

# Harbridge and Ibsley Conservation Areas



These two areas were once part of the large estate associated with Somerley House which strongly influences this section of the Avon valley. Both manors are mentioned in the Domesday survey. The settlements are separated by the River Avon with its water meadows which are home to nationally and internationally important communities of birds, flora and invertebrate fauna. Harbridge comprises two areas of settlement linked by the old coach road with its avenue of evergreen oaks. To the north, the Church with its old rectory and a cottage are grouped beside a stream. In the centre the small hamlet of Turner is a gem from times gone by; grouped around the pond are the 18th century farm, two thatched cottages and the 19th century school. The farm still uses heavy horses and traditional farming methods which means that longstraw thatching continues here using locally harvested materials. The sense of isolation provided by the parkland setting of mature trees and gravelled tracks is an important part of the character of the area.

At Ibsley the millstream is the only reminder of the mill mentioned in the Domesday survey which was near to the bridge and an inn. It was assessed at ten shillings and seven hundred eels. The 18th century Purbeck stone bridge over the Avon, rebuilt in 1930, provides a link with Harbridge. Vast amounts of heavy traffic continually rumble along the A338 past the thatched, timber-framed cottages which have otherwise changed little in the last 100 years. Beside the 19th century church, Mockbeggar Lane with its well established hedges and grassed verges leads to 18th and 19th century houses and cottages. The last 50 years have seen the insertion of bungalows, between them which detract from the historic character of this lane.

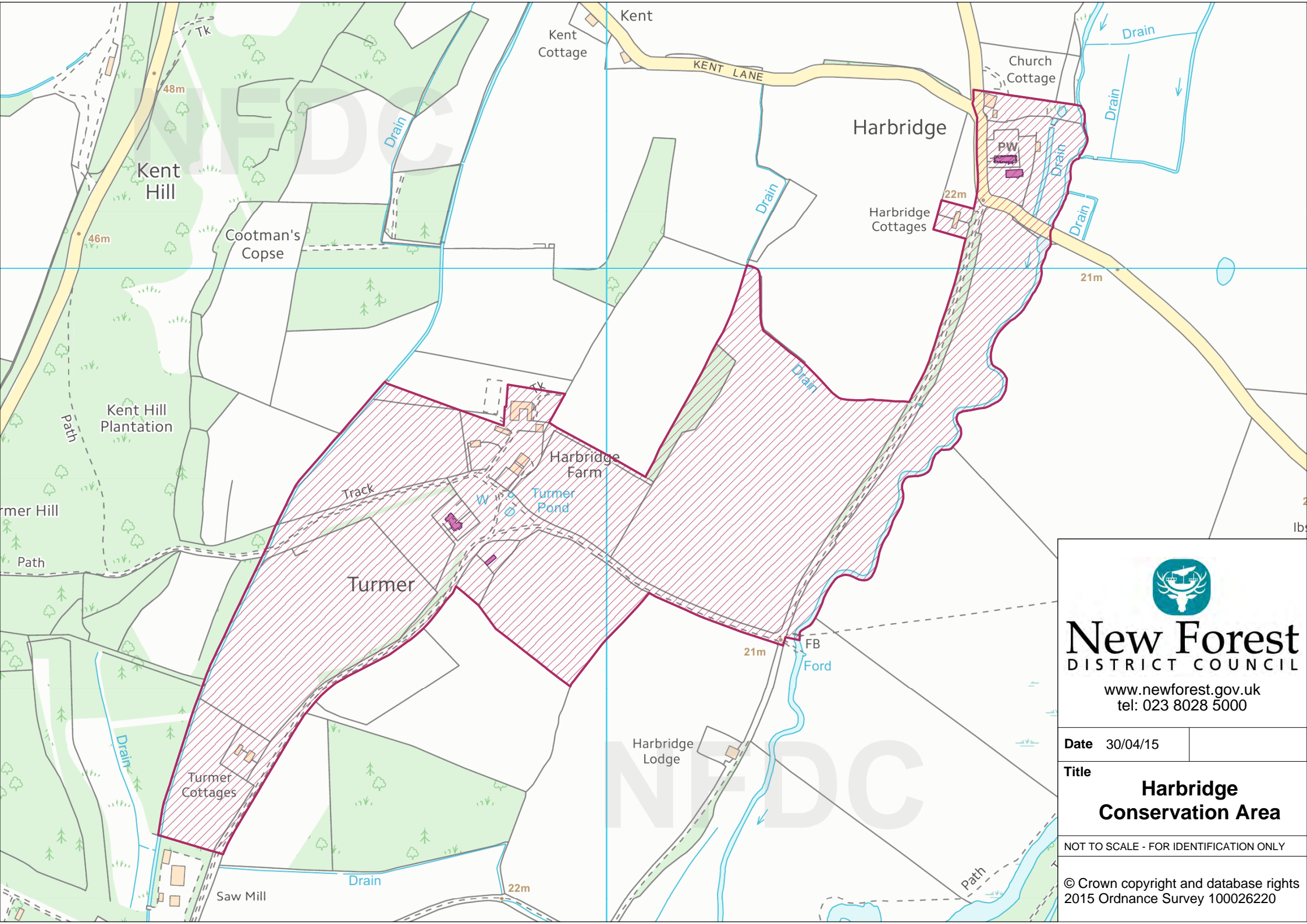
These are key features in the conservation areas:

- Both **All Saints' Church, Harbridge** and **St Martin's Church, Ibsley** were rebuilt around 1830 to '40. They have some original stonework remaining and other evidence is visible in the wonderful array of 18th century gravestones, two of which are listed at Ibsley. Ibsley Church is now redundant and about to be used as an office.
- **Turner seems to be a village almost lost in time** with its buildings all grouped around the pond and gravelled roads. The farmhouse has an impressive group of agricultural buildings which appear to be in the same style as others on the Somerley estate designed by Samuel Wyatt. The 19th century school was built by the Earl of Normanton to take 90 children from the estate and village and provide a house for the school mistresses.

- Each of these conservation areas contains a part of the **Avon Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest**. The river has a greater range of habitats and a more diverse flora and fauna than any other chalk river valley in Britain.
- The **Old Beams Inn and Avon Cottage** are cruck-framed buildings. Crucks are usually made from a tree sawn in half to give two identical pieces. Crucks carry the roof load to the ground directly rather than through the walls.
- Pevsner described **Ibsley bridge** as "A fine Georgian bridge of ashlar". It is made of dressed Purbeck stone and has been rebuilt from the foundations with two additional smaller arches. The arches have raised keystones and a raised string course runs across at road level from the flank walls
- An **avenue of holm oaks** runs south along the old coach road from Harbridge Church towards Turner.

These are some of the things that make Harbridge and Ibsley special - they need to be looked after:

- **History**  
The evidence of estate influence on both buildings and landscape particularly in Harbridge.
- **Buildings**  
Thatched, timber-framed cottages with brick infill.  
19th century farm buildings of brick with slate roofs at Turner and along Mockbeggar Lane.  
The churches, very different in style, both rebuilt in the 19th century with their older rectories alongside.
- **Archaeology**  
In old established settlements there is always the likelihood of finding evidence of vanished buildings.
- **Landscape/Townscape**  
The River Avon and its water meadows.  
The gravelled tracks of Somerley estate.  
The parkland appearance to the fields around Turner with mature oaks.
- **Setting**  
Views in and out of both areas across the Avon and its water meadows.
- **Potential for enhancement**  
In Ibsley, the area of old road in front of The Old Beams that is used as a car park.  
Removal of overhead cabling.



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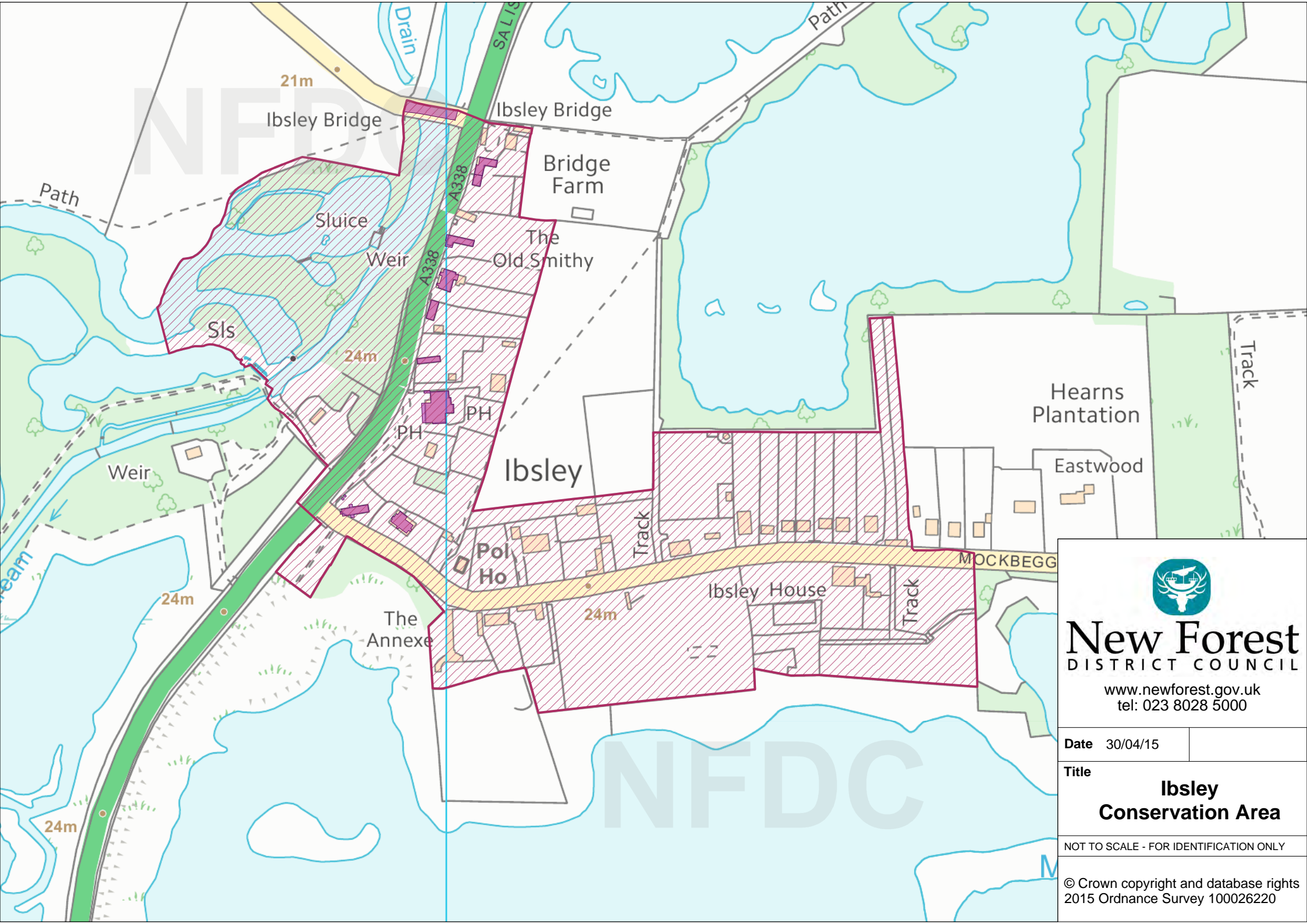
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**Date** 30/04/15

**Title**  
**Harbridge Conservation Area**

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