	
6a	Old Cemetery and Memorial Garden - note change to plan	14	Collection of arisings from the cemetery on the first cut following delayed cuts in the spring (to protect wild flowers)	yes	Delay cuts where bee orchids indicated, or to allow spring flowers to set seed, as agreed with contractor - when cuts delayed, cost per cut to be adjusted accordingly.	
6b	New Cemetery - note change to plan	18	Collection of arisings from the cemetery on the first cut following delayed cuts in the spring (to protect wild flowers)	yes	Delay cuts where bee orchids indicated, or to allow spring flowers to set seed, as agreed with contractor - when cuts delayed, cost per cut to be adjusted accordingly.	
WA3	Cemetery Wildlife Areas	1	No	no	Wildlife area - cut once	
Play Areas						
7	Bury Road Play Area	18	yes	yes	Cut grass immediately outside pocket park to facilitate access.	
8	Cemetery Road Play Area - leaves & debris collected	18	yes	yes		
Six Acres & Recreation Ground						
9	Bowling Green (in and outer banks)	16	yes	yes	not the bowling green itself	
10	Tennis Courts surrounding Grass	8	Don't cut South, West & North between May and September		Bee Orchids in Banks - protected	
Inner banks of Recreation Field and Six Acres - see WA1						
12	Recreation Ground & Six Acres	18	Collection of arisings from Recreation Ground and Six Acres on the cut immediately preceding the Fete and Flower show each year plus one further event - one months notice to be given for each occasion.		Leave area between Tennis Courts and Bowling Club as wildlife area with wide path cut through for access from school onto track leading to MSC	
WA1	Inner banks, Outer Banks and area between Bowling Green and Tennis Courts	1	Wildlife Area - Cut once following seed setting		to allow spring/wildflowers to set seed and develop as wildlife area	
Other						
13	Footpaths per plan, namely FP26 from Cemetery to FP25; and FP25 from Outer banks of Recreation Field and Six Acres - see WA1	6				
15	Memorial Social Centre Grounds	18	yes	yes		
16	Hedges - i) Bowling Green: Leylandii Hedge (both sides and top); other boundary hedges oneside only. ii) the beech hedge near the car park (cut one side); c) hedge bounding the cemetery - cut hedges both sides on road and alongside Footpath & one side elsewhere; d) hedge opposite school (Map 16c) cut bothsides	2	yes		Do not cut in nesting season	
18	Scrub to rear of hard standing between Bowling Green and Tennis Courts	1	yes			

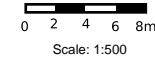


Parish



Grass Cutting

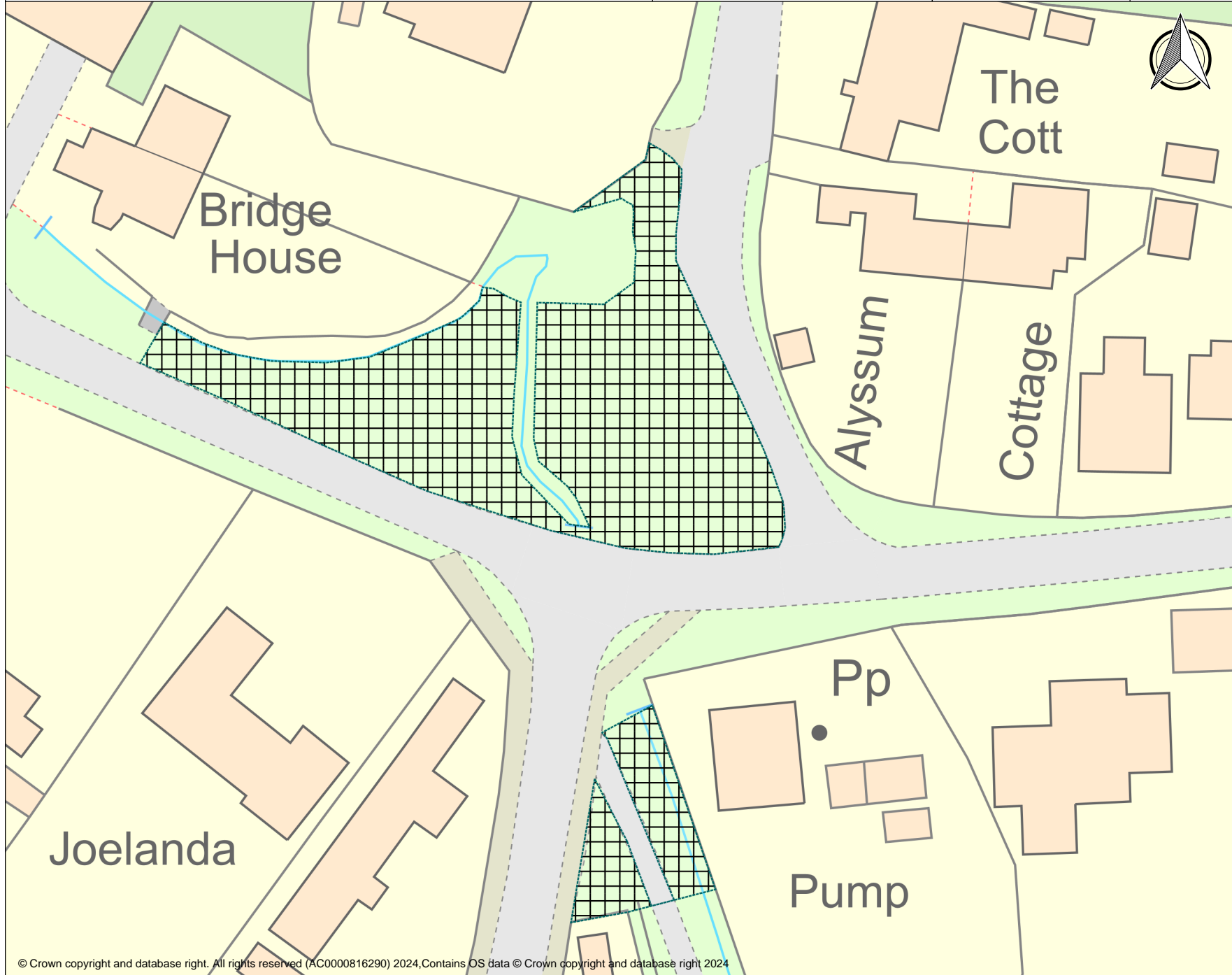


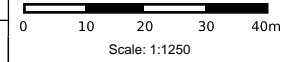


Parish



Grass Cutting





Parish



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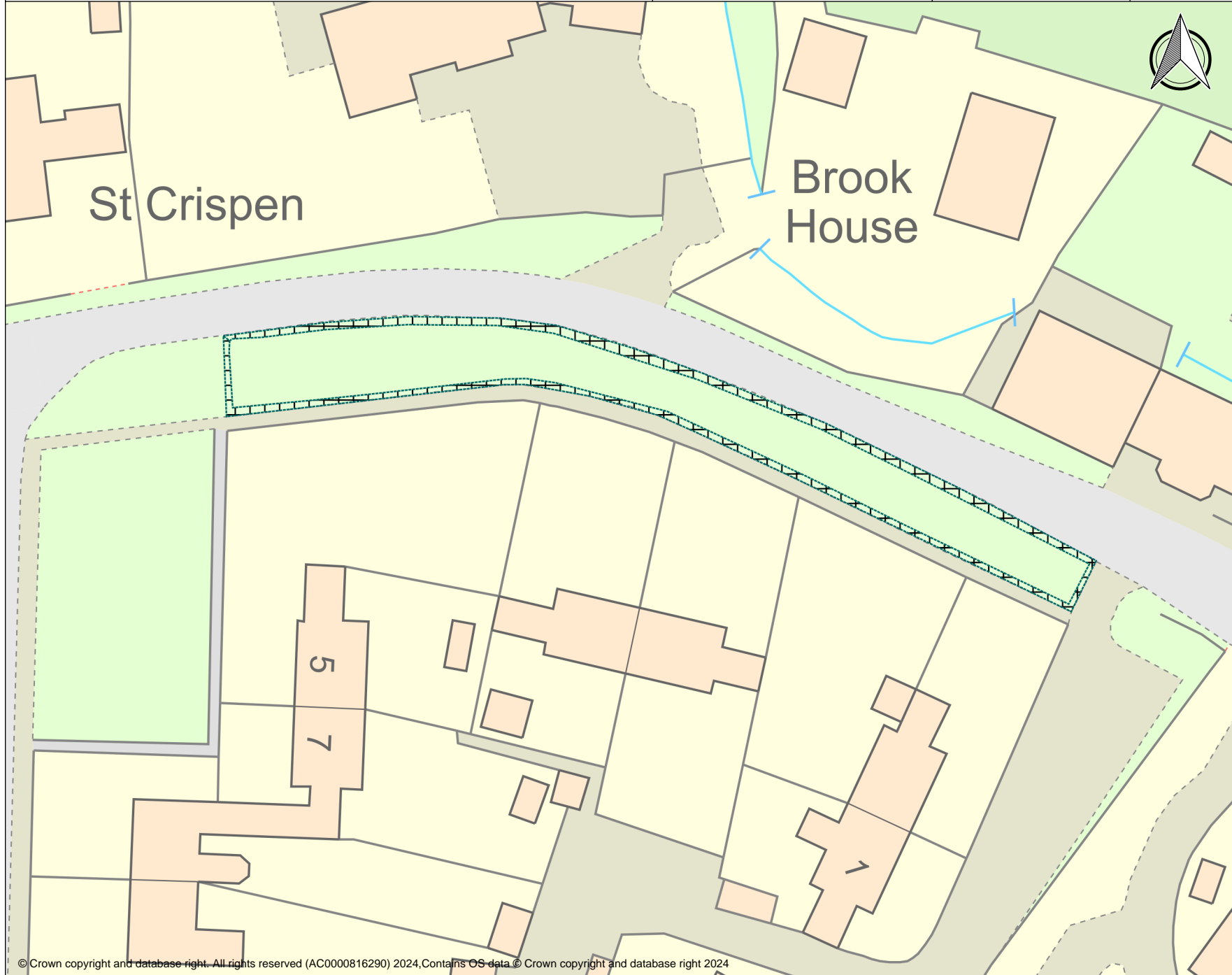




Parish



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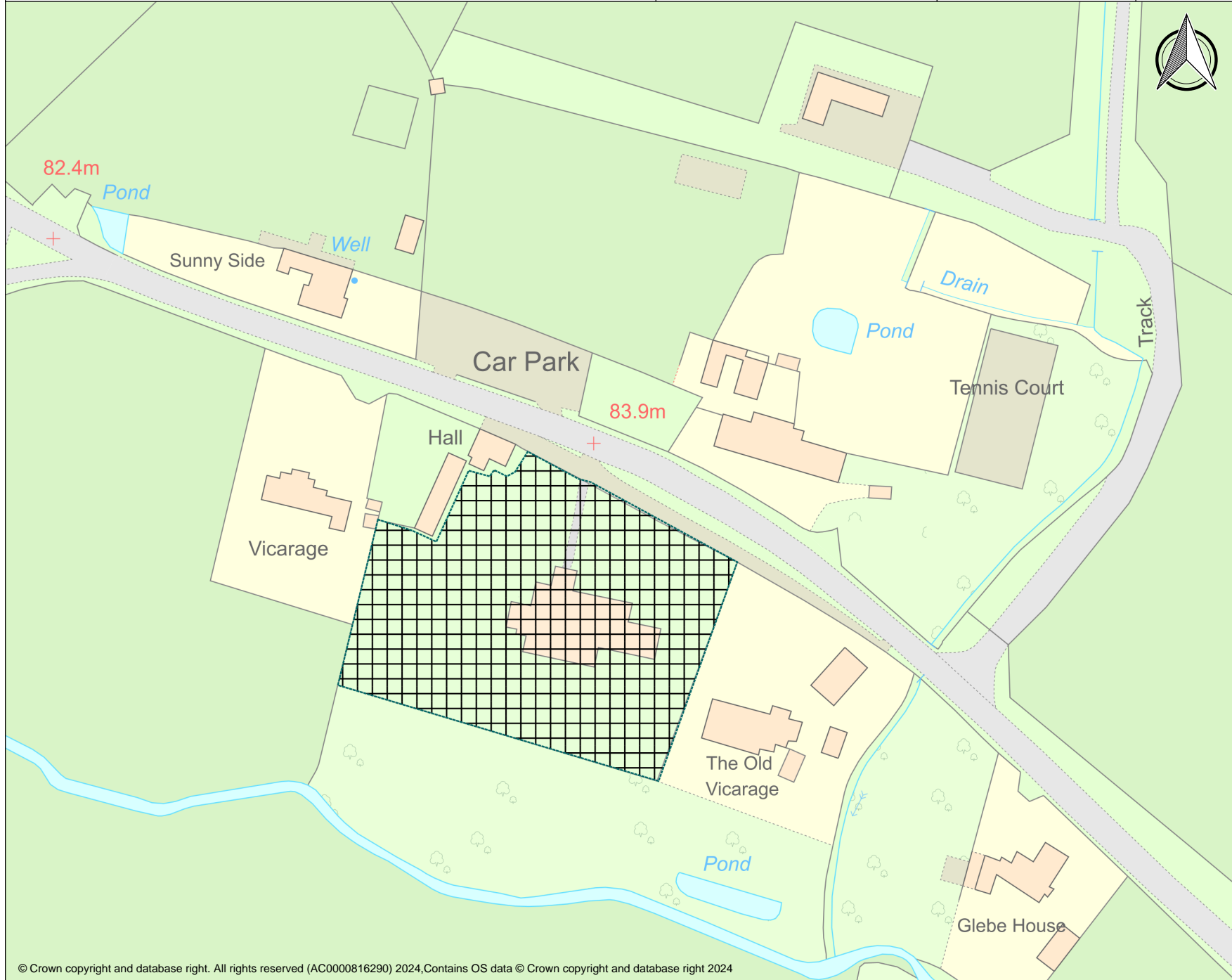
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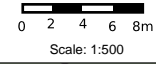


Parish



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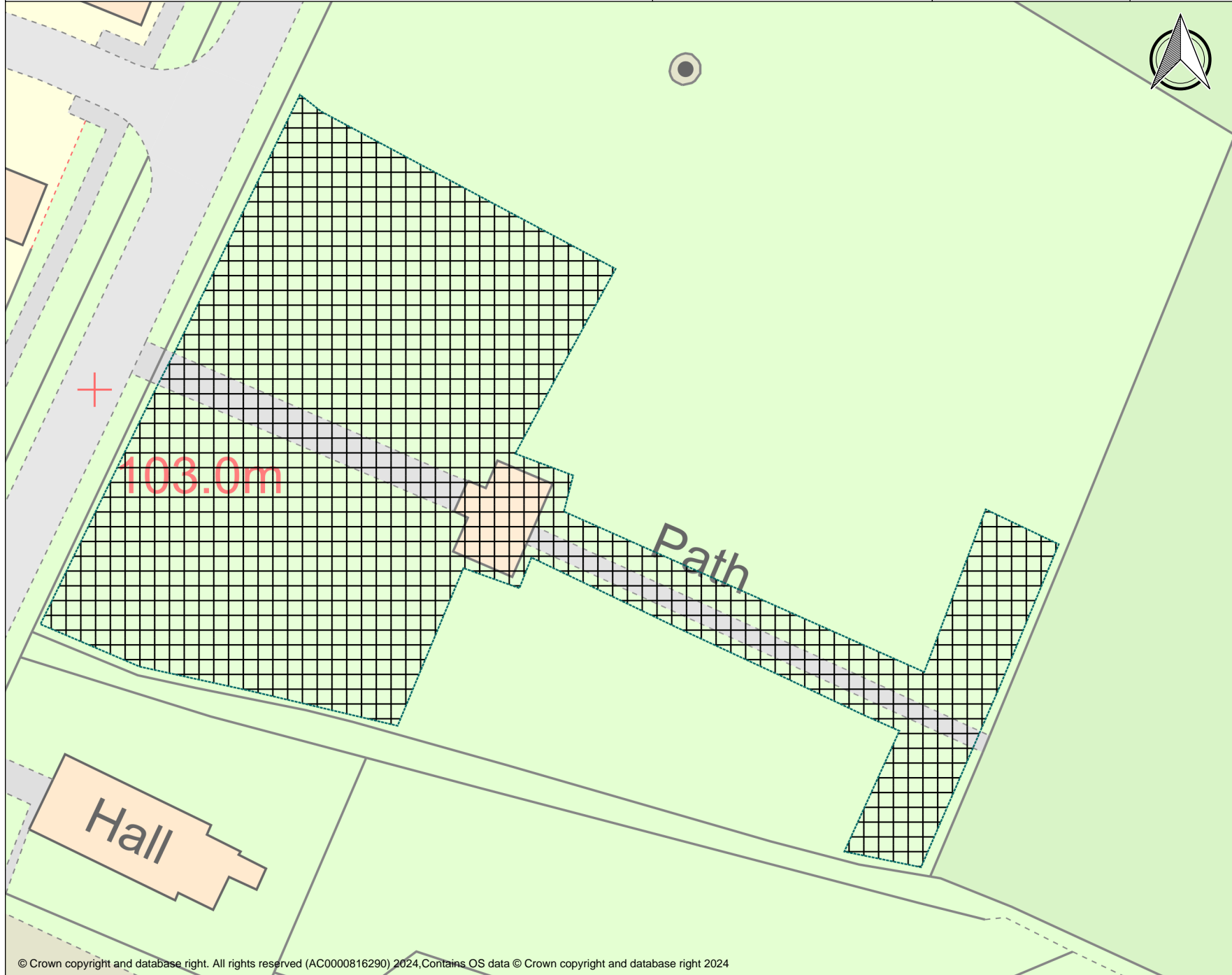




Parish



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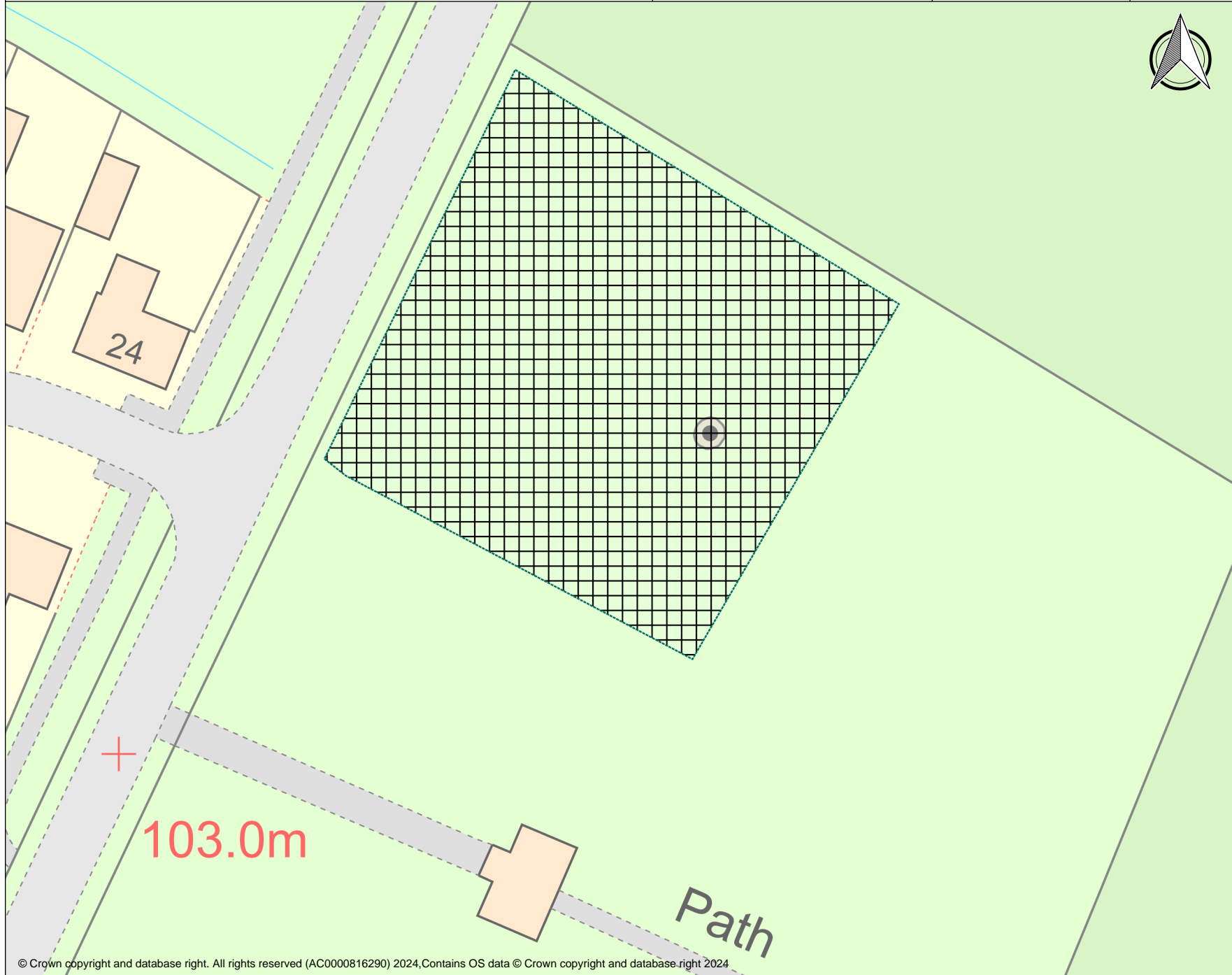


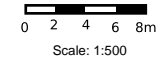


Parish



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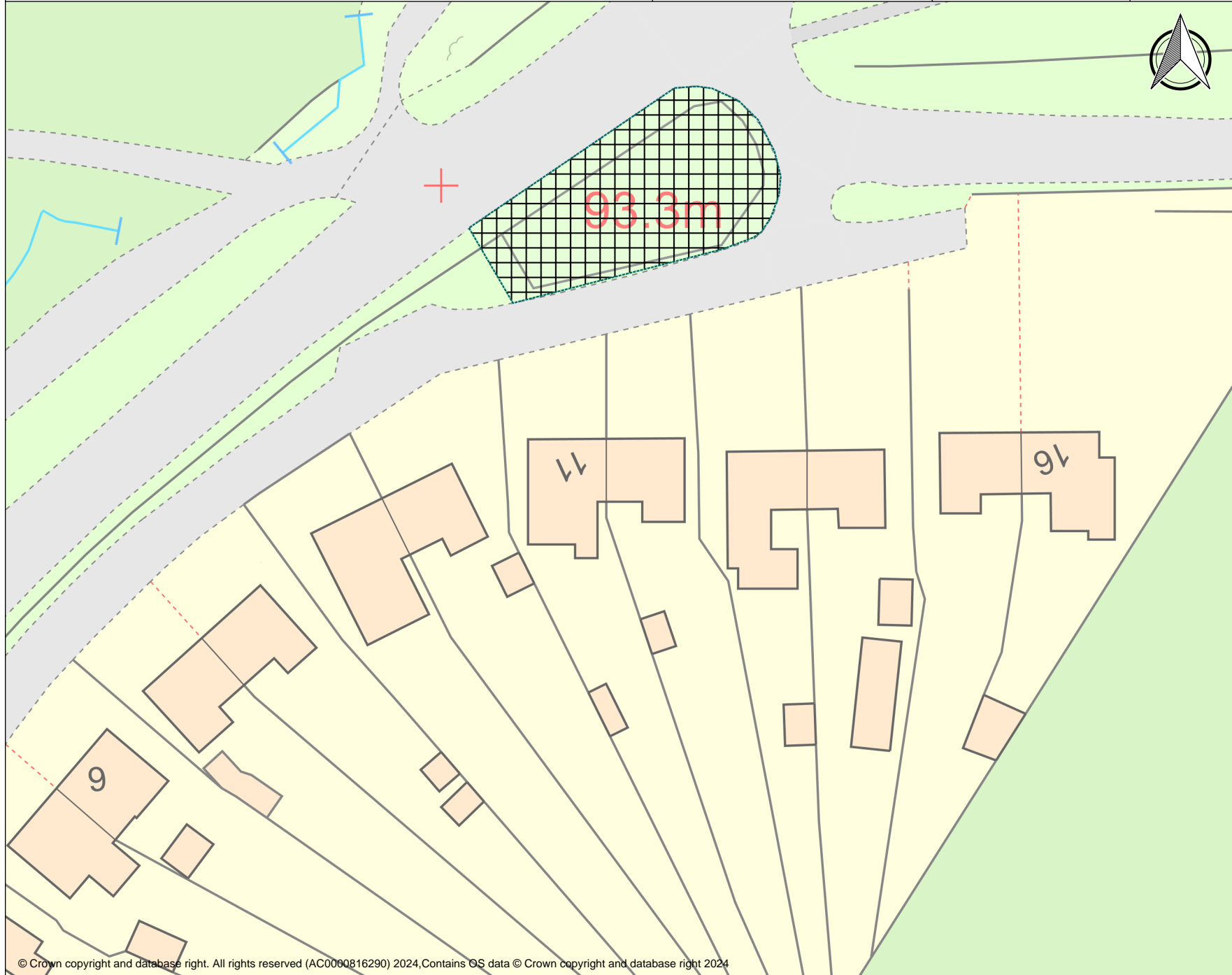


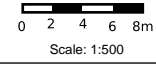


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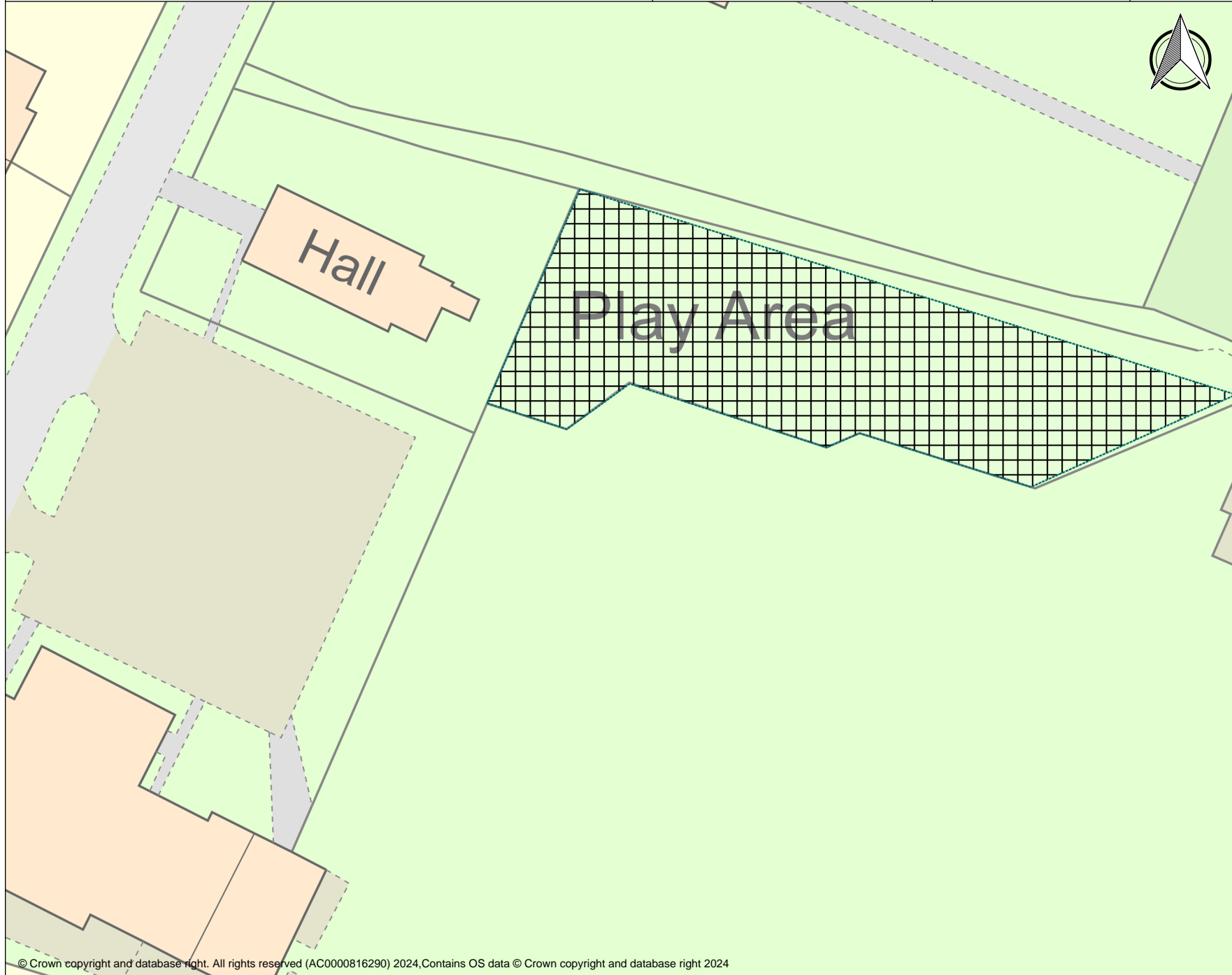


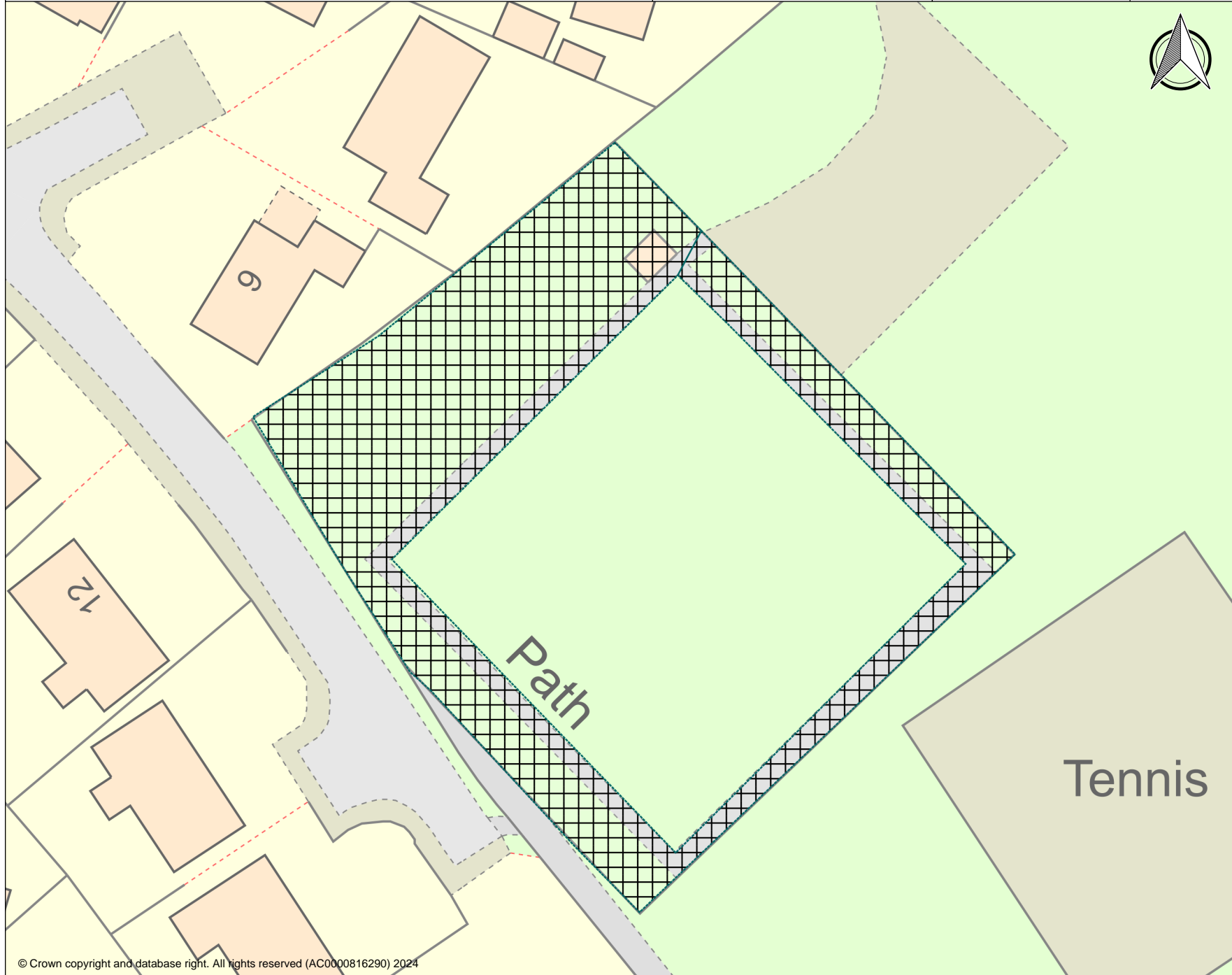


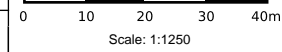
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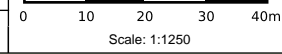
Grass Cutting

Wickhambrook

Map Item 12 - Recreation Ground & Six Acres

Author: L. Administrator

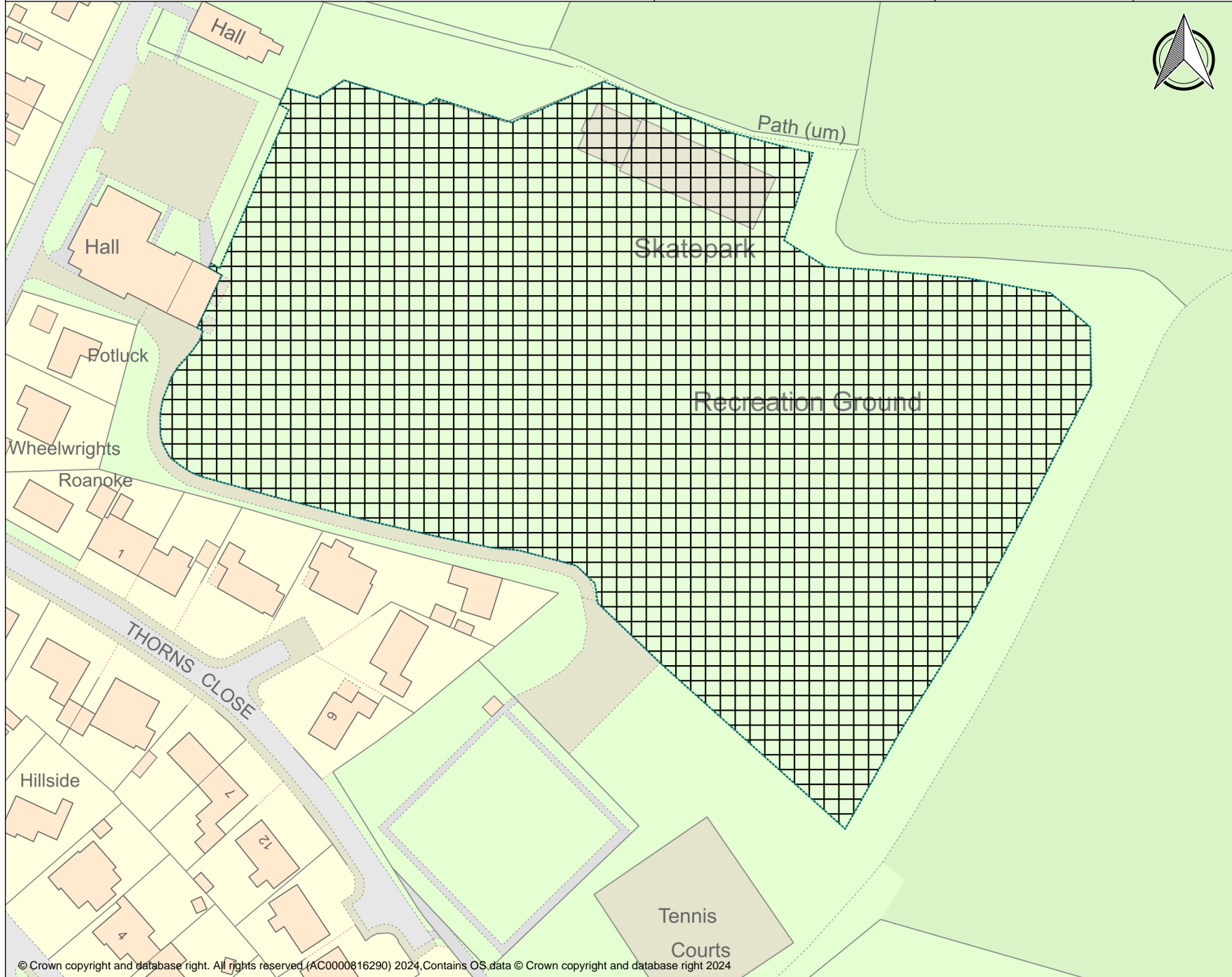
Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



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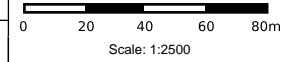
Wickhambrook



Map Item 13 - Footpaths FP26 & 25

Author: L. Administrator

Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



Grass Cutting



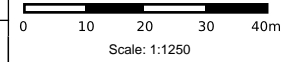
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Wickhambrook

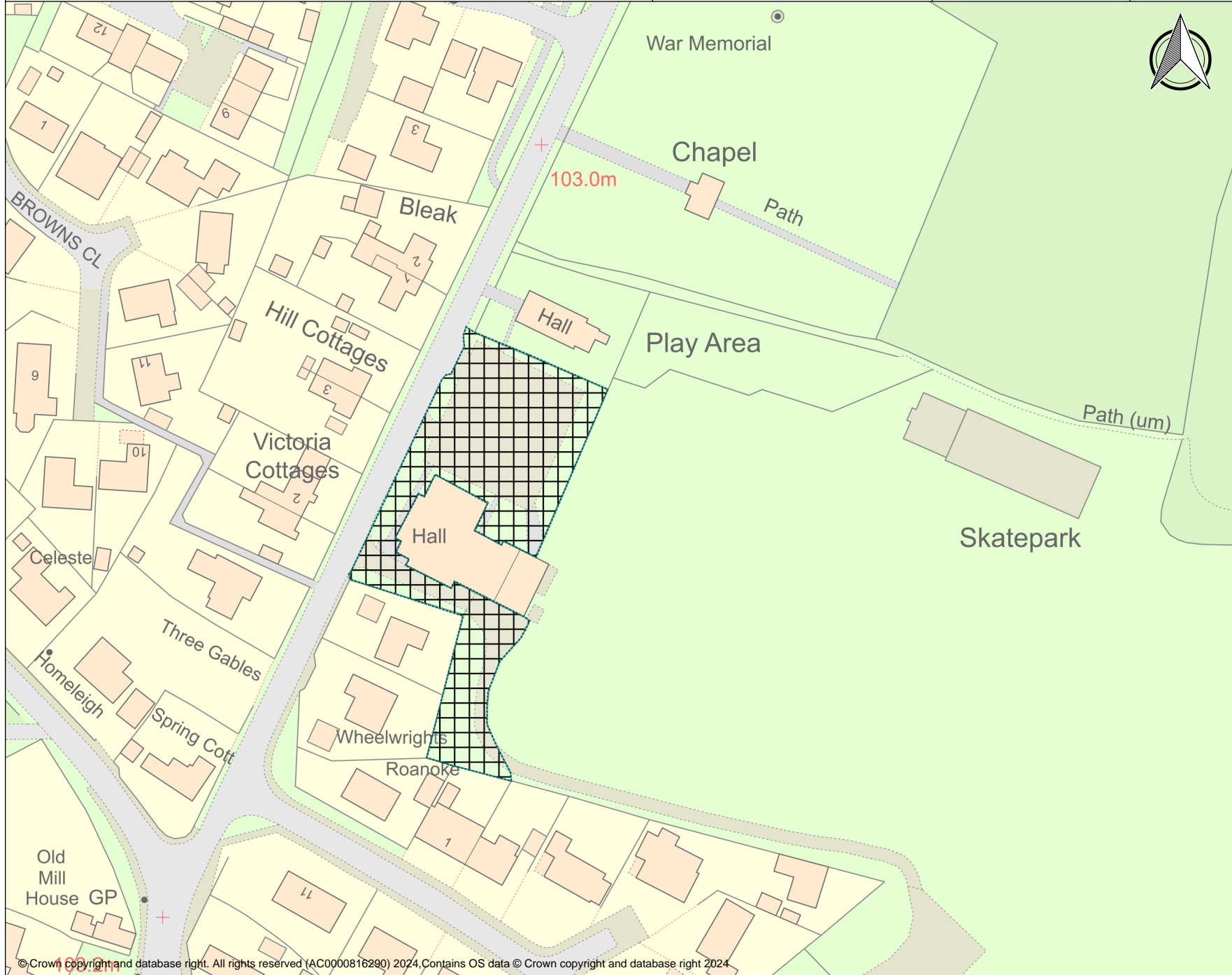


Map Item 15 - Memorial Social Centre Grounds

Author: L. Administrator



Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



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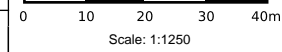


Grass Cutting

Wickhambrook

Map Item 16a - Hedges bounding Recreation Ground and Bowling Green

Author: L. Administrator



Date: 18/09/2024

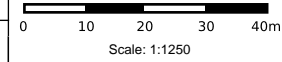


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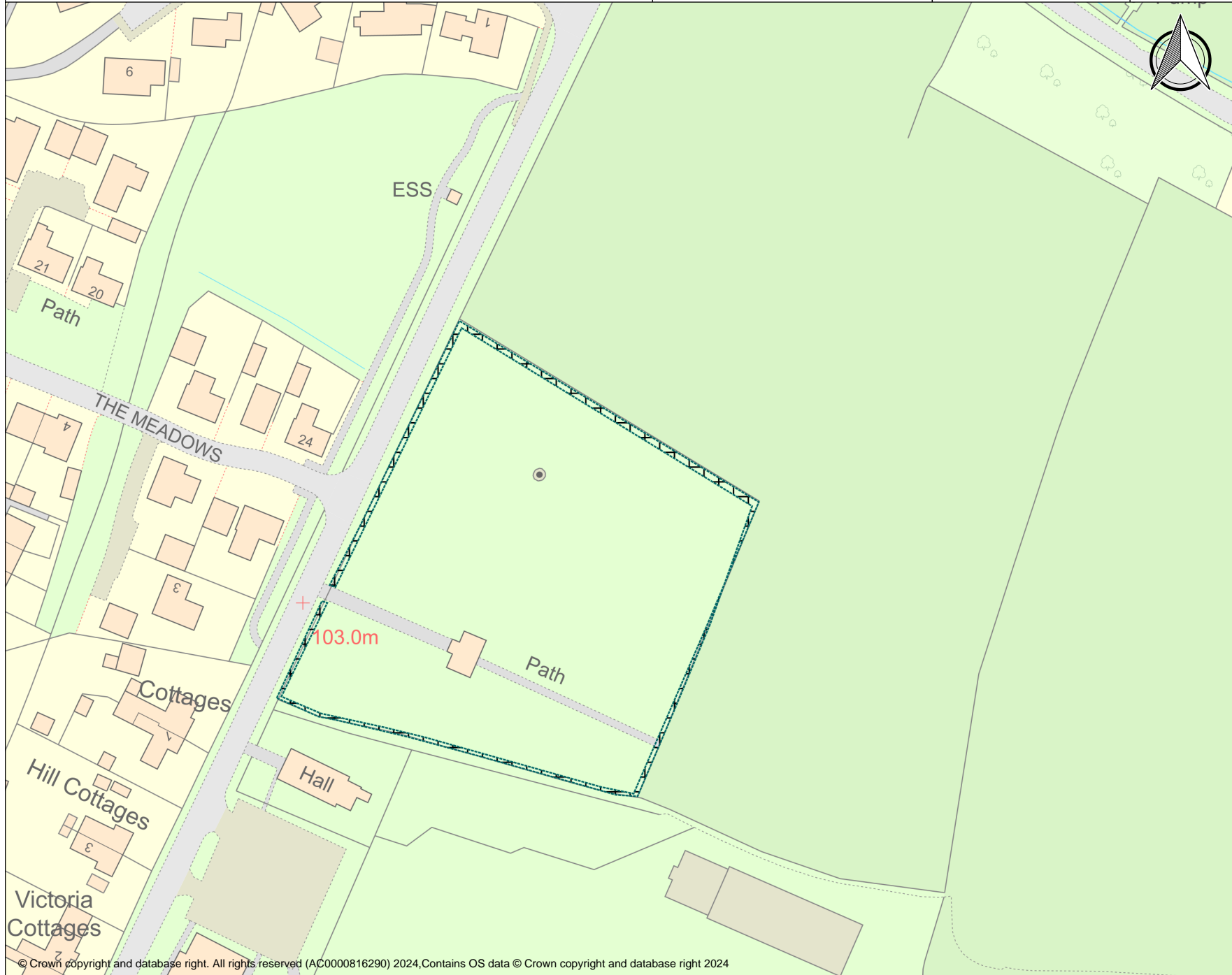




Parish



Grass Cutting



ESS

Path

THE MEADOWS

103.0m

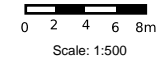
Path

Cottages

Hall

Hill Cottages

Victoria Cottages



Parish



Grass Cutting



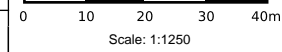
Grass Cutting

Wickhambrook

Map Item 18 - Scrub to Rear of Hard Standing

Author: L. Administrator

Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



Grass Cutting



Wildlife Areas - cut once

WA1 – Six Acres

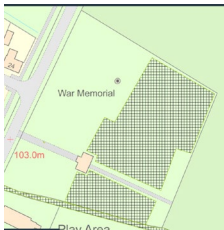


Includes path across

WA2 – Nunnery Green (hatched) – (n.b. – an outer border will be cut for visibility)



WA3 – Wickhambrook Cemetery

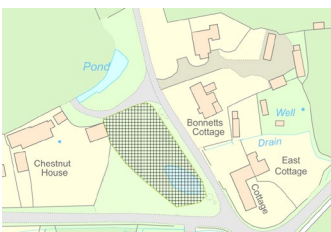


WA4 – All Saints Churchyard – not included this year

WA5 – Coltsfoot Green (culvert and to rear of pond)



WA6 – Attleton Green



From: [Hilary Workman](#)
Bcc: info@elitetrees.co.uk; [Luke Hamill](#); [Janine Hamill](#); enquiries@rgm.org.uk; mail@vertas.co.uk; [CGM Operations East](#); dkingcontractors; natasha@splandscapes.co.uk; sales@outdoorspacesltd.co.uk; info@bfgroundmaintenanceltd.co.uk; admin@seabygroundmaintenance.co.uk; [Nick Wiseman](#); office@excitesolutions.net; [Top Garden Services](#); jghgardenservices@gmail.com; info@sclandscape.co.uk
Subject: Grounds Maintenance Contract for Wickhambrook Parish Council 2025-26- Response please not later than 19 November 2024
Date: 01 October 2024 13:30:00
Attachments: [2025.26_GroundsContractSpecification.pdf](#)
[2025.26_WildlifeAreas.pdf](#)
[Plans for Grounds Contract Specification.pdf](#)

Hello, please find attached the agreed specification for the Grounds Contract for 2025-26 and relevant plans. If you have quoted previously, please note the highlighted changes in yellow.

Please note that the contract year runs from 1 February to 31st January. There may be some occasions when, due to wild flowers, cuts are delayed or skipped to allowed seed to set.

We have also designated some wildlife areas this year, where there will only be one cut, in early autumn once seeds have set (highlighted in green on the spec). Plans for the wildlife areas are also attached.

If you wish to do so, please submit a quote to the parish clerk at parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk not later than 19th November 2024. If you have not quoted before, could you please include some contact details for references/feedback, particularly of any parish(s) which you undertake grounds maintenance for.

Could you please ensure that you quote exactly in accordance with the specification to ensure that the parish council can compare like with like. If you are unable to undertake any aspect of the specification, please be clear about this.

It is planned that the grounds contract will be considered at the parish council meeting on Thursday 29th November. Quotes will be published with a covering report to be issued with the summons (after the closing period for quotes).

Hilary Workman CiLCA
Clerk & RFO for Wickhambrook Parish Council

Tel: 07508 039810
E-mail: parishclerk@wickhambrook.org.uk
Website: [Parish Council - Wickhambrook Village](#)

My normal working hours are mornings Monday to Friday.

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

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Quotes Received: Restricted - circulated to councillors only