

Quotes for Groundworks in Wickhambrook 2026 - 27

The Parish Council's Financial Regulations (5. Procurement – excerpt attached as **Appendix A**) require that, (5.6-8)

- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council. 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 Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;

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.25.09.15), which noted the adjustments to the specification for 2025-26:

- Allowing 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);
- 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.

And made provision (following advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust in respect of the newly designated Wildlife Areas) for two cuts with collections of arisings on the wildlife areas and an adjustment to the cutting of the outer banks of Six Acres to reduce scrub.

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

Quotes based on this more detailed specification were sought (from 15 suppliers – **Appendix C¹**) in the autumn of 2025, of which one 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 35 miles each way	£16260.00
RH Landscapes & Maintenance (previous contractor 2020-2023)	Quote was per specification Referees provided	Mildenhall 15 miles each way	£16702.86
S.P. Landscapes & Tree Contractors Ltd	No referees were provided	Red Lodge 15 miles each way	£19540.00

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

¹ The specification included the costs submitted by the parish council's appointed contractor for the current financial year.

RH Landscapes & Maintenance Ltd has provided a quote which includes the entirety of the specification and has 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 (35 miles), and S.P. Landscapes and Tree Maintenance Ltd is based in Red Lodge (13 miles). RH Landscapes and Maintenance is based in Mildenhall (15 miles each way) and has contracts with neighbouring parishes, reducing impacts on the environment through emissions.

A total of £17,000 plus VAT has been budgeted for in the next financial year, an increase of 9.6% on the year (higher than RPI 4.5%).

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 2026/27 and instruct the Clerk & RFO to issue the necessary purchase orders and contracts.

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. **Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax (England) requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.**
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the council at least annually in November for the following financial year and the final version shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Clerk and the Chair of the Council. The RFO will inform committees of any salary implications before they consider their draft budgets.
- 4.3. No later than November each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all receipts and payments for the following financial year, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent budgets for completed projects shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward (by placing them in an earmarked reserve) with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee (if any) shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the council not later than the end of November each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget with any committee proposals including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered by the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and forecast, the council shall determine its council tax (England) requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of January for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. **Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.**
- 4.9. The RFO shall **issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any addition to, or withdrawal from, any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the council.

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 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 Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulations 2024 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 5.12) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to exceed £60,000 including VAT, the Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers agreed by the council. 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 Legislation regarding the publication of invitations and notices.**
- 5.8. For contracts greater than £3,000 excluding VAT the Clerk shall seek at least 3 fixed-price quotes;
- 5.9. where the value is between £500 and £3,000 excluding VAT, the Clerk 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 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 or relevant committee. 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 £2,000 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
 - in respect of grants, a duly authorised committee within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy statement agreed by the council.
 - the council for all items over £5,000;

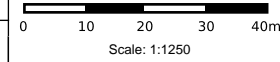
Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.

- 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 £2,000 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.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with Unity Trust Bank. The arrangements shall be reviewed annually for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. Wherever possible, more than one person should be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank.
- 6.3. All invoices for payment should be examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure previously authorised by the council before being certified by the RFO. Where the certification of invoices is done as a batch, this shall include a statement by the RFO that all invoices listed have been 'examined, verified and certified' by the RFO.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.

Map Item	Description	No. Cuts	Collect Arisings	Leaf Clearing	Notes
Greens					
1	Attleton Green	18	No		
WA6	Attleton Green	1			
2	Coltsfoot Green	18	No		
WA5	Coltsfoot Green	1			
3	Meeting Green Verge & Triangle	18	No		small triangle must be trimmed to ensure visibility
4	Nunnery Green Verges	18			
WA2	Nunnery Green Verges	1			
Cemetery & Churchyard					
5	All Saints Churchyard	18	No		Only in Churchyard, not verges or car park
6a	Old Cemetery and Memorial Garden	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
6b	New Cemetery	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
WA3	Cemetery Wildlife Areas	1			
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 late spring to September to allow for established bee orchids to set seed
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.		*please quote for both collection of arisings, and arisings left in place
12	Additional Cost per cut for cut and collection	2		yes	
WA1	Inner banks, Outer Banks and area between bowling green and tennis courts	1			cut a footpath through WA1 between tennis courts and bowling green to allow for foot traffic from school to recreation ground
Other					
13	Footpaths per plan, namely FP26 from Cemetery to FP25; and FP25 from	6			
14	Outer banks of Recreation Field and Six Acres	0			strim/brushcut - note steep banks
15	Memorial Social Centre Grounds	18	yes		
16	Hedges - i) Bowling Green: Leylandii Hedge (both sides and top); other boundary hedges onside 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		
18	Scrub to rear of hard standing between Bowling Green and Tennis Courts	1	yes		

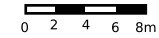


Parish



Grass Cutting

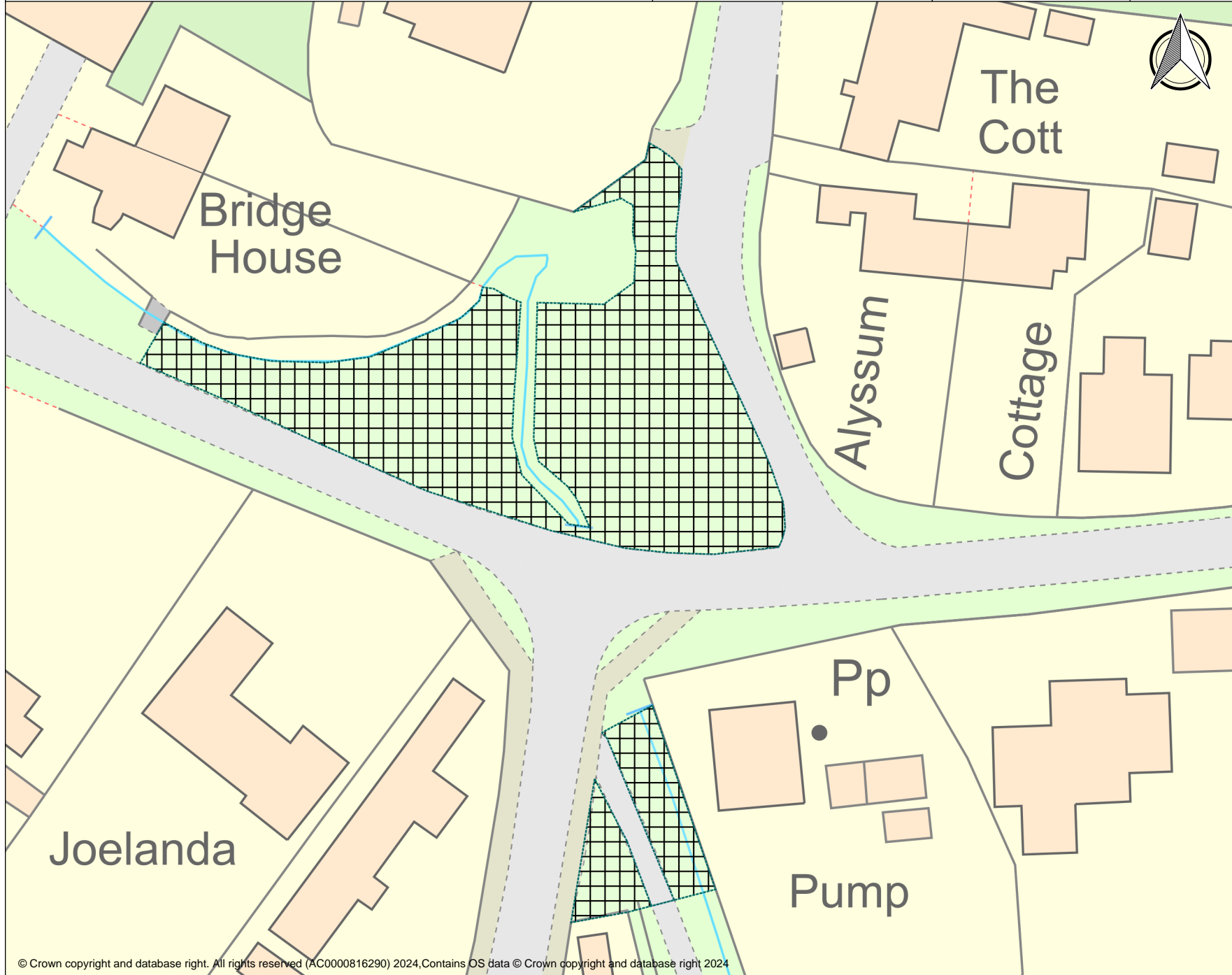




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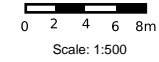


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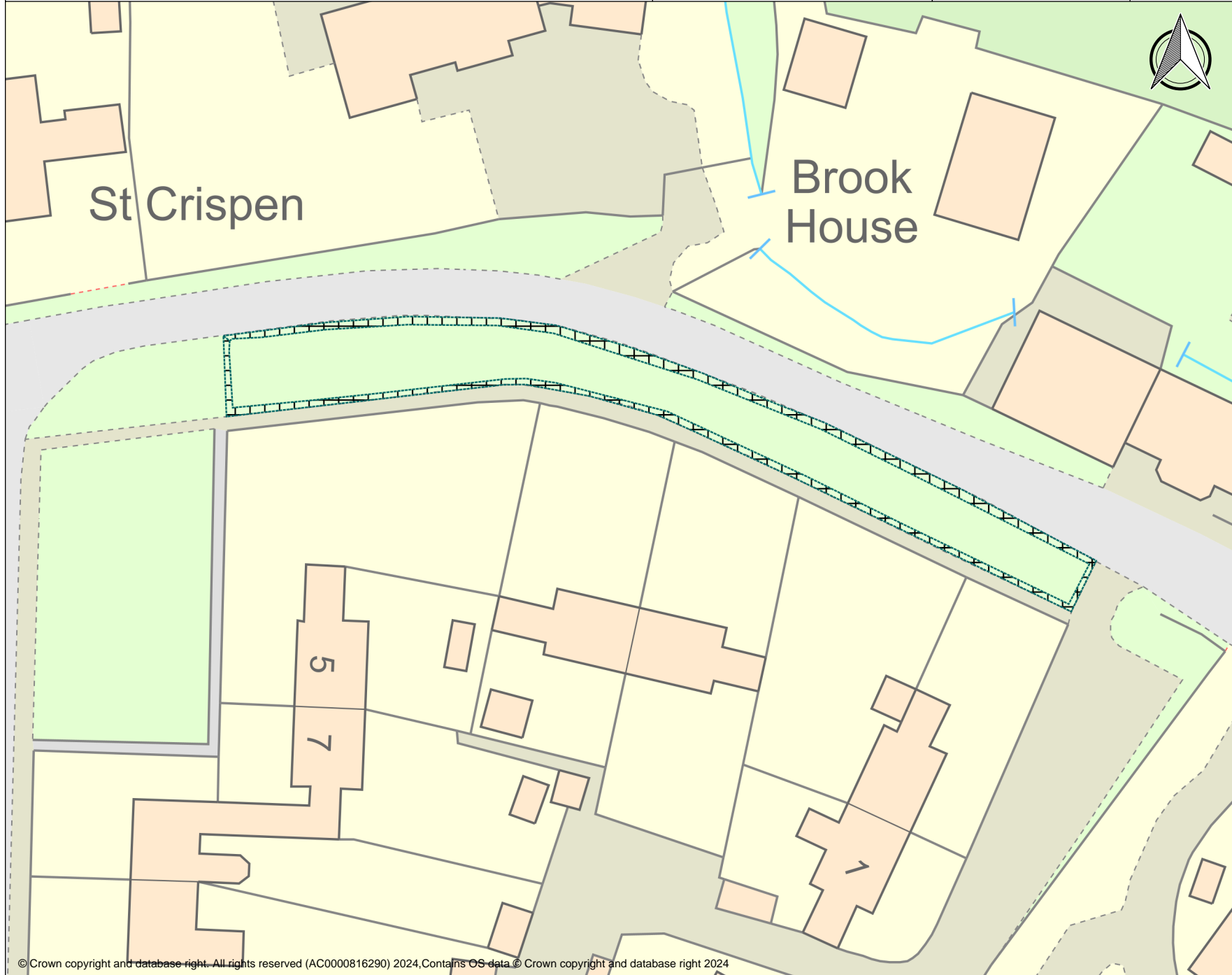




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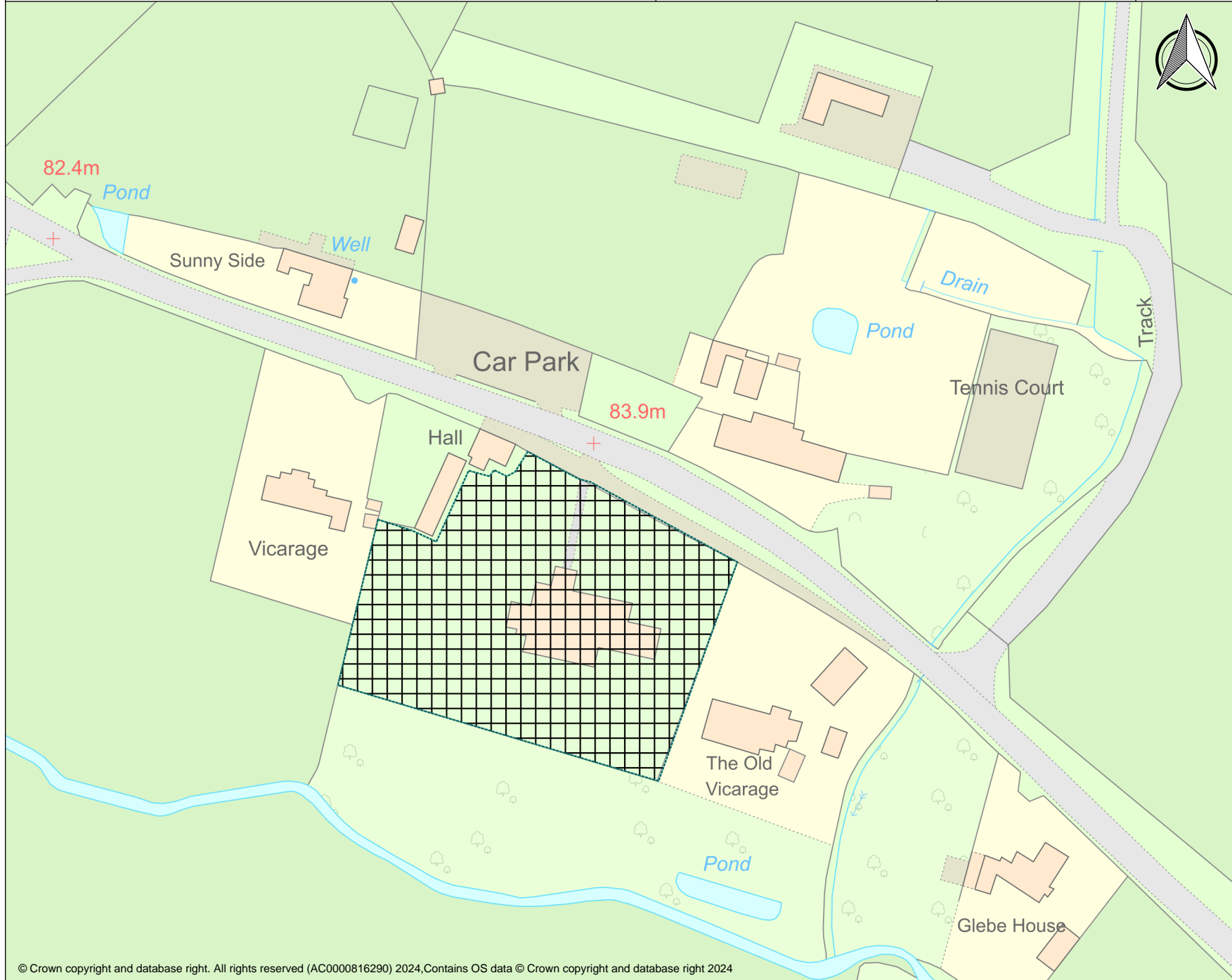


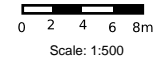


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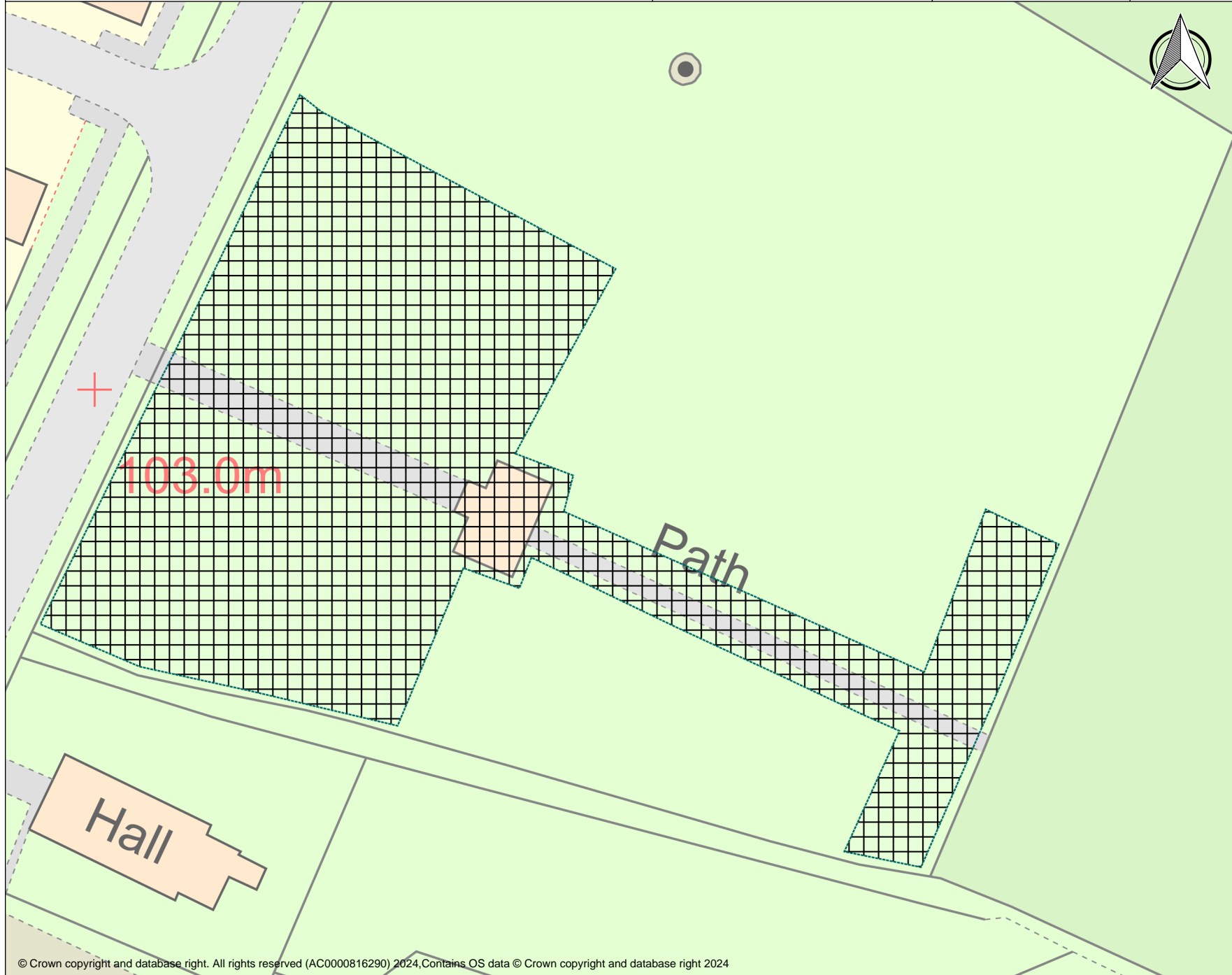




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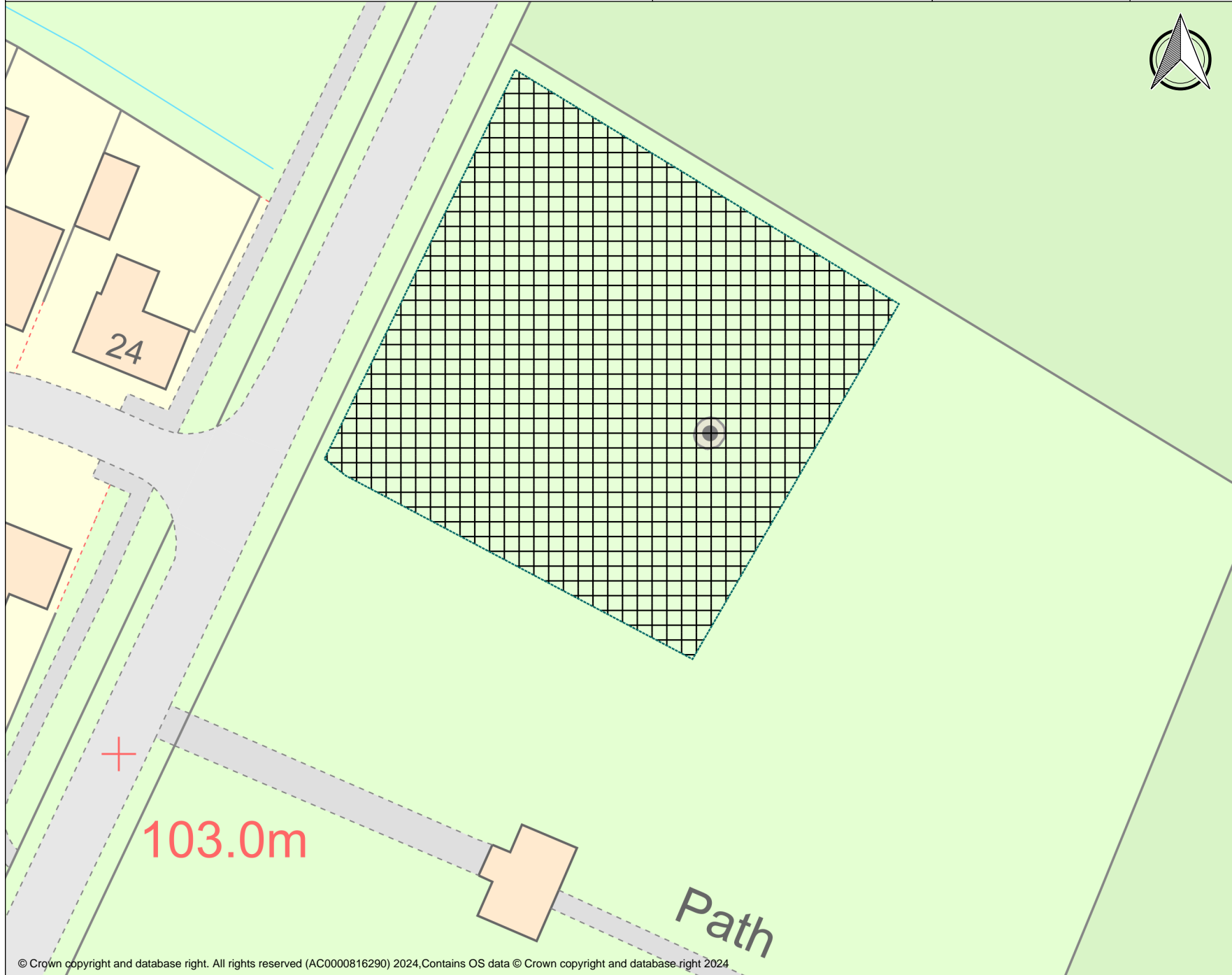




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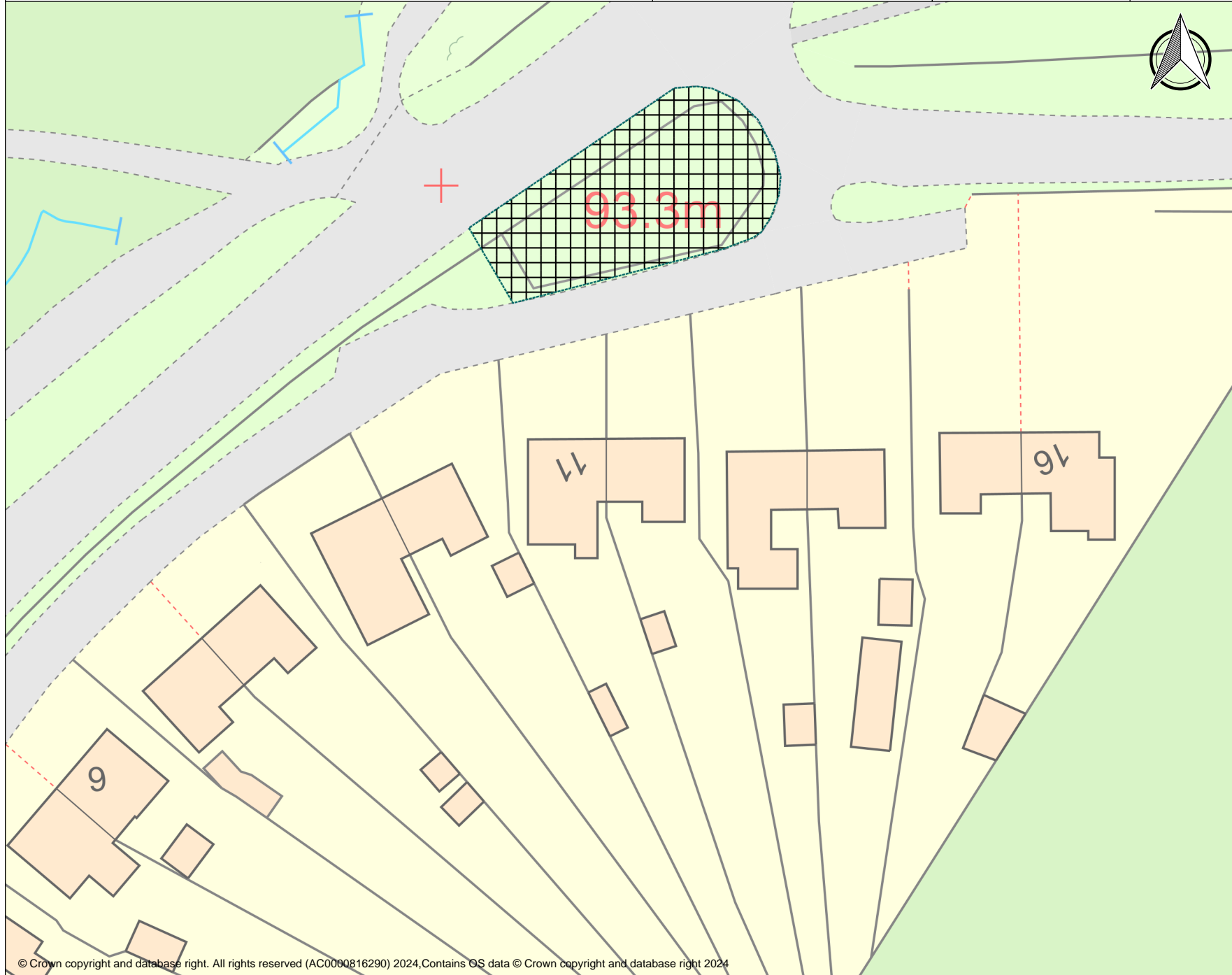




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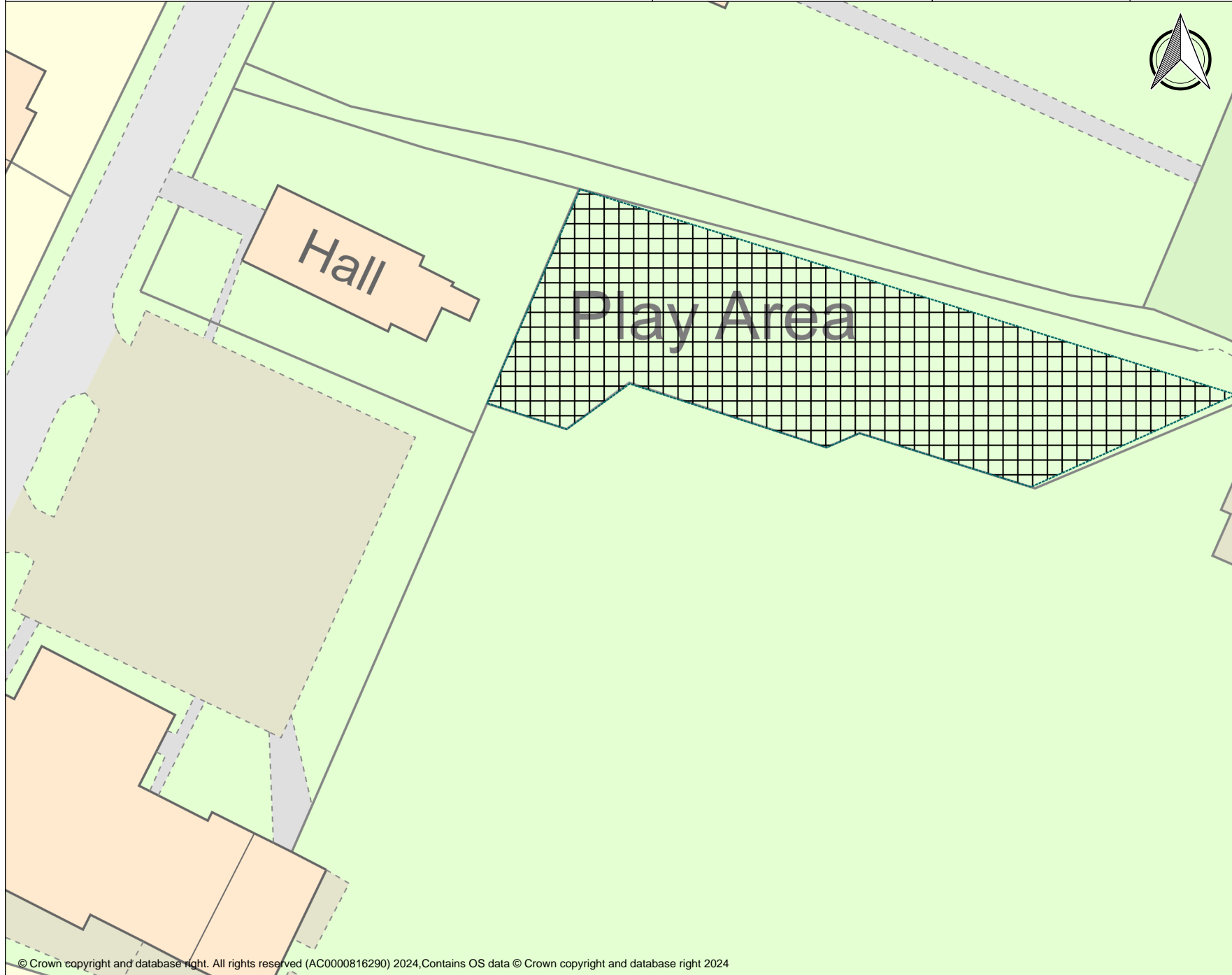


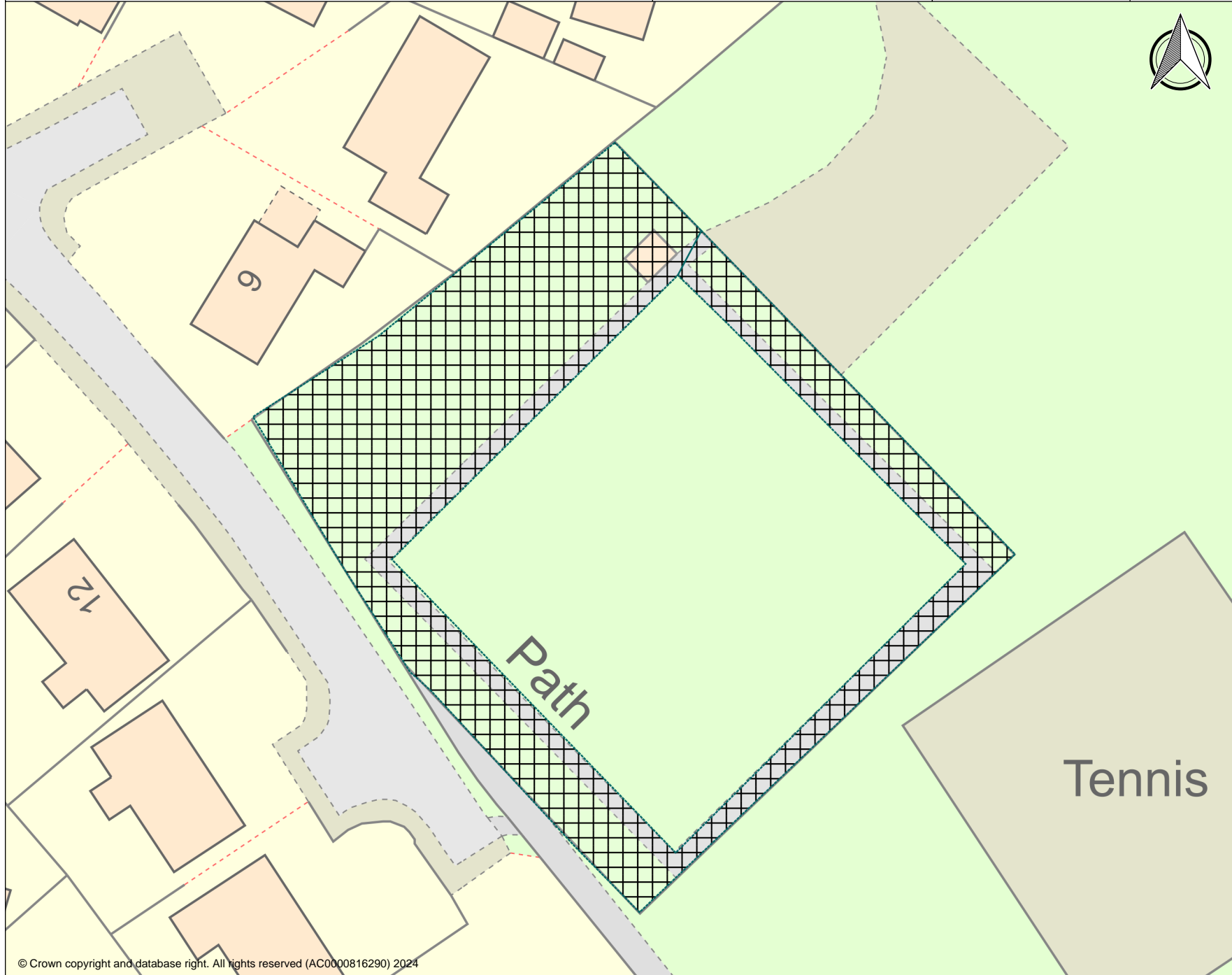
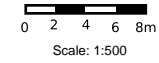


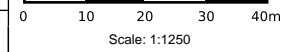
Parish



Grass Cutting







Parish



Grass Cutting



Recreation Ground

Bowling Green

Path

Tennis Courts

CLOSE

6

7

12

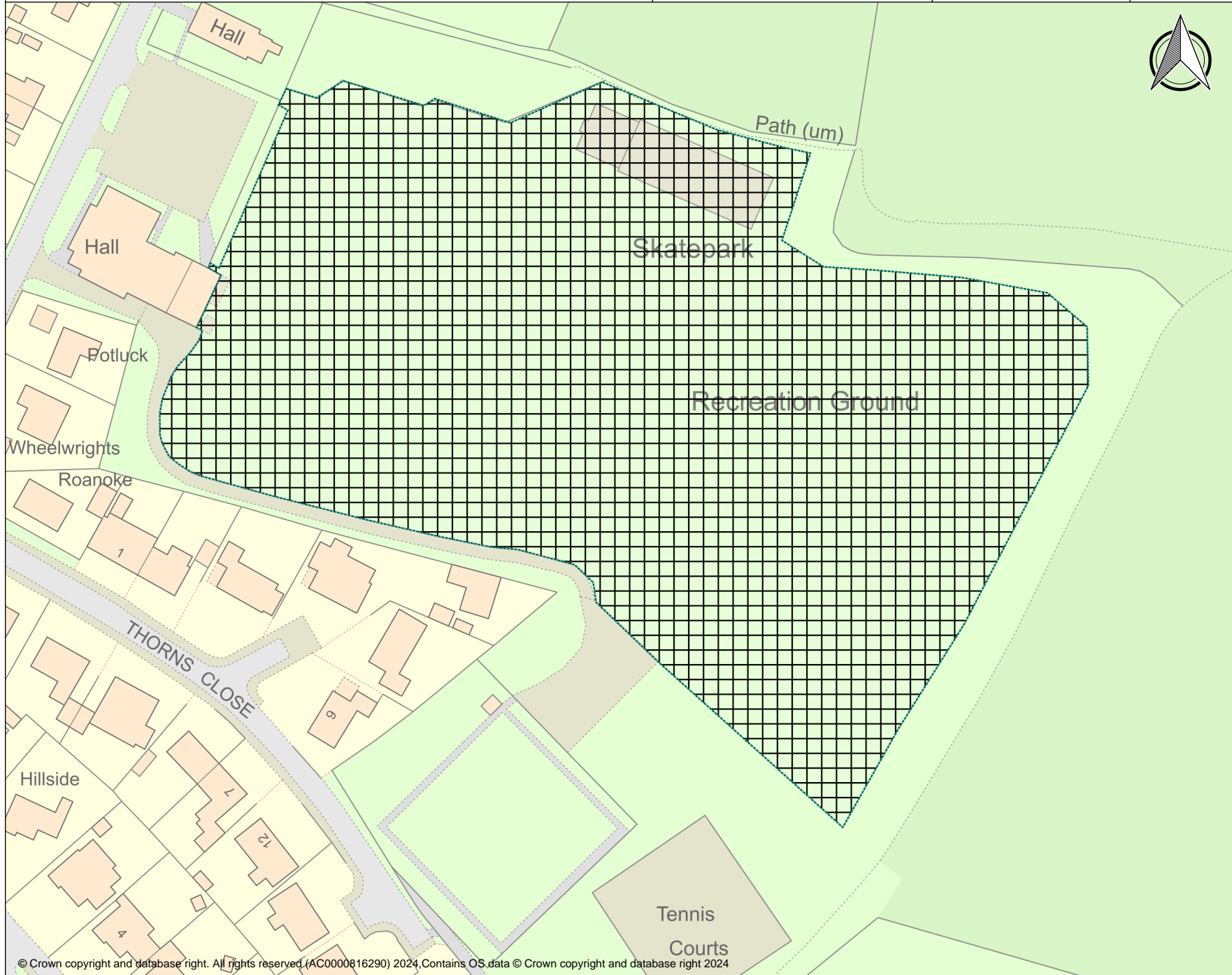
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Westfield

Hillcrest

School Cottage

Wickhambrook Community Primary School



Parish



Grass Cutting



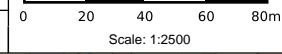
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Map Item 13 - Footpaths FP26 & 25

Wickhambrook

Author: L. Administrator

Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



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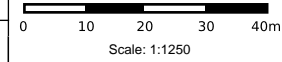
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Wickhambrook



Map Item 15 - Memorial Social Centre Grounds

Author: L. Administrator



Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



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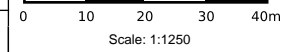


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Wickhambrook

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

Author: L. Administrator



Date: 18/09/2024

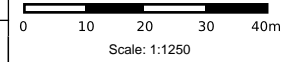


Parish



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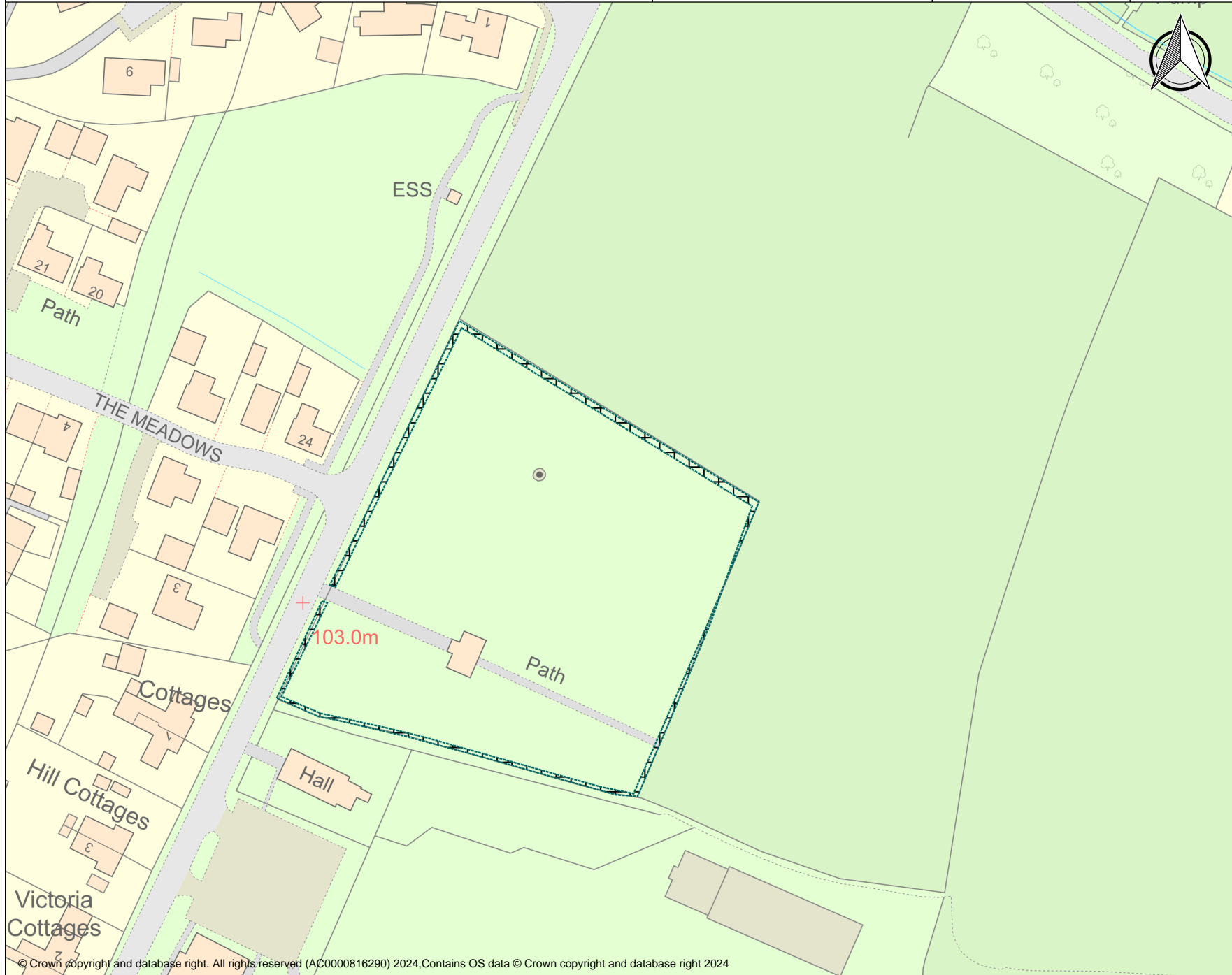




Parish



Grass Cutting



ESS

Path

THE MEADOWS

103.0m

Path

Cottages

Hall

Hill Cottages

Victoria Cottages



Parish



Grass Cutting



Path

Tennis

School
Cottage

15

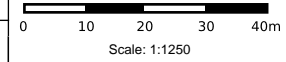
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Wickhambrook

Map Item 18 - Scrub to Rear of Hard Standing

Author: L. Administrator

Date: 18/09/2024



Parish



Grass Cutting



Wildlife Areas - cut twice (June & September) with arisings collected

WA1 – Six Acres

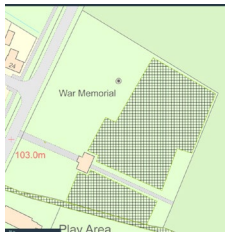


Includes path across bottom right to top left and right

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



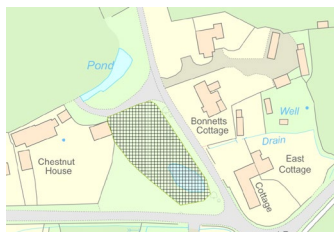
WA3 – Wickhambrook Cemetery



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



WA6 – Attleton Green



Wildlife Area - cut once with arisings collected

WA4 – Outer Banks at Six Acres



cut back 1/3 - 1/5 every third year - note steep banks