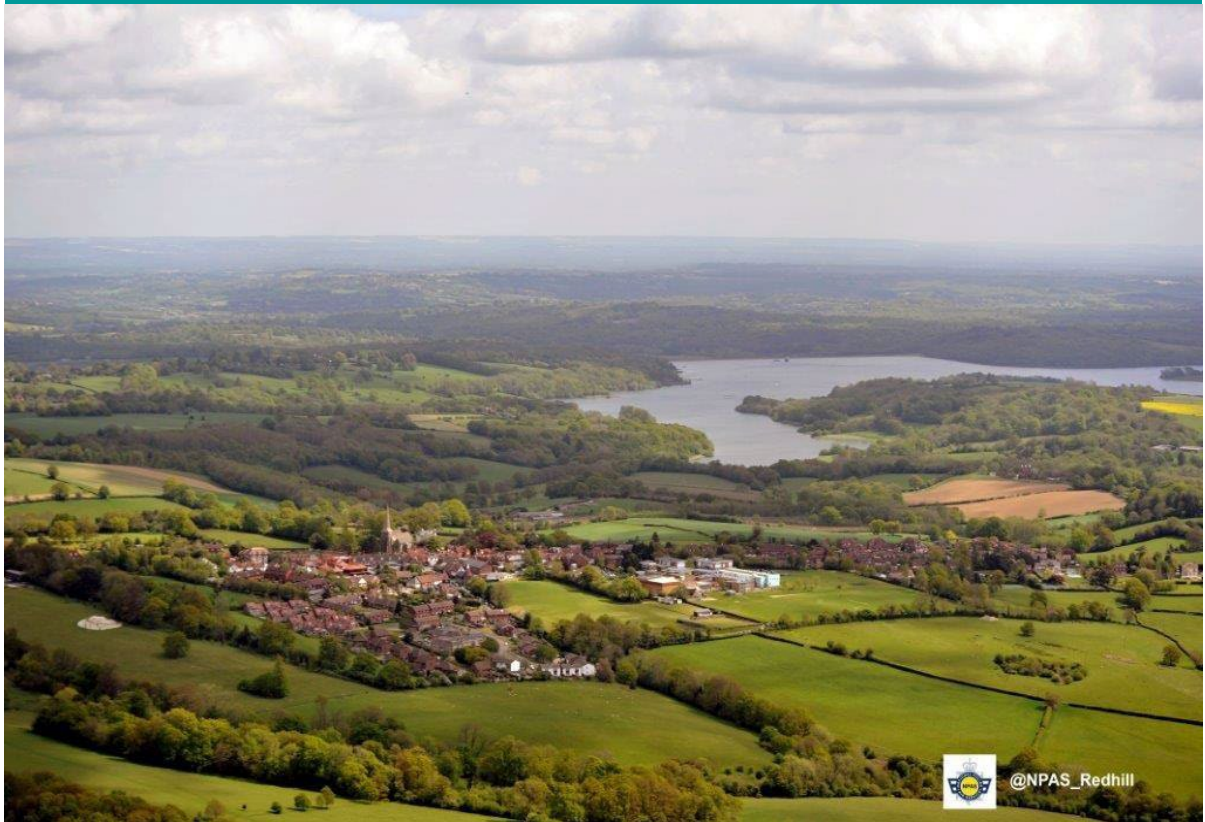


WADHURST

Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2039



By kind permission of the National Police Air Service (NPAS) Redhill

Referendum Version (2024)

This Plan has been prepared by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on behalf of the Wadhurst Parish Council and those who live and work in the Parish

March 2024

Foreword

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan is not statutory but a right which communities can choose to use. It is however part of the statutory development plan for the area. In September 2017, Wadhurst Parish Council (WPC), the qualifying body responsible for the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (WNP), agreed that the Plan should be prepared by a Steering Group of residents and WPC Councillors.

During the many Neighbourhood Plan consultations, interested parties have been widely consulted to ensure that the Plan meets the Parish needs. Our Plan sets out a future vision for the whole Parish, including Wadhurst village, Durgates, Sparrows Green, Cousley Wood, Primmers Green, Pell Green, Woods Green, Turners Green, Tidebrook, Best Beech and Stone Cross/Moseham.

The Parish Vision, which includes both planning and non-planning related matters of importance to the community, is:

‘Wadhurst Parish will continue to be a collection of friendly and vibrant distinct communities. The Parish will retain and support its rural ‘village feel’, historic character and heritage. Justifiable, sensitive and sustainable development will be supported whilst robustly protecting the High Weald National Landscape. The Parish economy and its popular High Street will be revitalised by improvements to the roads, traffic control, parking and active support of businesses. Sustainable ways of improving the built and natural environment, travel, leisure and amenities, which promote health and well-being, will be sought wherever possible.’

The Plan has five key objectives for the Parish to deliver the Vision:

Objective 1 – Heritage, Character and Design: To influence the provision of sympathetically designed, high quality housing in accordance with the Design Code that has been prepared for Wadhurst that meets local housing needs while enhancing the distinctive natural and built character of the Parish through justified, sensitive, sustainable development and healthy placemaking. Recognising and protecting the individual and distinctive settlements that comprise the Parish.

Objective 2 – Getting Around: To address local transport issues, including traffic and parking issues and promoting sustainable transport options by improving connectivity to facilities within and beyond the Parish by integrating and, where possible, extending the network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.

Objective 3 – Local Economy: To support and extend business, employment and associated training opportunities – including provision of infrastructure required – to grow the local economy, and to support the development of the Parish as a sustainable and environmentally friendly destination for those visiting the High Weald.

Objective 4 – Environment: To maintain and enhance the rural character and landscape features of the Parish, that led to the area’s designation as the High Weald National Landscape. This includes promoting opportunities for supporting and improving biodiversity, safeguarding valued green spaces and access to these, and protecting key viewpoints afforded by the Parish’s ridgeline location.

Objective 5 - Health, Wellbeing and Leisure: To retain and, where possible, expand the range of facilities and amenities available for local residents.

Following on from our previous consultations on the draft WNP, this Plan was amended fairly significantly in response to the representations received both from residents, statutory consultees and professional advice.

Following a successful Parish referendum, the policies in the WNP will be used by Wealden District Council – alongside the policies of the adopted Local Plan - to determine planning applications in the Parish. In addition, with a ‘made’ (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community will benefit from an uplift in the level of community infrastructure levy (developer contributions) received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing dwelling in the parish) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from the neighbourhood area. These contributions can be used to finance infrastructure projects or anything else to address the demands that development places on the area.

For more information about the WNP, please visit: <http://wadhurst-pc.gov.uk>

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Appendix C – Non-designated heritage assets

Appendix D – Locally distinctive and highly valued views

Appendix E - Local Green Spaces



Images show: St Peter and St Paul Church and The Greyhound public house

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). It sets out planning and land-use policy for the Parish, over the period 2016 to 2039, forming part of the Development Plan for Wealden District.
- 1.2 Wealden District Council (WDC), as the Local Planning Authority, designated the Wadhurst neighbourhood plan area on 8 November 2017. The neighbourhood plan area shares its boundary with that of the Parish (Figure 1.1).
- 1.3 The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Parish Council, as the Qualifying Body, set up a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group comprising community volunteers and Parish councillors to lead on the preparation of the Plan. In consultation with the community and local businesses, the Steering Group has established a vision and framework for the future of the designated area and set out how that vision will be realised through planning land-use and development change over the period 2016 to 2039.
- 1.4 The WNP provides guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within Wadhurst Parish. It also sets out how land should be considered in planning terms locally and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 1.5 The process of producing the WNP has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance in Wadhurst Parish. Within each section there is a summary of what the policy seeks to achieve and a justification, providing the necessary understanding of why the policy is needed and how it should be applied. The policies themselves are presented in the green boxes and these will be used to determine planning applications. To understand the full context for any individual policy, it should be read alongside the supporting text and evidence documents that have been compiled to underpin the WNP. Beneath each policy is a conformity reference, listing the relevant policies in the WDC adopted Local Plan documents, the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan and the paragraphs of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that the policy is in conformity with.
- 1.6 Section 11 sets out a framework for monitoring and implementation of the WNP. Infrastructure improvements and developer contributions are discussed in Section 12, with Community Aspirations - Major Projects detailed in Section 13. Additional local community project aspirations, that are not met through planning policy, but which are important to the well-being of the community, are detailed in the Evidence Base document, Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Community Aspirations.

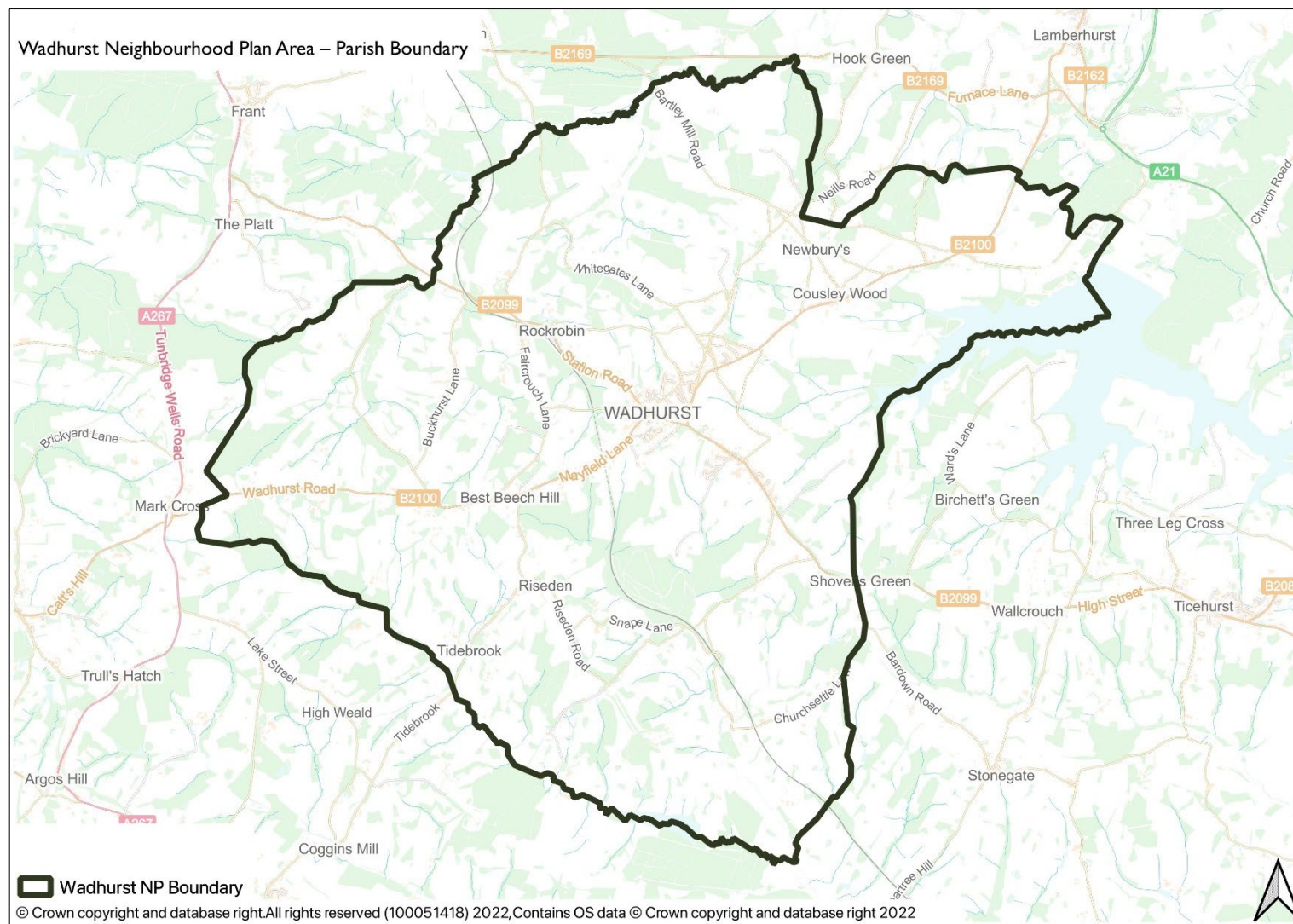


Figure 1.1: Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan designated neighbourhood area – the Parish boundary

The planning policy context

National Planning Policy

- 1.7 The WNP has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF (most recently revised in December 2023). Paragraphs 29 and 30 state:

*“Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan. **Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area or undermine those strategic policies** (Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in any development plan that covers their area).*

*Once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, **the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict; unless they are superseded by strategic or non-strategic policies that are adopted subsequently.***

Local Planning Policy

- 1.8 The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Development Plan for Wealden district, which comprises the following:
- [Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan](#) (WDC, May 2016)
 - [Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan](#) (WDC, February 2013)
 - [Saved policies of the adopted Wealden Local Plan](#) (WDC, 1998)
 - [Waste and Minerals Local Plan](#) (East Sussex County Council (ESCC, February 2013)
 - [Waste and Minerals Sites Plan](#) (ESCC, February 2017)
 - ‘Made’ Neighbourhood Plans within the district
- 1.9 The adopted Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) currently in force seeks to deliver approximately 4,525 net additional dwellings (450 per annum) across the district to provide for 9,440 dwellings over the period 2006-2027. Provision is also made for an additional 40,000 sq. metres net employment floorspace to provide for 128,695 sq. metres net employment floorspace and 17,000 sq. metres net additional retail floorspace over the period 2006-2027.
- 1.10 WDC is preparing a new Local Plan. On 19 February 2020, WDC formally withdrew its draft Wealden Local Plan 2019 following its Stage One examination process. Work has begun on preparing a new document and the first stage of this was a Direction of Travel Consultation, that took place between 23 November 2020 and 18 January 2021. The [current Local Development Scheme](#) (January 2024) states that the Regulation 18 consultation will take place in March 2024, with adoption envisaged in 2026.

- 1.11 The Direction of Travel Consultation policy options have been considered as part of the development of the WNP, although they carry no weight at this time.
- 1.12 At January 2024 there is a housing need target of 1,200 homes per annum to be delivered across the district. This figure is subject to change. This is currently the highest out of all East Sussex local authorities. See also Appendix A for further information on housing delivery in Wadhurst Parish since 1 April 2013. In terms of employment provision, [prepared evidence on district-wide need](#) can be found on WDC's website.
- 1.13 In the context of the emerging Local Plan, the WNP does not seek to allocate sites for housing or employment. There will be a need to review this position once the Local Plan is adopted and further information about this is set out in Section 11 of this document. However, since Wadhurst is inside the High Weald National Landscape area (also known as the AONB), the WNP stresses the need for Brownfield development over Greenfield (National Landscape) development going forward.

Other considerations

The High Weald AONB Management Plan

- 1.14 As of 22nd November 2023, all Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales have become National Landscapes. National Planning Policy and legislation still refers to AONBs rather than National Landscapes at this current time. Wadhurst Parish falls wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. Local authorities with land in a National Landscape are legally obliged under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to produce a Management Plan. The [High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024](#) is used to guide environmental land management and assess the impact of development or other changes on the National Landscape.
- 1.15 The objectives of the Management Plan have been considered in the development of this Neighbourhood Plan, as has the advice contained in the [High Weald Housing Design Guide](#) and the [High Weald AONB Colour Study](#).

Community engagement

- 1.16 Two-way communication with the local community throughout the WNP process has been vital for its success and ultimate support through to the public referendum. It has been important to engage with the whole community including key stakeholders throughout the process.
- 1.17 Communication and consultation, in various forms, (despite the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns during 2020/2021) has played a major role in formulating the WNP and allowing parishioners and other relevant stakeholders the opportunity to take part in defining the WNP. A full description of the community engagement process will be included in the Consultation Statement that will accompany this Submission Plan. Table 1.1 summarises the activity.



Images show: local consultation events

Date	Milestone	Key activities
2017	Neighbourhood Area designated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WPC decide to prepare a neighbourhood plan. Steering Group established. Area designated to coincide with the Parish.
2018	Initial community engagement to publicise the plan and gain input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of the WNP at the Commemoration Hall – Saturday pm 23 June 2018. Parish Fair – Uplands Community College – WNP Drop-in sessions – June 2018. Primary School Summer Fair – WNP Drop-in sessions – July 2018. Tidebrook Summer Fair – July 2018 and Tidebrook Drop-in sessions September 2018. Launch of the five resident Focus Groups at the Greyhound – Autumn 2018. Cousley Wood Community Event (held in Old Vine) – September 2018.
2019	Evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household Survey – March 2019. ‘What we all said’ community presentation at the Commemoration Hall – April 2019. Business Survey – May 2019.
2020 to 2021	Drafting the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-Submission plan drafted. SEA/HRA screening finalised. Regulation 14 (Phase 1) Pre-submission plan consultation and feedback survey – 17th June-15th August 2021. Feedback considered, prompting professional health check of the WNP. Development of Wadhurst Design Code.
2022	Consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 14 (Phase 2) consultation to consult on changes since the first consultation.
2023 to 2024	Finalising and making of the WNP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission Version Plan submitted to WDC. Regulation 16 Consultation. Examination. Parish referendum.

Table 1.1: Engagement activity timeline

- 1.18 Discussions with WDC have taken place on each of the topic areas covered by the WNP. In addition, communication with local groups and neighbouring parishes has taken place.

Evidence base

- 1.19 A series of reports and evidence documents have either been drawn on or commissioned for the WNP. These are listed in full in Section 16 and form the Evidence Base for the WNP. They include:

- Summary of the Parish Household Survey (HS) results
- 5 Focus Groups' Final Closing Reports
- Regulation 14 (Phases 1 and 2) Feedback Survey (FS) results
- Create Streets Wadhurst Design Code Mapping Tool
- Wadhurst Character Assessment
- High Weald AONB Management Plan
- High Weald Housing Design Guide
- Wealden Design Guide
- Wadhurst Design Code
- Local Green Spaces Report
- Significant Local Views Report

- 1.20 In addition, a review of the WDC evidence base used for the withdrawn Local Plan (2019) was analysed. Finally, all existing documents and strategies for the Parish and the published statistical information/data, including the 2011 Census data, were reviewed.

- 1.21 The Regulation 14 (Phase 1) Consultation (2021) brought about a great deal of feedback from both the community and statutory consultees, and this has been drawn on. In particular, key parishioner concerns about the impact of development have been carefully considered, for instance, the constraint of the High Street due to traffic congestion, the need for development to be supported by adequate infrastructure services (key among them are GP's, dentists, school places, sewage, water supplies) and the parishioners' preference for Brownfield development over Greenfield Countryside development in the High Weald National Landscape.

- 1.22 Some of the concerns raised, for instance strategic transport issues such as road congestion and speeding, medical provision and school places, sit outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is because they are the responsibility of other authorities, for instance the Highways Authority (National Highways and East Sussex County Council (ESCC)), the Education Authority (ESCC) and the Health Authority (NHS England and the Primary Care Trusts). Nevertheless, they have been recorded and Section 12 of this document sets out how the Parish Council will actively liaise with infrastructure providers to influence provision alongside development proposals coming forward in the future.

Sustainability of the Neighbourhood Plan

- 1.23 The WNP was originally screened by WDC in July 2021 to ascertain whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) would be required. The screening document was subject to consultation with Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency and the screening Determination Statement concluded that the WNP would be unlikely to result in significant environmental effects and therefore would not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 1.24 In addition, the screening determined that the 'appropriate assessment' stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process that ascertains the effect on the integrity of any sites of European significance would not need to be undertaken. This conclusion was sent to Natural England for consideration and their response was in agreement.
- 1.25 Following the Regulation 14 (Phase 1) consultation (2021) on the Pre-Submission Version WNP, and as a result of the significant number of amendments that have been made to the Plan, notably the inclusion of several new policies, WDC recommended that the updated Pre-Submission Version WNP be rescreened for the purposes of SEA and HRA. This was undertaken in Autumn 2022. The screening has determined that the WNP requires neither an SEA nor an Appropriate Assessment.
- 1.26 Copies of the Screening Determination statements are available on the Wadhurst Parish Council website (see Wadhurst Parish Council Website: [SEA](#) and [HRA](#)) and were included within the Basic Conditions Statement, which accompanied the Submission Version Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.27 A Sustainability Appraisal has been prepared to accompany the WNP, which considers the impact of each policy against economic, environmental and social factors. This is included in the Evidence Base.

2. ABOUT WADHURST

A portrait of the Parish

- 2.1. Wadhurst village is a historic market settlement, granted a royal charter in 1253, located within the High Weald National Landscape. Wadhurst village began as a crossing point linking ancient route ways, and as an unofficial market centre serving an area of scattered farmhouses and manors. In the 13th century, a more permanent settlement began to develop following the granting of a town charter, in 1253, for an official weekly market. In the 1700s, the road through Wadhurst village became a Turnpike (toll road) – now the B2099.
- 2.2. The landscape retains its medieval character of small irregular-shaped fields and scattered farmsteads, often grazed by sheep or Sussex cattle. Oak and sweet chestnut dominate the wooded rolling hills and streams run red from iron ore in the local rock. Close by, Bewl Water, the largest body of fresh water in the south east, is an active water sports and trout fishing centre. Wadhurst was also the location of the Last Great Prize Fight on 10th December 1863, when Englishman, Tom King, beat the American, John Heenan.
- 2.3. The High Street follows the line of an ancient trackway connecting prehistoric and Roman ironworking sites and communities. This became the old drovers' road and, in 1767, the turnpike around which the village grew. Wadhurst centre still has over 25 buildings dating from between 1500 and 1800, with predominantly small independent retail outlets that attract people from outside the village. Untouched by the advent of steam in 1851 (the railway station is 2.2Km/1.4 miles away), the only significant changes to the centre of the village were after an RAF aeroplane sadly crashed into the centre of the High Street in 1956.
- 2.4. Oak and iron formed the fundamental character of Wadhurst. The village still has a working blacksmith and an old, converted forge, grand ironmasters' homes and the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul where can be seen the finest collection of iron memorial slabs in England, dating from 1617 to 1799. The Church also commemorates the fallen of the two World Wars.
- 2.5. Local oak was used to build great wooden warships at Chatham Dockyard. It is said that oak from the Whiligh estate in Wadhurst forms the hammer-beam roof of Westminster Hall, commissioned in 1393 by King Richard II; it was certainly used to rebuild it after its bombing in the 2nd World War.
- 2.6. The Parish is at the northern extremity of East Sussex and lies six miles south of Royal Tunbridge Wells on the east-west Forest Ridge of the Sussex and Kent Weald. It covers an area of 15.5 square miles and includes the main residential areas of Wadhurst village, Durgates, Sparrows Green, Turners Green, Pell Green and Cousley Wood. Smaller hamlet communities comprise Primmers Green, Woods Green, Tidebrook, Best Beech and Stone Cross/Moseham. The population of the Parish has now risen to over 5,000, living in approximately 2,500 households. Figure 2.1 shows the location of the Parish within the broader geography.

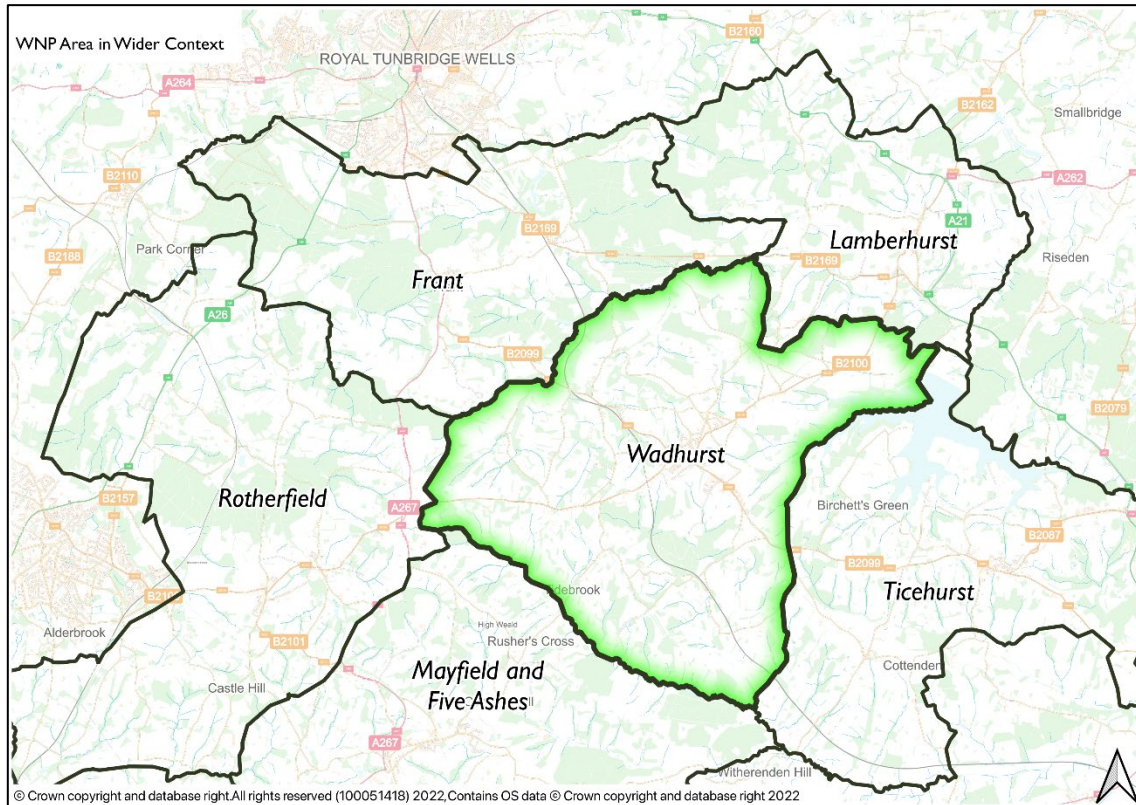


Figure 2.1: Wadhurst Parish and surrounding areas

- 2.7. As shown in Figure 2.2, Wadhurst Parish is situated wholly within the High Weald National Landscape (approximately 53% of Wealden district as a whole lies within the National Landscape). The landscape is one of sandstone ridges, small ancient woodlands and irregular-shaped fields. The High Weald is one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in north west Europe and has remained a unique and recognisable area for at least the last 700 years. The unique natural beauty of the High Weald was recognised in 1983 with its designation as an AONB (now known as a National Landscape).



Images show: Wadhurst Park; and Wadhurst Village sign

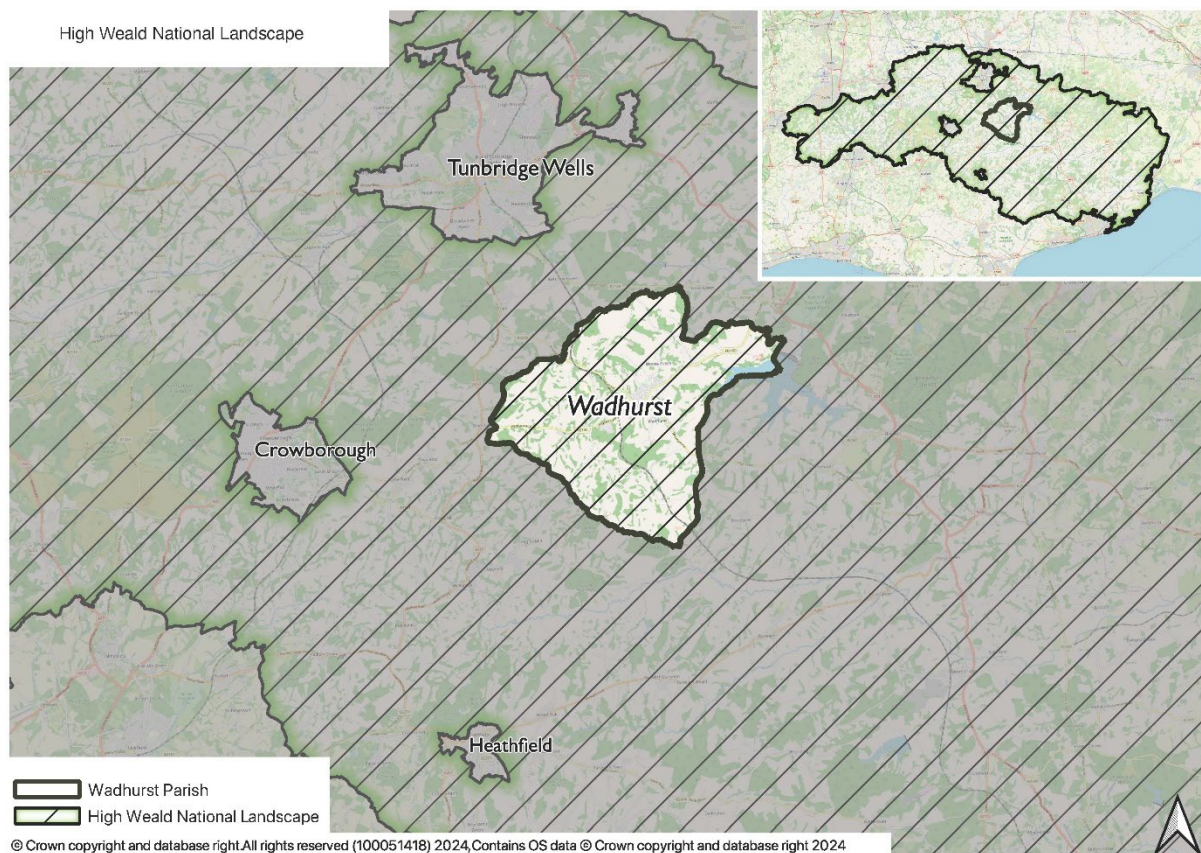


Figure 2.2: Wadhurst Parish within the High Weald National Landscape

- 2.8. Initially, the economy of the nascent town built on local trades and pig and sheep farming. Later, from the 1570s to the 1850s, Wadhurst became a centre of the iron industry, wealth from which was used to build many of the large houses in the Parish. With the decline of the iron industry in the area, due to the development of coal blast furnaces in the North of England, livelihoods were largely derived from woodland management, small mixed farming, wool, dairying, soft fruit and, notably, hops. Where these have become less viable, the farms have become larger or have diversified, supplying small trades and services associated with the rural economy. The Parish boundary incorporates parts of Bewl Water, the largest inland body of water in southeast England.
- 2.9. Wadhurst village has a popular High Street, but the narrow B2099 High Street is now often traffic congested and gridlocked and has a shortage of parking. The volume of general traffic and HGVs through the High Street has increased significantly recently with new housing developments, associated construction traffic and on-line delivery traffic. The Cattle Market closed in 1983 partly due to the increase in traffic congestion.

- 2.10. There are many heritage assets within the Parish. This includes over 150 listed buildings and two Conservation Areas. The designated Conservation Area around the High Street was reviewed and extended in 2017. The Conservation Area for Cousley Wood was first designated in 1995 and was reappraised and extended to include Pell Green in 2017. The Conservation Area Appraisal provides further detail. There is a Scheduled Monument (Riverhall blast furnace) on the western boundary of the parish.
- 2.11. Being within the High Weald National Landscape, Wadhurst is a haven for biodiversity and wildlife, including Local Wildlife Sites and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and areas noted for their nature at a local level. These include Snape Wood, Birchett's Wood and Bewl Water.
- 2.12. With its numerous countryside footpaths, clubs and leisure opportunities and connections via road (the Parish is accessed from the A21) and rail (Wadhurst is on the London to Hastings line) to the rest of the UK, Wadhurst is a popular place to live and work.



Images show: Rehoboth Chapel, Pell Green; Bewl Water; and The Wadhurst Flag, which is a community flag proclaiming the unique identity of this Sussex Parish and its people. The flag displays a green field evoking the Parish communities' rural nature. A golden-orange section, forming a 'W' for Wadhurst, recalls the historic iron industry and the mineral colour of local streams. It also symbolises the hills, steep valleys and meandering streams of the surrounding High Weald.

Parish Statistics

2.13. The following profile has been constructed using the data from the 2011 census:

Population by Age and Household Composition

2.14. Of the Parish population, 21% were aged over 65 and 31% were aged 45-64. Around 28% were one-person households. Moreover, 56% of those single households were aged over 65. Thus, an important development theme will be that of “downsizing” as the local population ages into 1–2-bedroom accommodation for the elderly and not to 4/5 bed new build homes. Parish housing that is affordable for the young is particularly important to ensure local families remain together and should not have to move to other locations.

Economic Activity

2.15. The Parish has a level of economic activity (defined as those aged 16-74 who are in employment, self-employment, or actively seeking work) in line with regional and national levels.

2.16. The self-employed make up a larger proportion, at 19.3% in the Parish compared with 15.7% for Wealden and just 9.7% in England & Wales. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, commuting for work into London was common, but now with the benefit of modern technology, more people are currently working from home and the unemployment rate in the Parish is low.

Employment by Industry

2.17. Data shows that the biggest sources of employment are wholesale, retail trade and car repairs (13.7%), finance, insurance and property (12.5%), professional, science and technical (11.8%), followed by human health and social work (11.3%), education (10.5%). Agriculture, while historically important, employs just 2.4% of the labour force. Tourism is not singled out but is thought to be an important contributor to the local economy.

Access to a Car and Distance Travelled to Work

2.18. Car ownership per household is high in the Parish, both compared with the Wealden district and national averages. With continued growth this average could rise further when the data for the 2021 census is released. Hence, there is a concern that further growth in the Parish will come at the cost of more traffic congestion and pressure on the local road network. But it is also significant that 10% of Parish households are without a car. This emphasises the need for the communities around the Parish to be better connected with safer routes for people choosing to walk or cycle, although this is not helped by the very hilly topography of the Parish.

Challenges and Opportunities facing the Parish

- 2.19. Since the initiation of the Plan project in September 2017, a considerable amount of work has been undertaken to gauge the views and aspirations of parishioners and businesses within the Parish. Five residents' Focus Groups reviewed core subjects comprising: Design, Development and Character; Getting Around; Local Economy; Environment; Wellbeing and Leisure. A detailed report of the five Focus Group findings is included in the Evidence Base (The Future – What Parishioners Want) accompanying this document (see Section 16).
- 2.20. The key opportunities and challenges that have emerged and which the WNP seeks to address are:
1. Protecting the valued High Weald National Landscape setting and important views and green spaces within it, including its contribution to biodiversity, recreation and local character. Access to green spaces is important to safeguard as is the provision of new green spaces.
 2. Maintaining the identity and distinctiveness of the individual settlements within the Parish.
 3. Tackling traffic issues, including congestion, narrow lanes, lack of car parking, and road safety.
 4. Protecting and improving the health and wellbeing of parishioners underlies most of these challenges and opportunities.
 5. Ensuring that any new development is in keeping with and contributes positively towards the character of the Parish.
 6. Supporting the ongoing viability and vitality of Wadhurst village centre
 7. Meeting the demands of younger people and families and an ageing population in terms of ensuring housing, services and facilities are accessible and suited to their needs.
 8. Seeking to ensure that necessary and adequate infrastructure is provided.
 9. Improving accessibility within Wadhurst village and to nearby settlements – through the provision and improvement of footpaths, cycle paths, and public transport, if possible – to help reduce over-reliance on car use.
 10. Addressing the provision of housing that is affordable on local average incomes.
 11. Supporting employment that exists in the Parish, including opportunities for those wishing to work from home or more flexibly.
 12. Preserving the dark skies of the Parish.

3. A VISION FOR WADHURST PARISH

Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan

- 3.1. Through a combination of questionnaire surveys, public consultations, email correspondence and conversations with local businesses, the Steering Group collected the views of parishioners and local businesses to understand what they wished to see for the future of the Parish. There were various consultation events, which have informed the Vision and Objectives. The Vision for Wadhurst seeks to capture parishioners' aspirations for the Parish. It therefore forms the basis on which the Objectives and Policies have been formulated. In consultation with the community, the vision for Wadhurst Parish for 2039 is:

Wadhurst Parish will continue to be a collection of friendly and vibrant distinct communities. The Parish will retain and support its rural 'village feel', historic character and heritage. Justifiable, sensitive and sustainable development will be supported, whilst robustly protecting the High Weald National Landscape. The Parish economy and its popular High Street will be revitalised by improvements to the roads, traffic control, parking and active support of businesses. Sustainable ways of improving the built and natural environment, travel, leisure and amenities, which promote health and well-being, will be sought wherever possible.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

- 3.2. The WNP has five objectives, as follows:

Objective 1 – Character, Heritage and Design: To influence the provision of sympathetically designed, high quality housing in accordance with the Design Code that has been prepared for Wadhurst that meets local housing needs while enhancing the distinctive natural and built character of the Parish through justified, sensitive, sustainable development and healthy placemaking. Recognising and protecting the individual and distinctive settlements that comprise the Parish.

Objective 2 – Getting Around: To address local transport issues, including traffic and parking issues and promoting sustainable transport options by improving connectivity to facilities within and beyond the Parish by integrating and, where possible, extending the network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways.

Objective 3 – Local Economy: To support and extend business, employment and associated training opportunities – including provision of infrastructure required – to grow the local economy, and to support the development of the Parish as a sustainable and environmentally friendly destination for those visiting the High Weald.

Objective 4 – Environment: To enhance and maintain the rural character and landscape features of the Parish, that led to the area's designation as the High Weald National Landscape. This includes promoting opportunities for supporting and improving biodiversity, safeguarding valued green spaces and access to these, and protecting key viewpoints afforded by the Parish's ridgeline location.

Objective 5 - Health, Wellbeing and Leisure: To retain and, where possible, expand the range of facilities and amenities available for local residents.

4. SPATIAL STRATEGY

Policy WAD1: Location of development

Purpose

- 4.1. This policy sets out the WNP approach to the location of development within the Parish. It emphasises the importance of protecting the nationally important High Weald National Landscape, by ensuring that any development is directed to the most sustainable locations, which is within the defined development boundaries, near to local services and amenities. Development beyond this should be strictly controlled.

Justification

Protecting the High Weald National Landscape

- 4.2. Unlike the neighbouring towns of Crowborough, Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells, Wadhurst Parish – including Wadhurst village – lies wholly within the High Weald National Landscape (Figure 2.1). The Parish benefits from spectacular long-ranging views from ridges across the valleys to the north and south. Steep valley sides descend sharply from the ridge towards the Rother Valley and Bewl Water. The rolling landscape is richly wooded with ancient woodland and shaws, unimproved grassland, heathland and historic field boundaries, relatively open valley floors with small, winding, streams and extensive areas of exceptional and unique remoteness.
- 4.3. The engagement process for the WNP has revealed that residents strongly value this special landscape and are keen to safeguard its natural and historic features against inappropriate development. This means retaining the rural nature of the Parish's settlements – in terms of size and character.
- 4.4. The importance of protecting National Landscapes is a national priority, recognised in the NPPF, which states in Paragraph 182 *"that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and AONBs"* and at Paragraph 183 that *"planning permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest"*.
- 4.5. Whether a proposal is a 'major development' for the purpose of Paragraph 183 is a matter for the decision maker (who is WDC for the Parish) taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated.
- 4.6. The Government's Housing Need for Wealden District has already risen from 450 dwellings per annum (dpa) in the current Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) to c. 1,200 dpa) for the emerging Local Plan (2024).
- 4.7. WDC's 5-year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS) was only 3.80 years as of 1 April 2023. This was probably due to the Government's high Housing Need numbers, where estimates are based on 2014 population projections (where 2018 projections are available that would lead to reduced housing need numbers). It was also due to the Covid pandemic and developer 'Land Banking'.

- 4.8. So, since late 2015, official data shows that WDC has not been meeting its Government Housing Need and WDC (and Developers) deem this an 'exceptional circumstance' for major development on National Landscape Greenfield, thereby tilting the balance in favour of development.
- 4.9. To place this in context, from 2016 to 22 there have been 245 completions, approvals and live applications (as of October 2022, see Appendix A for further detail). Of this total, 75% are dwellings on Greenfield sites and just 25% on Brownfield sites within the Parish.
- 4.10. As can be seen from WDC's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2021 map, all the subsequent Parish lands put forward for possible development are Greenfield sites within the National Landscape Parish countryside. However, WDC's SHELAA only calls for sites over 5 dwellings, developments tend to be large and not small scale, which is not in line with parishioners' wishes.
- 4.11. However, according to the Parish Household Survey / 1st Regulation 14 Feedback Survey, over 94% of parishioner respondents have stated they do not support further major development encroachment on Greenfield (countryside) and wish further development to be on Brownfield sites as a clear preference, where possible. Therefore, this Plan respects the parishioners' survey feedback by not allocating for development any of these Greenfield countryside sites and this forms part of the decision not to allocate sites at all.
- 4.12. The Plan strongly encourages future development – including strategic sites - to use Brownfield sites in preference to the Greenfield countryside in the High Weald National Landscape.
- 4.13. However, it should be noted that recent case law, Monkhill 2021, has had the effect of shifting the 'tilted balance' back in favour of protection. The Court of Appeal recently decided that the failure of a Council to build enough houses is not a relevant issue once the need to protect the AONB (now National Landscape) or other protected areas has been established, see 2021 EWCA Civ 74 (Monkhill vs Secretary of State) para 37.
- 4.14. At a regional level, the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2016) describes the characteristics of Wadhurst Parish as follows:

"As with most of the Wealden landscape the historic field patterns of small fields and significant hedgerows remain intact, apart from in the wider more fertile river valleys where farming is more intensive."

Protecting this important landscape against inappropriate development is also supported in the adopted Core Strategy, and in the Wealden Local Plan Direction of Travel Consultation document.

- 4.15. The High Weald Management Plan provides a comprehensive strategy to conserve and enhance the National Landscape and has been adopted by Wealden District Council, therefore development proposals will need to have regard to this Management Plan.

Supporting sustainable development

4.16. The adopted Local Plan does not identify a housing figure to be delivered through the WNP itself, as it considers that housing supply to be adequately addressed at the strategic level through the strategic allocations. The WNP therefore does not allocate sites for housing, rather it supports a series of parameters to support WDC's growth strategy. These are:

- Conserving and enhancing the nationally important landscape of the High Weald National Landscape;
- Directing development to within the defined, adopted development boundaries (Figure 4.1);
- Prioritising the use of Brownfield sites and only permitting Greenfield development beyond or on the edge of the development boundaries in exceptional circumstances, with clear and strict guidance on what is appropriate;
- Providing new dwellings in the period to 2039 on sites in accordance with the adopted Local Plan;
- Ensuring that the overall quantum of development does not put an unacceptable strain on infrastructure capacity, in accordance with Policy CS1 of the adopted Core Strategy;
- Ensuring that new developments include a mix of housing to meet the needs of local people, considering the current and projected demographic of the Parish;
- Neighbourhood Plan Policy WAD15 (Local Green Spaces) takes into account the Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community by virtue of their beauty, history, recreation value, tranquillity and richness of their wildlife;
- Protecting cherished areas of beauty/history/recreation/tranquillity and wildlife;
- Ensuring that new development is well-connected to the rights of way network, improving and adding to this where possible, to provide pedestrian and cycle links; and
- Providing well-designed dwellings that are sympathetic to the character of the settlement.

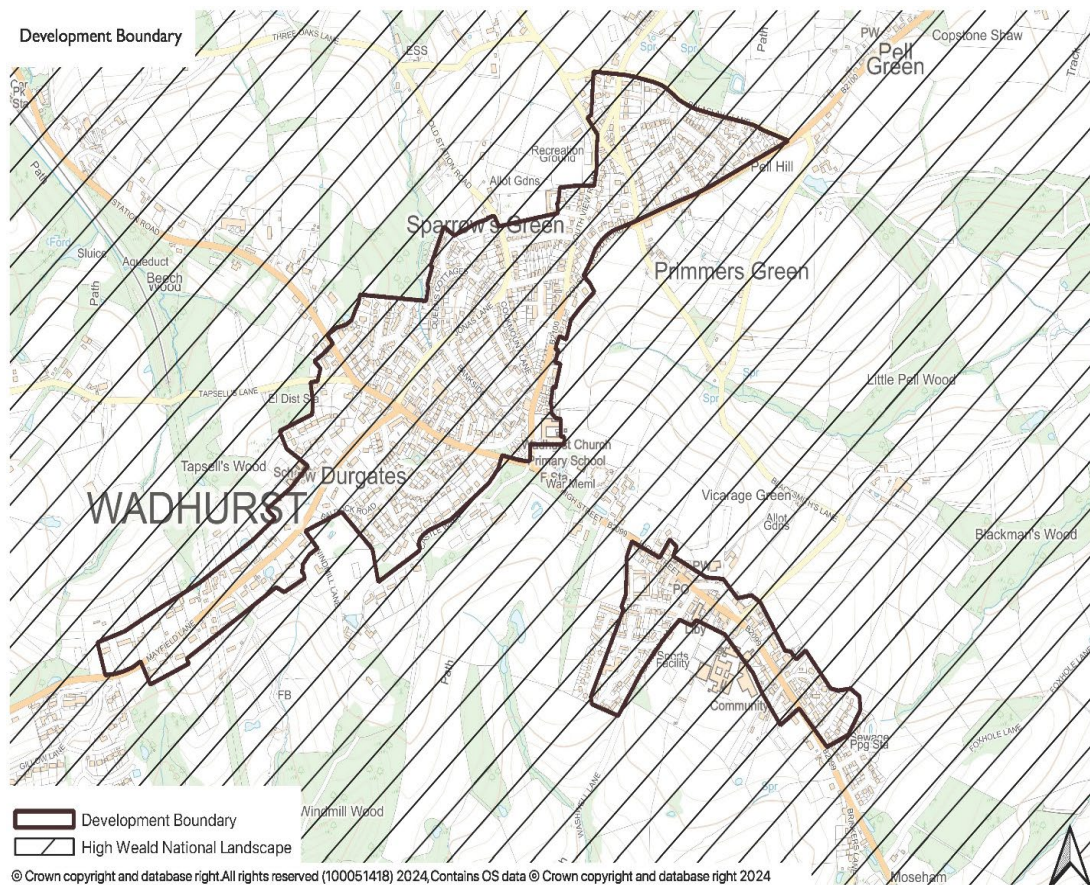


Figure 4.1: Map showing the current adopted (1998 Local Plan) development boundaries within Wadhurst Parish

POLICY WAD1: LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT

- A. Development in the neighbourhood plan area will be supported within development boundaries defined in the current adopted Local Plan. Development proposals on Brownfield land within these boundaries will be particularly supported, subject to compliance with the policies in this plan.**
- B. Development in the countryside, beyond the adopted development boundaries, will be strictly controlled in the interests of conserving the nationally important landscape, tranquillity and distinctive character of the High Weald National Landscape and will be resisted except in the circumstances detailed below:**
- i. It constitutes appropriate development in the countryside consistent with the High Weald National Landscape, in accordance with NPPF paragraphs 84, 88 and 89; and**
 - ii. It conserves and enhances the landscape and scenic beauty of the High Weald National Landscape and its setting and has regard to the objectives of the High Weald Management Plan; and**
 - iii. it relates to necessary utilities infrastructure and where no reasonable alternative location is available; or**
 - iv. the proposal is a “rural exceptions scheme” to provide affordable housing tailored to meet local needs in the Parish, supported by appropriate evidence, in accordance with Policy WAD2 (Meeting Local Housing Needs) of the Neighbourhood Plan, and managed in perpetuity by a social housing provider in accordance with WCS9 of the adopted Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan or in any successor policy; or**
 - v. it is on sites strategically allocated in the Wealden Local Plan or its successor; or**
 - vi. the proposal brings redundant or vacant agricultural/farm buildings or historic buildings of heritage value back into optimal use; or**
 - vii. it relates to sustainable rural tourism, in accordance with Policy WAD11; or**
 - viii. It comprises development which would be supported by the Local Plan.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1, 4; WDC Saved policies (1998): GD1, GD2, EN1, EN2, EN6, EN15, EN17, EN18, DC2-DC8, DC17-DC22, HG3, HG12, TM1, TM3; WDC Core Strategy (2013): WCS1-WSC3, WCS6, WCS9, WCS14; AONB objectives: S2, S3; NPPF: 11, 20, 83, 84, 89, 97e, 109, 123-125, 128, 157, 180, 182 183

5. HOUSING

Policy WAD2: Meeting local housing needs

Purpose

- 5.1. Policy WAD2 seeks to ensure that there is a range of general housing that is designed to be capable of meeting the specific housing needs of the Parish.

Justification

- 5.2. It is important that any new residential development within Wadhurst Parish addresses local housing needs. Policy AFH1 of Wealden's Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan supports this approach. It requires all sites of five or more dwellings to deliver 35% as affordable homes of a mix of tenures.
- 5.3. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (2021) prepared for the emerging Local Plan suggests the following at a district-wide level:
- Market housing: there is a fairly modest need for market housing of 1-bedroom (5% of market homes) and a far larger need for two- and three-bedroom market homes (at 30% and 40% respectively) with the remaining need at 4+ bedrooms (approximately 25%).
 - Affordable housing: the analysis suggests that there will be a need for both social and affordable rented housing – the latter will be suitable particularly for households who are close to being able to afford to rent privately and also for some households who claim full housing benefit. On this basis, at a district level, a rigid policy for the split between social and affordable rented housing, is not recommended, although the analysis is clear that both tenures of homes are likely to be required.
- 5.4. Surveys carried out at the Parish level to inform the WNP point to the importance of meeting the needs of those seeking to get on to the housing ladder, as well as those of the elderly (70+). The Office of National Statistics (ONS) data related to population growth by age category between 2011 and 2019 reveal that there was a 55% increase in those aged 70-74. There is clear evidence that the 20-30 range and the 70+ bracket are also growing rapidly across the district and this is also true for Wadhurst Parish, as has been endorsed through survey data.
- 5.5. Providing homes that meet the needs of a range of age groups is therefore important. The Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) has, since 2009, developed a series of [principles for good design of housing](#) generally. Many of the principles are recognisable from good design generally – good light, ventilation, room to move around and good storage – but they have particular relevance to the spectrum of older persons' housing which needs to both offer an attractive alternative to the family home and be able to adapt over time to meet changing needs.

5.6. The ten principles are:

- Space and flexibility
- Daylight in the home and in shared spaces
- Balconies and outdoor space
- Adaptability and 'care ready' design
- Positive use of circulation space
- Shared facilities and 'hubs'
- Plants, trees, and the natural environment
- Energy efficiency and sustainable design
- Storage for belongings and bicycles
- External shared surfaces and 'home zones'

5.7. In addition to these standards, the Alzheimer's Society suggests that in 2015 there were around 850,000 people in the UK living with dementia, a figure expected to rise to over 1 million by 2025. East Sussex County Council estimates that in the county, around 10,200 people (1.88% of the population) have dementia. The Royal Town Planning Institute's (RTPI) publication, Dementia and Town Planning, provides guidance to enable better environments for those living with dementia. Development proposals should seek to incorporate this guidance where appropriate.

5.8. In terms of size of housing, the existing housing stock in the Parish has a significant tilt towards larger houses (4+ bedrooms), as demonstrated in Figure 5.1, which details stock by tax band, and Figure 5.2, which shows dwellings by bedroom size in the Parish compared to the wider district.

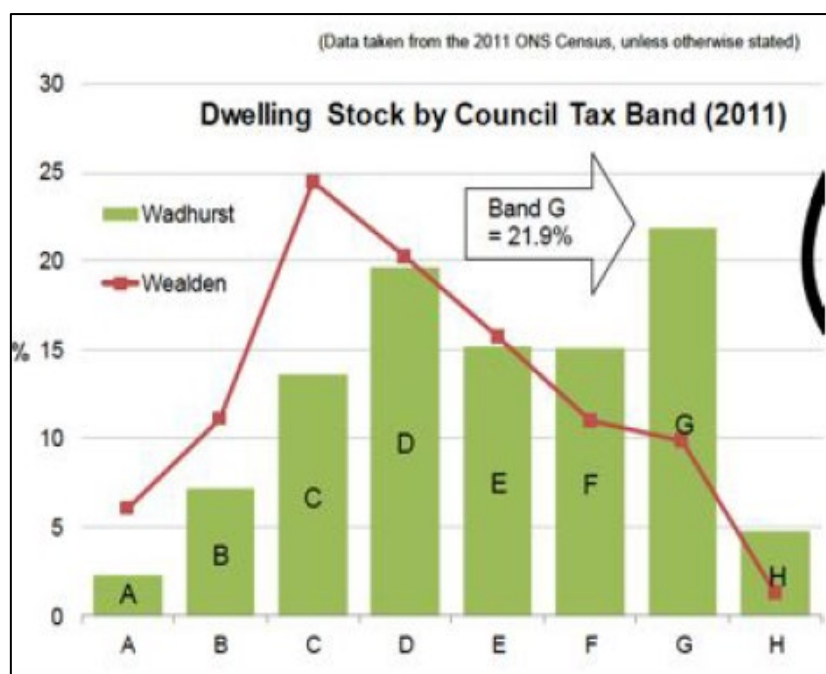


Figure 5.1: Properties by council tax band (source: 2011 Census)



Figure 5.2: % of properties with 1 to 5+ bedrooms in Wadhurst compared to Wealden district (Source: 2011 census)

- 5.9. Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2013, WDC advises that a total of 144 homes (net) have been completed in Wadhurst, with a further 56 homes approved. The Steering Group have undertaken an analysis of housing provision in the Parish, which is provided in Appendix A. The analysis demonstrates that the trend towards larger homes (in terms of numbers of bedrooms) has continued. Between 2016 and 2022, for instance, 27% of all homes delivered had 4+ bedrooms, in contrast to 7% with 1 bedroom, 35% with 2 bedrooms and 31% with 3 bedrooms.
- 5.10. Affordability of housing is also a concern locally. Notwithstanding the constraints posed by being located within the National Landscape, the WNP supports appropriate sustainable development that would deliver homes that are smaller (in terms of number of bedrooms), affordable to those on local median incomes, and suited to both young families and the elderly (for downsizing). This includes support for self-build and custom builds, which provides an additional choice for those wishing to step onto the property ladder.
- 5.11. First Homes have been introduced by the government as the preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:
- must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
 - are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
 - on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and
 - after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000.
- 5.12. Policy WAD2: Meeting Local Housing Needs confirms that 25% of all affordable housing units that come forward within the Parish will be for First Homes. The remaining 75% of affordable

homes to be provided within the Parish will either be for social rent and/or affordable rent in accordance with the district's adopted Policy AF1: Affordable Housing of Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (May 2016), with the First Homes replacing the requirement for other intermediate affordable housing tenures.

POLICY WAD2: MEETING LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

- A. Proposals that will deliver smaller one, two- and three-bedroom dwellings to address the needs of single people, young couples, families and the elderly will be particularly supported.**
- B. Other than for development designed to meet an identified specialist housing need, the mix of housing sizes, types, tenures, and affordability in proposed development should assist in meeting needs identified in the most recently available Wealden District Council Local Housing Needs Assessment.**
- C. The provision and mix of affordable units for new development must comply with the National Planning Practice Guidance on First Homes, which requires 25% of all affordable housing units to comprise First Homes. The remaining affordable units (see Glossary) should be in accordance with Policy AFH1: Affordable Housing of the Wealden Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan, or its successor.**
- D. Residential development that could reasonably be expected to meet the needs of older people (by virtue of its size and location) should demonstrate how it has reflected the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles and the guidance contained in the RTP1's Dementia and Town Planning.**
- E. Subject to the other policies of this plan, proposals for self- and custom build housing will be supported.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN28, HG2, HG3, HG5, HG11; WDC Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan (2016): AFH1; AONB Management Plan objectives: S1, LBE2; NPPF: 60-66, 82

6. CHARACTER, HERITAGE, DESIGN AND SUSTAINABILITY

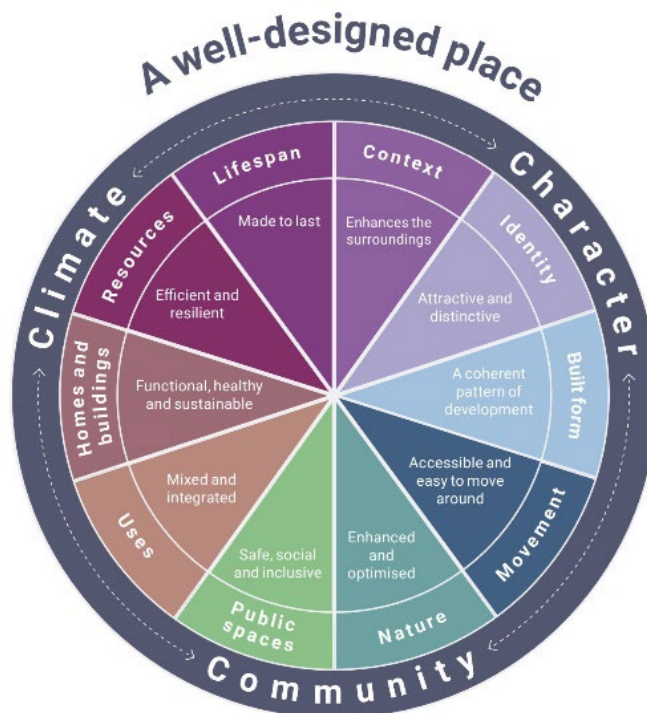
Policy WAD3: Design and character of development

Purpose

- 6.1. Good quality housing design can improve social wellbeing and the quality of life by improving the built environment, reducing crime, improving public health, easing transport problems and providing supportive neighbourhoods. This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals within Wadhurst Parish comply with the highest design standards, adhere to the Wealden Design Guide, the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide and the locally specific Wadhurst Design Code (Appendix B), which forms an integral part of this neighbourhood plan. The policy and its supporting text add greater detail to the Local Plan policies, in particular EN27 of the saved Local Plan policies, which requires development to reflect local distinctiveness.

Justification

- 6.2. Past generations of people and development, in parallel with its location, have created the features that give the settlements of Wadhurst their identities today. This process has been gradual, taking place over many centuries, and the settlements that exist today have a distinctiveness that derives from variety.
- 6.3. The importance of good design has received renewed attention over recent years. In October 2019, a new National Design Guide was launched, forming part of the Government's collection of Planning Practice Guidance. The document sets out ten characteristics necessary for creating a well-designed place, contributing to its physical character, a sense of community and addressing environmental issues affecting climate. The National Model Design Guide expands on the ten characteristics.



The ten principles of design, National Design Guide

- 6.4. Furthermore, the guide Building for a Healthy Life 2020 is the Government-endorsed industry standard for the design of new housing developments. It is a tool for assessing the design quality of homes and neighbourhoods. The criteria also link to other standards for housing design, including the Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) standards and Secured by Design. It should be used to inform development proposals along with other policies contained within this plan to achieve the industry standard's 'Building for a Healthy Life' commendation.
- 6.5. It is important that development is designed from a landscape-led perspective and the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide provides a comprehensive set of advice, specific to the characteristics of the landscape, to promote well-designed places and the conservation and enhancement of the National Landscape. It focusses on three core considerations: respecting the setting of the High Weald, incorporating sympathetic placemaking principles next; encouraging detail design built in towards the end.
- 6.6. At the Parish level, Wadhurst is associated with an historic local iron industry (iron ore), oak framed buildings, forestry (weatherboarding) and Wadhurst clay – bricks and tiles and sandstone. These elements are natural influences on the design of housing and public spaces within the Parish and have created its unique rural feel, beauty and character.
- 6.7. Oak – Wadhurst is renowned for the oak from the Whiligh Estate. Timber was famously supplied for the repair of the 14th-century roof of Westminster Hall, some cut from trees over 600 years old, "arguably" from the same forest, which had supplied some of the original material in 1393.



Oak from Wadhurst was used to repair Westminster Hall

- 6.8. Clay – The renowned Wadhurst Clay formation takes its name from the Parish. The uppermost clays of the Wadhurst Clay, closest to the boundary, are often stained red. The Wadhurst clay deposits, from which the iron ore was obtained, supplied suitable material both for bricks used for furnace linings and for tiles, which were increasingly used to replace thatch. These elements are on display in the Parish's public realm and houses.



Examples of clay-based materials incorporated in development in Wadhurst Parish

- 6.9. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states: *“Neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development, both through their own plans and by engaging in the production of design policy, guidance and codes by local planning authorities and developers”.*
- 6.10. To further inform design at the local level, the Steering Group commissioned Create Streets to develop a localised set of design codes to guide future development in the Parish.
- 6.11. The main purpose of the Design Code is to provide guidance encouraging the creation of distinctive places that are well-integrated with the existing settlements in Wadhurst Parish and to promote high-quality and popular built forms. The document draws on the design guidance available at the national and regional levels, and that which exists at the very local level, such as the Wadhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Pell Green and Cousley Wood Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 6.12. It has also been informed by extensive local engagement, including walkabouts and an interactive website, which attracted over 100 comments in its first phase.
- 6.13. The Wadhurst Design Code forms an integral part of the WNP and should be applied to all development proposals in the Parish.
- 6.14. The Design Code considers the Parish in the context of three Area Types, summarised in Figure 6.1 and mapped in Figure 6.2. The Design Code seeks to ensure high quality, locally distinctive design, which will help to avoid generic building design that is inappropriate to the Plan area.

Local Character Area	Example image
<p>Town centre: The term ‘town centre’ is used in a planning sense but in fact, the centre is referred to locally as “Wadhurst village.” It is the Parish’s main shopping centre. This area starts at the intersection with Station Road and Sparrows Green Road in the north west and ends where Lower High Street begins in the south east. The high street incorporates most of the Wadhurst conservation area, which is subject to extra planning controls by Wealden District Council.</p> <p>The main shopping area is about 200 metres long and is characterised by historic buildings on the north and a mix of historic and post-war buildings on the south.</p>	
<p>Neighbourhood Settlements: Outside of the main town centre are the residential neighbourhoods of Lower High Street, Durgates, Sparrows Green, Turners Green, Pell Green and Cousley Wood. These are predominantly residential with few amenities. Homes are mostly detached and semi-detached houses. The Wadhurst Conservation Area also extends down into the Lower High Street neighbourhood. The Pell Green and Cousley Wood Conservation Area is also relevant. The Conservation Area Appraisals for each should be consulted.</p>	
<p>Rural hamlets: There are many smaller, rural hamlets within Wadhurst. These are normally small clusters of dwellings based around historical farmsteads.</p>	

Figure 6.1: Area Types in Wadhurst

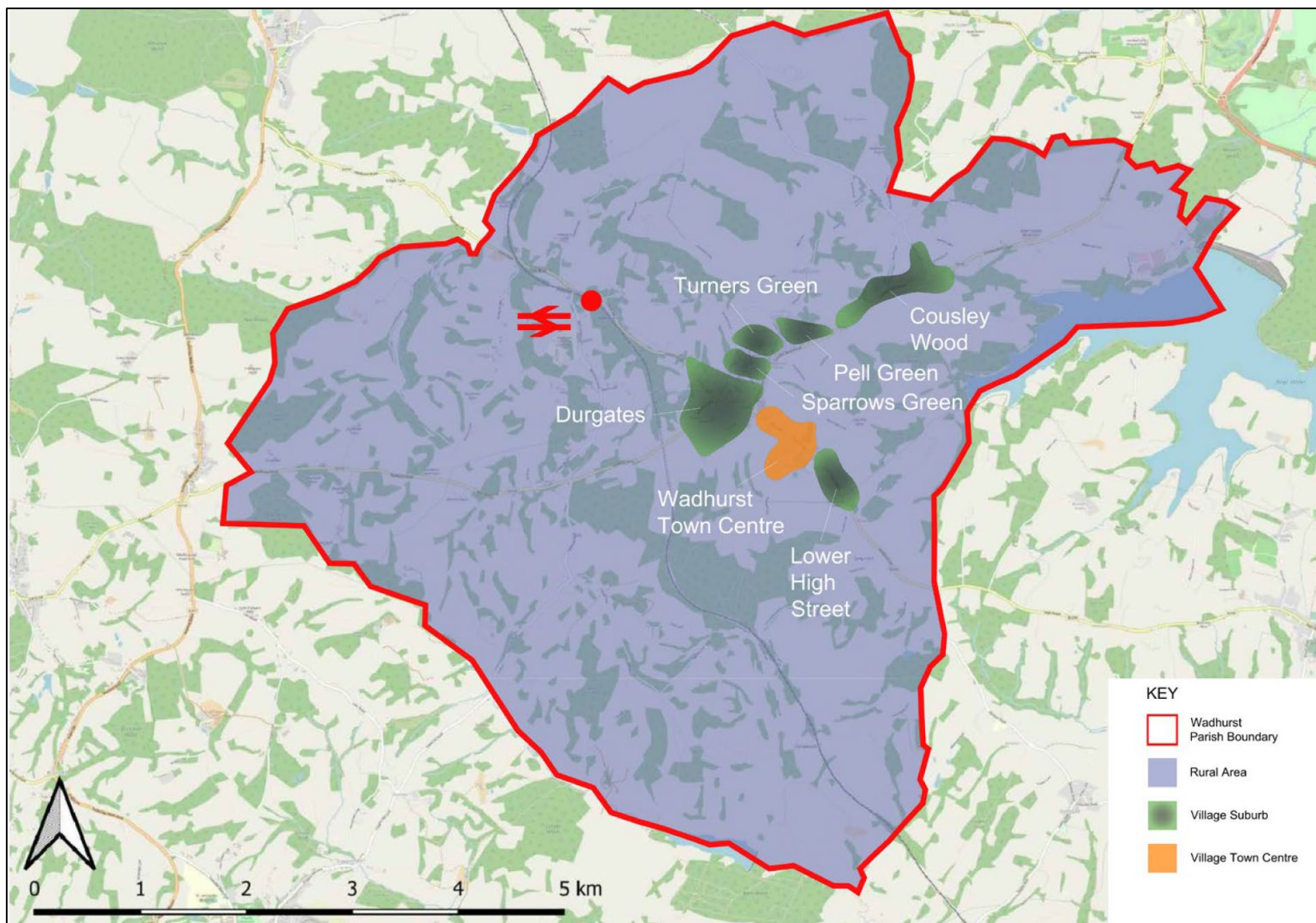


Figure 6.2: Map of Area Types in Wadhurst Parish

6.15. The Code then explores four areas related to design (Figure 6.3), providing detail on the extent to which development proposals should incorporate the guidance provided.

Design Code summary



Built Form

- New development should be sympathetic to the existing building types and heights.
- Allow gentle intensification in the town centre.



Identity of Buildings

- Preserve and promote the identity of Wadhurst's Wealden architecture.
- Preserve and improve Wadhurst's identity by the quality of façade treatment, roofs, windows, doors and brickwork



Movement

- Design streets that encourage walking and cycling
- Connect streets together to avoid cul-de-sac developments.



Public Space

- Create attractive and green public spaces that have buildings fronting onto them.
- Create many smaller public spaces ('little and often') rather than one large space.

Figure 6.3: Summary of the Wadhurst Design Code scope

6.16. Policy WAD3 is closely related to Policy WAD4 (Sustainability and design) and the two should be read collectively.

POLICY WAD3: DESIGN AND CHARACTER OF DEVELOPMENT

- A. The scale, character, and siting of the proposal should respect and enhance the landscape and its features, valued views into and out of the settlements (in accordance with Policy WAD15), the local streetscapes and heritage assets. It should emulate the best of locally distinctive architecture, using materials that are in keeping with those used in existing buildings in the locality and typical of Wadhurst Parish. Innovation in design will be supported where it is associated with sustainability, demonstrably conserves and enhances the High Weald National Landscape, being in keeping and utilising materials and detailing typical of Wadhurst Parish.**
- B. Development proposals must ensure that they achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements and minimising the impact on the local environment. Proposals should demonstrate how they have complied with the Wadhurst Design Code and address site context, residential amenity, local character, design and landscape, biodiversity and open space, as they are appropriate to their scale, nature and location.**
- C. Where development sites abut open countryside, development on the rural boundary edge should mitigate any detrimental visual impacts on the countryside. This should be achieved through the siting of lower density development at the rural boundary of the site in order to provide a gradual transition from the built form to open countryside, or by other means such as through a layout that clearly minimises the visual impact of any larger buildings on both the open countryside and existing village-scape.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1, 4; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN1, EN2, EN6, EN12, EN14, EN16, EN27, EN28, HG4, HG6, HG10, TR11, TR14, TR16, LR3; AONB Management Plan objectives: S2, S3; NPPF: 131-138, 158, 159, 96, 108e, 111, 114, 128-137, 139, 180

Policy WAD4: Sustainability and design

Purpose

6.17. This policy seeks to ensure that development meets the highest environmental standards in terms of its construction, materials and energy use. This will help to mitigate against climate change and contribute to achieving the national target of zero net carbon by 2050. Good neighbourhood design also brings both physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits.

Justification

6.18. On 12 June 2019 Parliament voted to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a new target for at least a 100% reduction of increased greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. This is a demanding target, which will require everyone to be engaged, from households and communities to businesses and local and national Government. As part of this, the government has set an interim target to cut the country's greenhouse gas emissions 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

6.19. Being '2050 ready' means that new development will be required to have minimal energy use and net carbon emissions. Unlike Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans are more limited in what they can dictate in terms of environmental standards, as they must conform to the minimum requirements as set out by national policy and building regulations. The WNP can, however, strongly encourage the design and layout of new development to maximise its potential to be as energy efficient as possible and to encourage the use of renewable energy.



Examples of discreet solar panels (source: Historic England)

6.20. The Code for Sustainable Homes was withdrawn by the Government in 2015 and this has been replaced by new national technical standards which include new additional optional Building Regulations regarding water and access as well as a new national space standard (this is in addition to the existing mandatory Building Regulations). The Future Homes and Buildings Standard will be introduced in 2025 to complement the Building Regulations and ensure that new homes built from 2025 will produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than homes delivered under current regulations. As an interim step, changes to Part L came into force in June 2022 to ensure new homes built will produce 31% less carbon emissions.

6.21. There is an opportunity to improve and promote sustainability in the Parish by:

- Supporting the principles of the [Retro First movement](#), which cites the most climate friendly developments are those that exist already. The movement promotes the reuse of existing

buildings and building on Brownfield land ahead of development on green fields, which provide important natural carbon sinks. The WNP supports this approach in Policy WAD1 (Location of development);

- minimising the embodied carbon of construction materials, favouring natural materials such as wood over highly energy intensive materials such as concrete and uPVC. The UK construction industry emits 45% of the UK's carbon emissions (source: Technology Strategy Board, now known as Innovate UK), so that 50% of a typical residential building's lifetime carbon emissions have been emitted by the time the building is completed (source: There's no place like old homes: reuse and recycle to reduce carbon, Historic England). This also aligns with the High Weald AONB Management Plan and Housing Design Guide relating to materials use;
- following basic passive environmental design, encouraging the use of insulating materials to minimise energy loss;
- integrating renewable energy systems into new development, including existing and new public buildings;
- reducing water consumption through grey water systems;
- promoting sustainable forms of transport through priority systems for pedestrians and cyclists;

6.22. Alterations to historic buildings: Historic vernacular buildings are themselves highly sustainable, having usually been built of local natural materials with low inherent carbon footprint, all ultimately recyclable. Maintaining the historic character and appearance of these buildings needs to be the prime focus and, in some cases, the possibility of harm to or loss of historic fabric negates such retrofitting. Inappropriate alterations or thoughtless installation of energy efficient equipment could easily compromise historic character and appearance; the effect on the character, fabric and setting of the building will therefore need to be carefully assessed in each case.

6.23. Whilst particular care should be taken across Wadhurst as it is in the High Weald National Landscape, this is even more so in its Conservation Areas and careful consideration of the siting and visibility of micro renewables is key.

POLICY WAD4: SUSTAINABILITY AND DESIGN

A. Proposals which incorporate the following sustainable design features as appropriate to their scale, nature and location will be supported:

- i. Siting and orientation to optimise passive solar gain.**
- ii. The use of low embodied carbon building materials.**
- iii. Installation of energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation and double glazing.**
- iv. Reducing water consumption using water re-use measures including rainwater harvesting, surface water harvesting and/or grey water recycling systems.**
- v. Providing low carbon sustainable design and avoid or mitigate all regulated emissions using a combination of on-site energy efficiency measures (such as insulation and low energy heating systems), on-site zero carbon technologies (such as solar panels, air source and ground source heat pumps) and, only where necessary, off-site measures to deal with any remaining emissions.**
- vi. Providing the infrastructure for adequate electric vehicle charging points for each individual dwelling, including provision for guest parking, where new parking provision is expected to be made.**
- vii. Where a development proposal is required to provide Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), this is expected to be provided on-site unless there are clear reasons why this is not possible. Such development is encouraged to demonstrate the use of a wide range of creative SuDS solutions, for example through the provision of SuDS as part of green spaces, green roofs, permeable surfaces and rain gardens. The absence of any on-site SuDS provision will only be permissible in such developments where a specific reason can be evidenced that prevents the use of SuDS.**

B. Maintaining the character, appearance and environmental performance of historic vernacular buildings should be the prime focus and the possibility of harm to or loss of historic fabric can negate the justification for retrofitting with inappropriate alterations or thoughtless installation of energy efficient equipment. The effect on the historic character and appearance, fabric and setting of the building will therefore need to be carefully assessed in each case.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN1, EN3, EN4, CS2, HG7; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS14; AONB Management Plan objectives: G1, G3, S3; NPPF: 131, 132, 157-161, 175, 183, 196

Policy WAD5: Conserving heritage assets

Purpose

6.24. This policy recognises the important contribution that designated and non-designated heritage assets make to the local character and distinctiveness of Wadhurst Parish, both individually and collectively. Where possible, they should be conserved, enhanced and celebrated.

Justification

6.25. Heritage assets are categorised into those that are designated and those that are non-designated. Designated heritage assets include scheduled monuments, listed Buildings, registered parks and gardens, Conservation Areas, World Heritage sites, protected wrecks and registered battlefields. These are assets that are considered to be of national (and sometimes international) importance, and which should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Non-designated heritage assets include buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes that have been identified by plan-making bodies as having a degree of heritage significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which do not meet the criteria for designated heritage assets.

6.26. The following designated heritage assets can be found within Wadhurst parish:

- One scheduled monument – Riverhall blast furnace is located on the western boundary of the parish, although is officially noted as being situated in Frant Parish.
- Two Conservation Areas – [Wadhurst Conservation Area](#) and [Pell Green and Cousley Wood](#), each having a Character Area Appraisal setting out the history and significance of the area and how it should be managed and conserved:
- National listed buildings – there are presently 154 individual/groups of buildings and assets in Wadhurst parish that are recognised through a listing for their contribution to national heritage. This includes the Grade I listed Church of St Peter and St Paul in Wadhurst village.

6.27. The listed buildings and Conservation Areas are mapped in Figure 6.4 (and Figures 6.6 and 6.7 in Policy WAD6).



Images show: Church of St Peter and St Paul, Wadhurst; and Wadhurst Castle

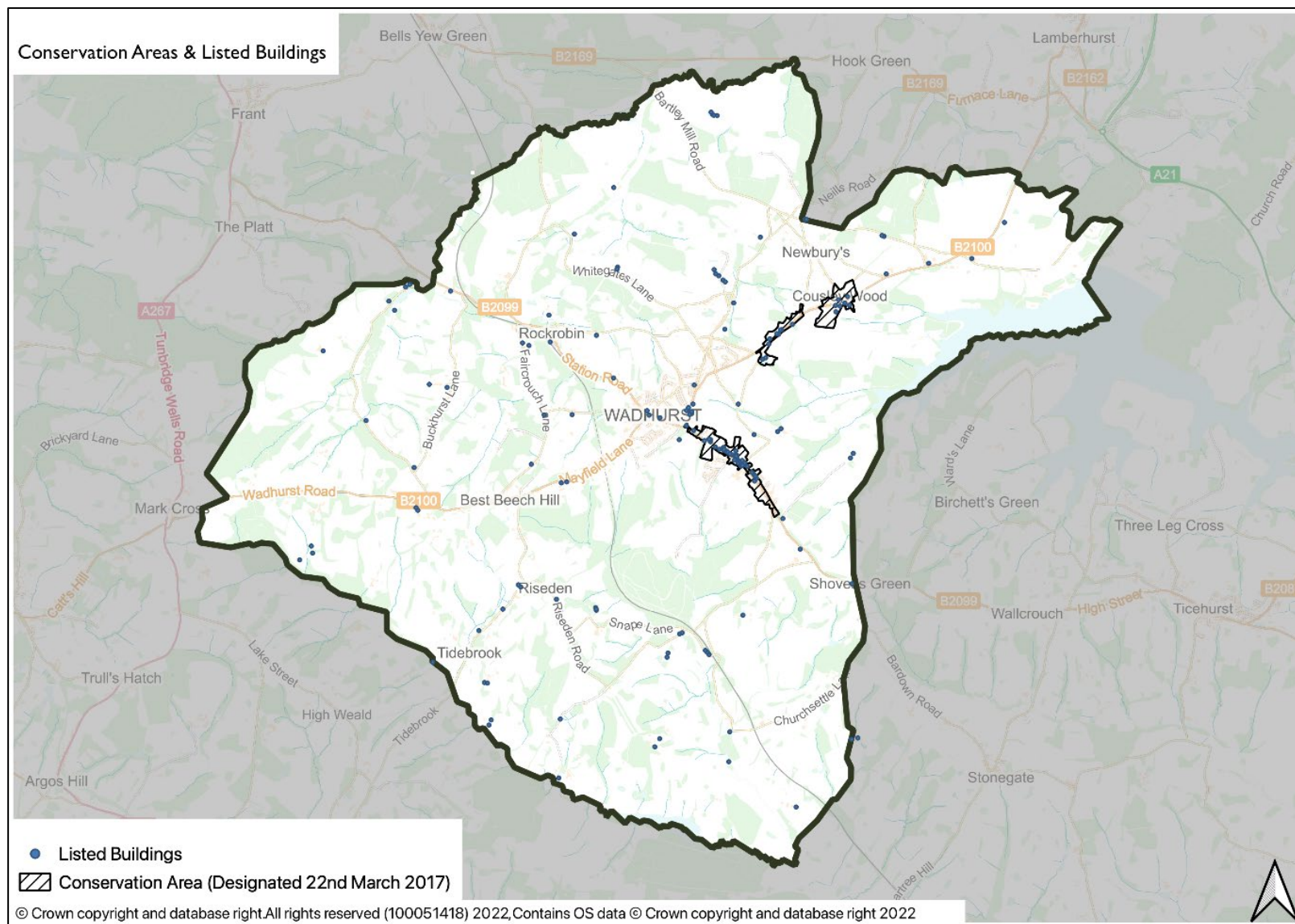


Figure 6.4: Map showing the Conservation Areas, listed heritage assets in Wadhurst Parish

- 6.28. National Planning Practice Guidance supports the identification of non-designated heritage assets through the neighbourhood planning process. Appendix C sets out the criteria which may be used for the identification of such assets. (The Historic Environment Record contains details of heritage assets in the Parish, some of which are not nationally listed. The Record should be consulted by potential developers).
- 6.29. Chapter 16 of the NPPF sets out the policies which apply for conserving and enhancing the historic environment”.

POLICY WAD5: CONSERVING HERITAGE ASSETS

- A. Proposals affecting heritage assets will be assessed in accordance with national policy in Chapter 16 of the NPPF.**
- B. Non-designated heritage assets within Wadhurst Parish may be identified using the criteria set out in Appendix C.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN21-EN26; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WSC14; AONB Management Plan objectives: R1, OQ2; NPPF: 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 205, 206-209

Policy WAD6: Conservation Areas

Purpose

6.30. This policy seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the two Conservation Areas and their settings within the Parish.

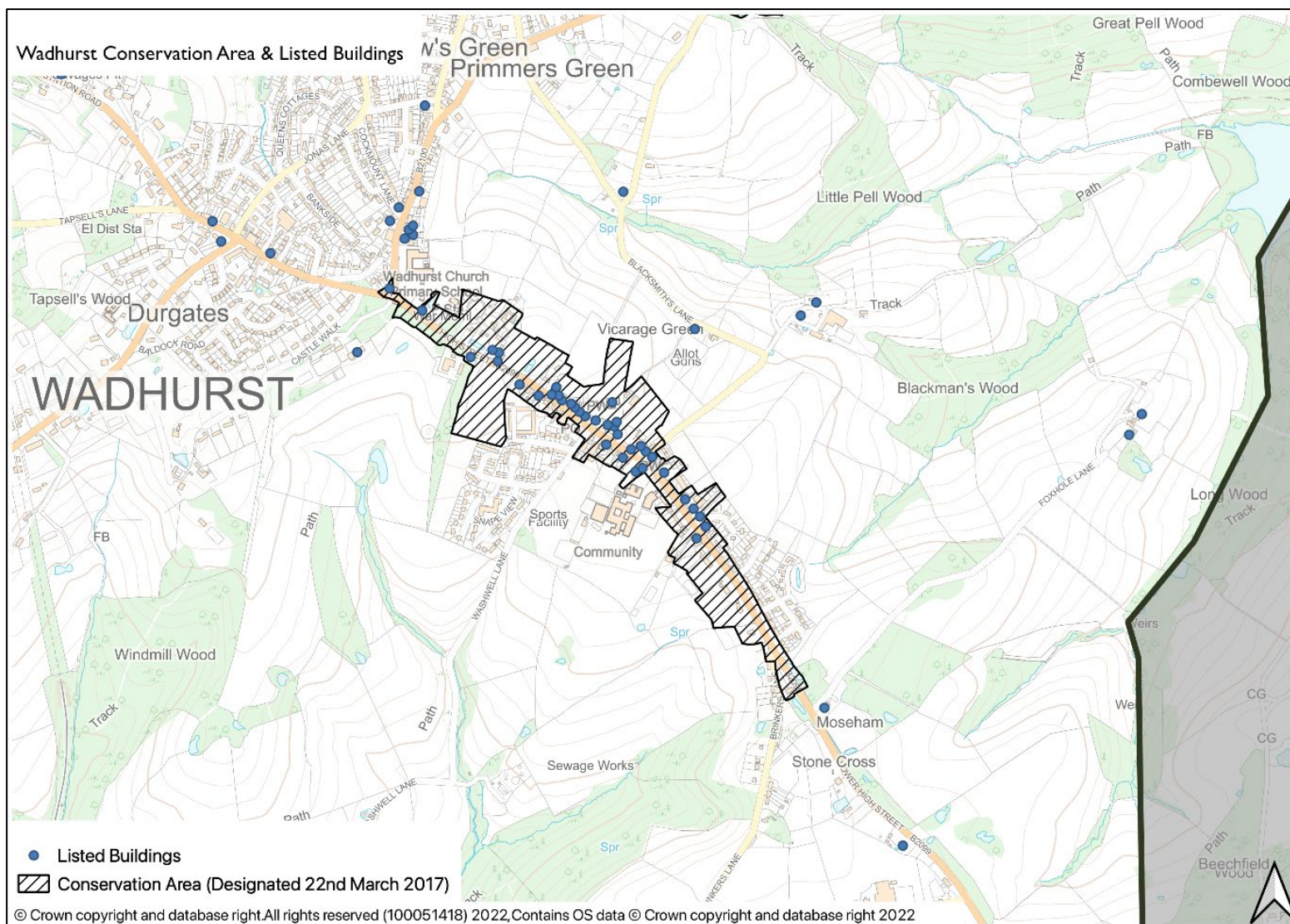
Justification

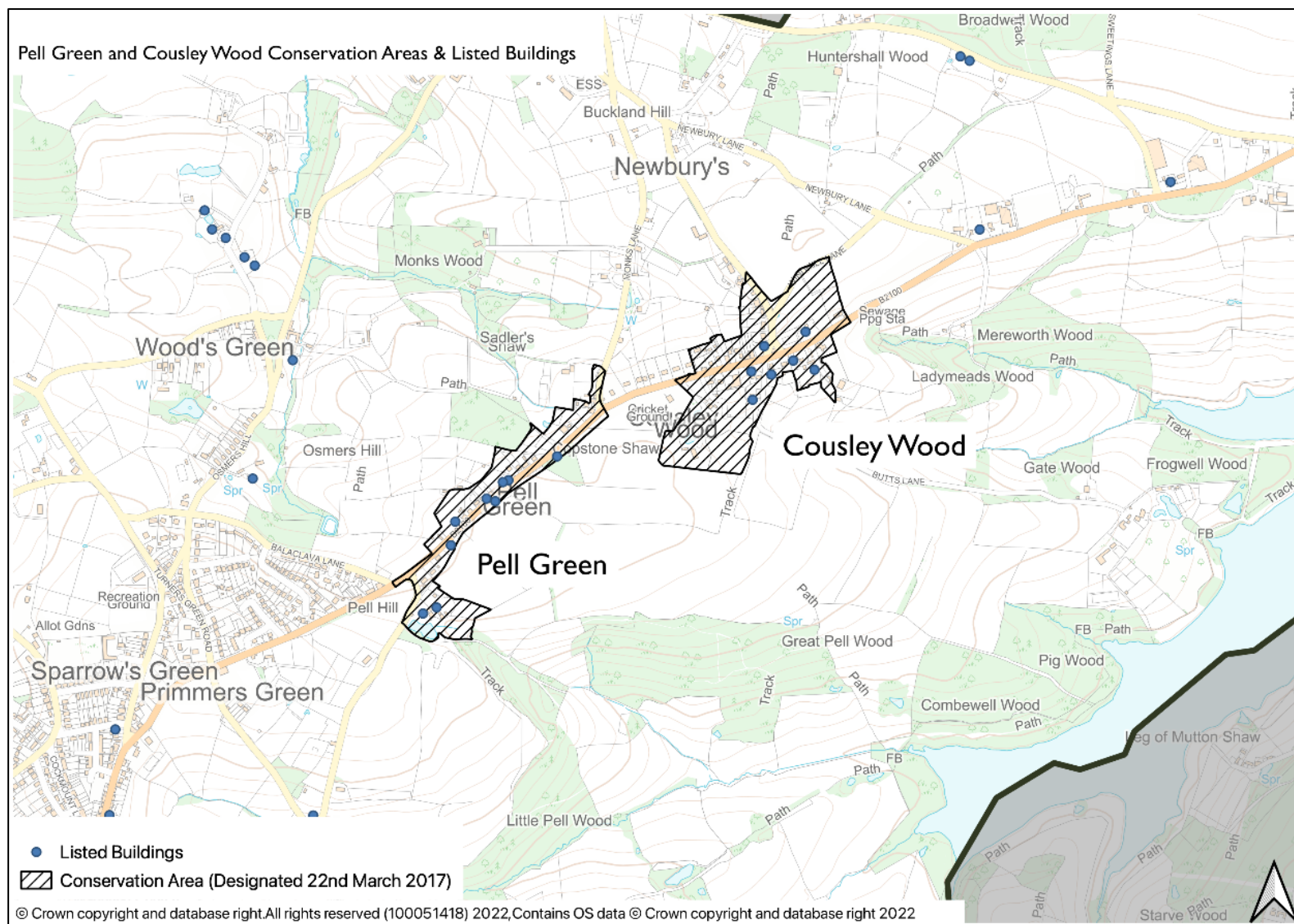
6.31. There are two Conservation Areas within the Parish: Wadhurst, Pell Green and Cousley Wood. These are shown on Figures 6.5 and 6.6. The WNP seeks to ensure that development proposals are sympathetic to the Conservation Areas, as set out in the respective Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

POLICY WAD6: CONSERVATION AREAS

- A. Development proposals will be required to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Wadhurst, and Pell Green and Cousley Wood Conservation Areas shown in Figures 6.5 and 6.6, and their settings, including the green and woodland spaces in accordance with the information set out in the [Conservation Area Character Appraisals](#) and Wadhurst Design Code.**
- B. Proposals for new development and extensions and alterations to existing buildings and structures within the Conservation Areas will be supported where:**
- i. it is sympathetically designed and preserves and enhances the character of the conservation area and its setting; and**
 - ii. the scale and massing of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area; and**
 - iii. it retains those buildings and other features, including trees and hedges, which make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area.**
 - iv. it uses traditional and vernacular building materials (as described in the Wadhurst Design Code, Conservation Area Designation Reports and Conservation Area Character Appraisals), which respect the context of the development concerned, and**
 - v. it does not exacerbate traffic congestion and air pollution within the Conservation Areas.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN19-EN22; AONB Management Plan objectives: S3; NPPF: 195, 196, 212, 213





7. GETTING AROUND

Policy WAD7: Safe and sustainable movement

Purpose

- 7.1. This policy seeks to encourage more sustainable modes of transport by supporting proposals that enable and promote active travel.
- 7.2. The rural nature of the Parish means that car ownership is fairly high with 52% of homes having access to more than one vehicle (2011 Census). Traffic volume and congestion, not only from local traffic, but also traffic travelling through the Parish, has been raised as a particular issue by the local community.
- 7.3. Whilst the WNP cannot prevent people from using their cars, encouraging walking, cycling and, where possible, horse-riding, particularly for shorter journeys within the Parish and between the settlements and facilities, presents an opportunity to help reduce some of the car-related pressures, which also supports the promotion of health and wellbeing.
- 7.4. This aligns with the county-wide aims to promote active travel, as demonstrated in the ESCC Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and the East Sussex Local Transport Plan (including the emerging East Sussex LTP4).

Justification

- 7.5. Whilst the Parish benefits from a rich and varied network of footpaths and bridleways (Figure 7.1), because of the particular geography and historic growth of the area, the individual settlements (and hence the facilities and amenities within them) are scattered and widely distributed along two main ridge lines. The main hub and services, for instance, are in Wadhurst Village and in Durgates/Sparrows Green (as shown in Figure 7.2), while the main rail transport link is located some 2.2km (1.4 miles) away from Wadhurst Village centre. Figure 7.3 provides details of the walking and cycling distances and times between some of the main facilities as measured by the Steering Group. The times do not take account of the steep hills, the quality of the walking experience or the inclement UK weather, which contribute to car usage.



Images show: footpaths around the Parish

7.6. The Parish is located around the crossroads of the B2100 and the B2099, which provide direct links to the A21 and the larger nearby settlements of Royal Tunbridge Wells, and Crowborough. Drivers from outside the Parish often cut-through Wadhurst, either to access these routes or to avoid them if there are incidents on them. This adds to local congestion on the narrow Parish roads and lanes.

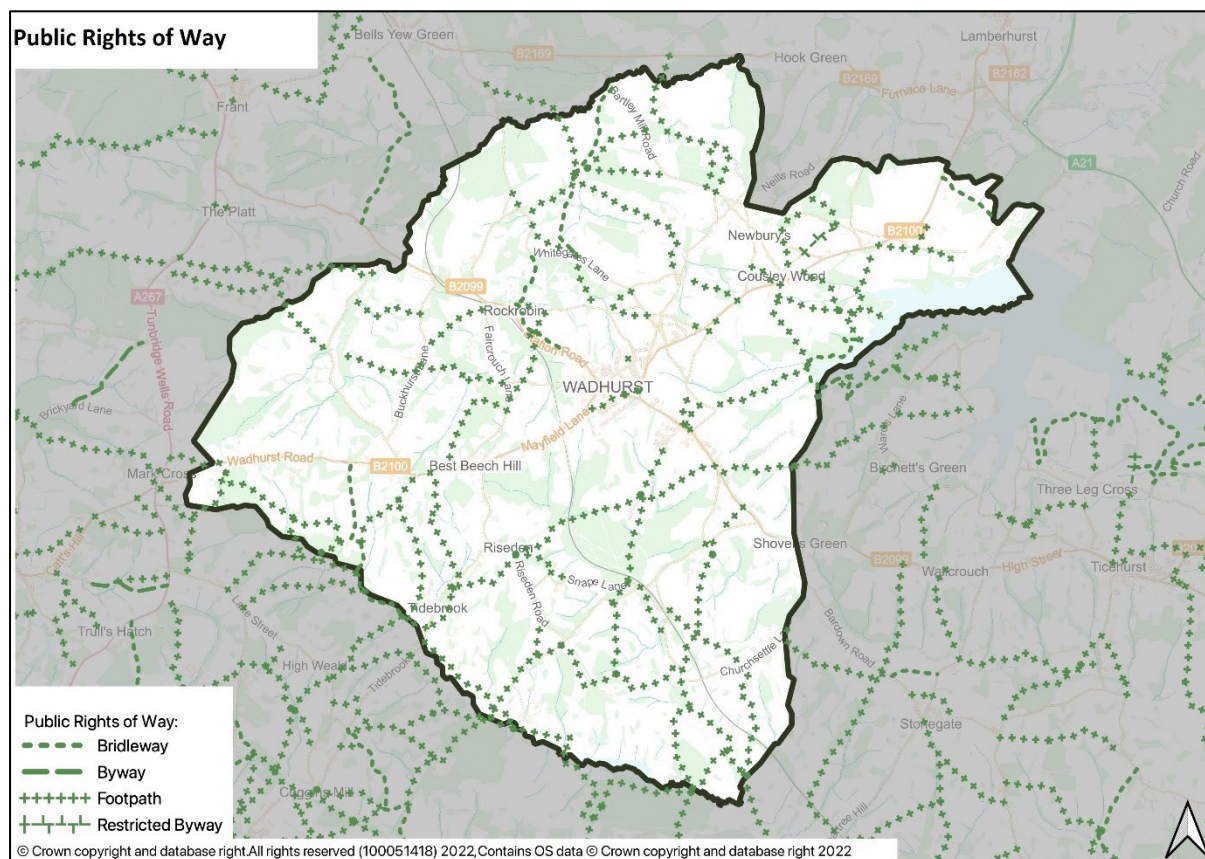


Figure 7.1: Public rights of way in Wadhurst Parish- note that despite a large number of public rights of way in the Parish, there is limited connectivity to the High Street

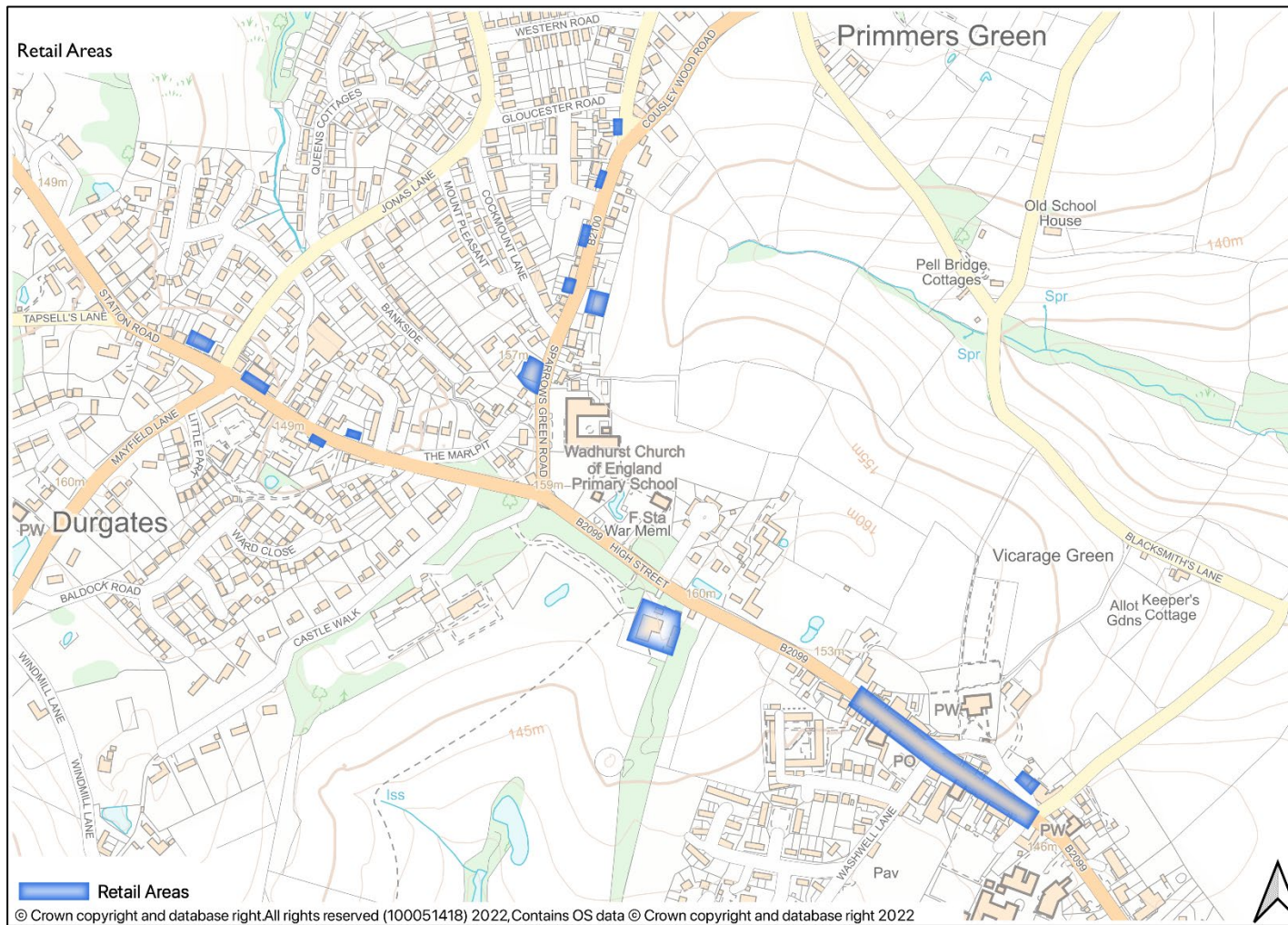


Figure 7.2: Map illustrating the scattered nature of retail/service facilities

From Station to:	Distance, metres	Walking time, mins	Cycling time, mins
Durgates (petrol station)	1270	19	5
Mayfield Lane (Best Beech)	2410	36	10
Wadhurst Village (Jempsons)	2190	33	9
Wadhurst Village (Uplands)	2450	37	10
Waters Reach	2840	43	12
Sparrows Green (Co-op)	1860	28	8
Woods Green	2510	38	10
Cousley Wood Road (Dobbin Inn)	2860	43	12
Cousley Wood (Old Vine)	3890	58	16
From Wadhurst Village (Jempsons) to:	Distance, metres	Walking time, mins	Cycling time, mins
Durgates (petrol station)	900	14	4
Mayfield Lane (Best Beech)	2490	37	10
Station	2190	33	9
Wadhurst Village (Uplands)	260	4	1
Waters Reach	650	10	3
Sparrows Green (Co-op)	610	9	3
Woods Green	1970	30	8
Cousley Wood Road (Dobbin Inn)	1630	24	7
Cousley Wood (Old Vine)	2600	39	11
Sources: Google maps, Ramblers, Road Bike https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/navigation/calculating-walking-pace.aspx https://roadbikebasics.com/average-speed-on-road-bike/ Note: distance > 2km or 10 minutes walking and cycling time highlighted			

Figure 7.3: Walking and cycling distances and times between main facilities in the Parish

7.7. The evidence gathered as part of the WNP engagement (detailed in the report, The Future – What Parishioners Want which is included in the Evidence Base) demonstrates that the traffic impact on the Parish is, at times, severe. As a result, the walking (and cycling) experience around the Parish is variable, ranging from acceptable to potentially dangerous. There are a range of hazards that pedestrians have to navigate including:

- Vehicles parked on the pavement, forcing pedestrians on to the road (examples in the images below show the Lower High Street).



- Narrow, poorly maintained, poorly lit pavements.
- No pavements in places or pavements with low kerbs (often travelling car encroached e.g., High Street, Sparrows Green).



- Hilly terrain (for instance the walk from the rail station to Durgates, or Woods Green to Wadhurst Village)
- Narrow, uneven, muddy footpaths (the examples below are from Turners Green).



- Dangerous, traffic busy rural lanes/main roads and no pedestrian crossings (the examples below show Sparrows Green, Three Oaks Lane).



- 7.8. In addition, there are instances of speeding traffic along the main routes through the Parish. Public transport options are limited.
- 7.9. Improvements to and promotion of the main movement routes within the settlements and wider Parish may further encourage residents to take short, local journeys on foot or by bicycle. Not only will this alleviate congestion and associated air pollution (particularly outside the schools and at the main junctions) but it will also have health benefits for residents.
- 7.10. In parallel to improving this active travel network, there are a series of actions that may help to improve the environment for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. Many sit outside the scope of the WNP but might be considered as part of ESCC's [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan \(LCWIP\)](#), which was approved in September 2021. As a live document, there is scope to include schemes specific to Wadhurst Parish in future iterations. Such actions could include:
- Using psychological traffic calming that is appropriate to the rural National Landscape character of the area to slow-down traffic. For example, through the introduction of village gateways, the removal of central white road-lines, road narrowing and the minimisation of urban features, as outlined in the Wadhurst Design Code and detailed more fully in the "Traffic in Villages, Safety and Civility for Rural Roads, Toolkit" by Hamilton-Baillie Associates.
 - Introducing slower speed limits in parts of Wadhurst Parish, however, this sits outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Redirecting HGVs away from rural lanes – a dialogue with East Sussex County Council and National Highways would help to consider ways to re-route vehicles, for instance by altering Satnav guidance provided to private companies.
 - Problems associated with rat-running, where Wadhurst routes are used by drivers to avoid congestion on the A21.
 - Working with East Sussex County Council Highways and private operators to improve public transport provision in the Parish, in terms of routes served, timings and punctuality.

POLICY WAD7: SAFE AND SUSTAINABLE MOVEMENT

- A. To ensure that residents can access social, community, public transport, education, retail and other important facilities in Wadhurst Parish, as well as the wider countryside, in a sustainable and safe way, all new developments should ensure safe pedestrian, and where possible cycle, access to link up with any existing footpath and cycleway network, and public transport network, as defined in Figure 7.1.**
- B. The provision of new, or the enhancement of existing, cycle and pedestrian routes that are, where feasible, physically segregated from vehicular traffic and from one another will be strongly supported. Such routes should be of permeable material and ensure that access by disabled users and users of mobility scooters is secured.**
- C. The design and layout of works required in relation to development and involving the widening of footpaths or the provision of traffic-calming measures should enhance the rural, High Weald character, for example retaining and/or providing hedgerows, trees and soft verges where possible. Materials and layout should be sympathetic to local character, in accordance with Policy WAD3 (Character and Design) of this Neighbourhood Plan, the High Weald Housing Design Guide and where relevant the Conservation Area Appraisal.**
- D. Proposals for new bridleways will be supported wherever possible; in all new developments existing bridleways must be retained where they exist or, alternatively, new or amended bridleway links provided together with safe road crossing points that enable connectivity between the settlements and the wider countryside.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN2, TR1, TR2, TR11, TR13; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS7; AONB Management Plan objectives: G3, OQ3; NPPF: 96, 104, 108, 110, 114, 116

Policy WAD8: Car parking provision

Purpose

- 7.11. This policy seeks to ensure that sufficient parking is provided, serving both the public and as part of development proposals.

Justification

- 7.12. The issue of car parking was raised by the community during the engagement process. Due to the historic nature of the Parish, many of the roads and lanes are narrow, often lacking pavements, and a large proportion of the homes were constructed at a time when car ownership was not the norm. There is also a shortage of public car parking, particularly in Wadhurst village. As a consequence, on-street and on-pavement parking is a major reason for the current severe traffic congestion in the Parish. This creates obstacles for those wishing to walk and, on occasion, has created problems for emergency vehicles requiring access. The short video below ([see Wadhurst Parish Council Website](#)) shows a fireman diverting traffic down dead-end Washwell Lane in the High Street to allow progress of the fire engine. Concerns have been raised over the Health and Safety implications of this video, as lives could be lost eventually to this traffic congestion and associated restriction of emergency vehicles.
- 7.13. Whilst the WNP seeks to encourage a shift to active travel, particularly for shorter journeys, it is important that adequate infrastructure to support the use of vehicles is provided.
- 7.14. The WNP therefore seeks to retain, manage and improve the quality of the existing public car parking areas, in particular where they are off-street, but also on-street spaces along Wadhurst village High Street. In addition, it supports proposals that enable the provision of additional public car parking, particularly where it serves those parts of the Parish most under pressure from on-street parking. Finally, it seeks to ensure that all new development incorporates adequate off-street parking for both cars and bicycles.
- 7.15. The provision of electric vehicle charging points is required to future-proof parking provision and to catalyse a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport.

Policy WAD8: CAR PARKING PROVISION

Public car parking

- A. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable loss of existing publicly available off-street car parking spaces and/or on-street parking spaces along Wadhurst village High Street will not be supported.**
- B. Proposals that enable the provision of additional, publicly accessible off-road car parking spaces to alleviate parking congestion along the High Street and Sparrows Green Road will be supported.**
- C. Alongside any new public car parking provision, the following facilities will be strongly supported to be provided as part of that provision:**
 - i. dedicated secure (and if possible covered) bicycle parking facilities, preferably with e-bike charging points; and**
 - ii. future-proofed electric vehicle charging points.**

Car parking as part of development

- D. Development proposals that demonstrate clear and measurable opportunities to reduce car dependency will be supported. Where car parking is included, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should provide sensitively designed off-street parking, close to the development it serves, in accordance with the East Sussex County Council's Parking Guidelines.**
- E. The layout of provision should adhere to the Wadhurst Design Code and have regard to the DG6 'Parking Strategies' guidance of the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide. Garages and additional car parking should be unobtrusive, and the streetscape not dominated by vehicles.**
- F. Space should be provided for dedicated cycle parking and/or storage, in accordance with the East Sussex County Council's Parking Guidelines.**
- G. Electric vehicle charging facilities that are affordable, reliable and open access must be provided as appropriate to their scale, in accordance with the East Sussex County Council's Parking Guidelines.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 2; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): TR11, TR12, TR14, TR16; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WSC7; AONB Management Plan objectives: OQ4; NPPF: 108, 111

8. LOCAL ECONOMY

Policy WAD9: Employment retention and local economy viability

Purpose

- 8.1. The provision of local employment is a key aspect of the vitality of any community and this policy seeks to encourage new business development where appropriate and complementary to the sensitive High Weald National Landscape setting. It also seeks to safeguard existing business premises and associated employment.
- 8.2. Finally, the policy seeks to ensure that Wadhurst village centre remains a thriving destination serving the needs of parishioners and tourists and of the smaller surrounding settlements.

Justification

- 8.3. Wadhurst village centre (Figure 8.1) is designated as a 'Service Centre' by the Core Strategy (2013)

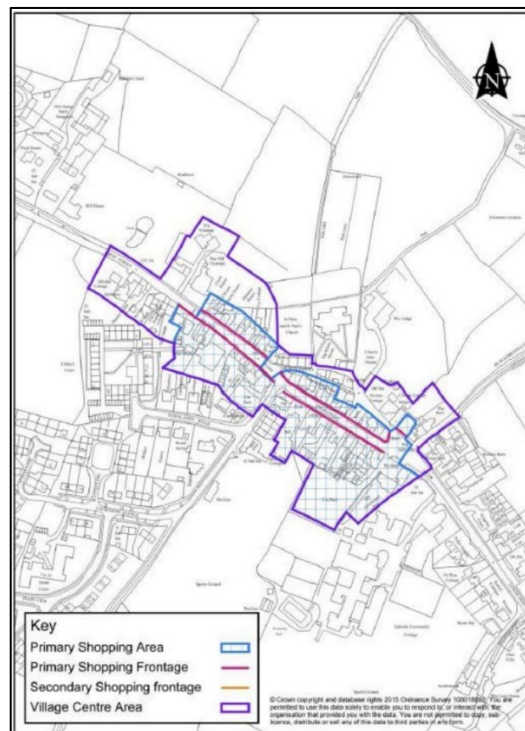


Figure 8.1: Village centre area (source: Town Centre and Retail Study 2016)

- 8.4. Like many village centres, the High Street and other smaller retail areas are suffering from the multiple threats of online shopping and out-of-town shopping, which has been exacerbated by traffic congestion, parking constraints and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 8.5. There have been a number of planning applications to convert retail spaces to residential, which is eroding the overall retail provision within Wadhurst Village centre. Every opportunity to safeguard existing and provide new retail space and employment opportunities must therefore be taken. It should be noted that, the new permitted development right (Class MA), which enables the change of certain buildings in Use Class E (shops, offices, gyms, restaurants,

workshops and many other types of commercial building) into residential use under permitted development, is not applicable to buildings or land within a National Landscape.

- 8.6. Over 35% of Household Survey respondents felt that there is a lack of variety in the range of shops and facilities available, while 14% also noted the disturbing trend of the closure of shops and services.
- 8.7. This policy seeks to provide more flexibility in the way in which premises on the High Street and other retail areas are used so that a greater variety of shops and facilities are available.
- 8.8. Beyond Wadhurst village centre, the key employment areas in the Parish are: educational establishments (Uplands Academy, Primary School at Sparrows Green, Sacred Heart on Mayfield Lane, The Mount on Faircrouch Lane), Wadhurst Manor Care Home (on Station Road), Faircrouch Industrial Park (Faircrouch Lane), Durgates Industrial Park (Durgates), Wadhurst Castle and Castle Keep, Sparrows Green retail area, Lower Cousley Wood Farm units.
- 8.9. The protection of these existing local employment opportunities and the promotion of new ones will not only provide greater prospects for local people to access local jobs but will ensure that these are sustainable in terms of the patterns of commuting that they generate.

POLICY WAD9: EMPLOYMENT RETENTION AND LOCAL ECONOMY VIABILITY

Delivering New Employment:

- A. Within the development boundaries proposals for new commercial/community activity (use classes E (a and b) and F) and/or the expansion of existing commercial activity will be supported, subject to the following criteria:**
 - i. the proposal, including any associated premises, would not have significant harmful impacts on the local environment and nationally important High Weald National Landscape; and**
 - ii. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential, through excessive noise and pollution, smells or traffic; and**
 - iii. the proposal must not have significant adverse impacts upon the local road and footpath network in terms of congestion, parking, safety and amenity to all users including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.**
- B. Within the development boundaries, proposals which support the increase of footfall in the High Street and other shopping areas (uses E (a and b) and F) will be particularly supported to secure the vitality and viability of these areas.**

Employment Retention:

- C. Proposals for a change of use of existing commercial premises to an activity that does not provide employment opportunities will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the commercial premises or land:**

- i. has not been in active use for at least 18 months; and**
- ii. has no potential for either reoccupation or redevelopment for employment generating uses as demonstrated by,**
 - a. a robust marketing campaign lasting for a continuous period of at least 18 months and a supplemental report evidencing the marketing undertaken and the market response; and**
 - b. a detailed valuation report assessing the viability of the land and buildings for employment use.**

D. To minimise permanent on-street parking and maintain a comprehensive retail offering, conversion/change of use of retail/business/services to residential development will not be supported in the High Street at ground floor level. Proposals for residential developments above shops will only be supported if off-road parking and off-street bin provision is incorporated and subject to impact on residential amenity.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): DC8, BS6, BS6-BS9, BS11-BS15, SH1-SH3, SH5, SH6, SH8, SH10; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS1, WCS3; AONB Management Plan objectives: LBE2; NPPF: 85, 88, 89, 90, 96, 97

Policy WAD10: Supporting sustainable rural tourism

Purpose

- 8.10. Wadhurst's attractive location within the High Weald, coupled with its proximity to regionally and nationally significant visitor attractions, presents an opportunity for the Parish to develop itself as both a destination and base for sustainable rural tourism. This policy supports proposals that would help to achieve this.

Justification

- 8.11. Engagement for the WNP revealed that the local community would support the idea of developing Wadhurst's role as a gateway to the High Weald, promoting activities that are sympathetic with and celebrate the rural nature of the parish, such as walking, cycling, visiting historic sites and buildings, enjoying local food and drink and visiting museums and farm shops.
- 8.12. The High Weald AONB Unit defines rural tourism as follows:

1.3 What is Rural Tourism?

The rural tourism offer, as defined by the Action Plan, is distinctive and diverse, and includes a wide range of activities. Those most relevant to the High Weald AONB include walking, sightseeing and visiting historic sites and villages, cycling, mountain biking, adventure sports, camping and caravanning, horse riding, fishing, boating, nature, bird watching, painting, arts and crafts, music and dance, well-being, visiting museums, farm shops, enjoying food, drink and accommodation in rural locations, business meetings and team building.

The rural assets and locations where these activities take place include the High Weald AONB's designated landscape with its rural market towns and villages; built heritage, historic houses, gardens, farms; its natural environments, woodlands and forests, wildlife habitats, reservoirs, lakes and rivers; visitor accommodation; rural transport and infrastructure including rights of way.

Definition of sustainable rural tourism (source: Tourism in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, for High Weald AONB Unit by Acorn Consulting Ltd)

- 8.13. Attracting visitors to the Parish – particularly those staying at least one night – could provide a valuable source of income for local shops and businesses, accommodation providers and eateries, create new employment opportunities for local people, offer scope for farm diversification and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the local area.
- 8.14. Proposals that would support the development of such facilities, would need to be undertaken in a way that is in-keeping with the rural character of the High Weald and, as far as possible, contributes to the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the National Landscape. Any supporting infrastructure to support sustainable rural tourism, for instance provision of facilities to promote active travel, should be planned from the outset.
- 8.15. At the district level, Local Plan Policy TM4 seeks to strongly resist new holiday villages and chalets within the National Landscape.

POLICY WAD10: SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM

In order to encourage day and staying visitors, proposals for tourism development will be supported where the following criteria are met:

- i the proposal addresses the concept of sustainable rural tourism regarding green travel, sustainable employment and the production and consumption of local produce and materials; and**
- ii the proposal would not generate any unacceptable impact on the amenity of residential properties and on the capacity and safety of the local highways network; and**
- iii any new infrastructure or changes to existing infrastructure related to tourism should consider appropriate sustainable infrastructure from the outset, including Active Travel, EV charging, bike racks and drying rooms**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): BS8, BS9, BS14, TM1-TM5, TM10; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WSC1; AONB Management Plan objectives: OQ2, LBE2; NPPF: 88, 89

Policy WAD11: Communication Infrastructure Support

Purpose

- 8.15. This policy aims to ensure that all parishioners and businesses have access to modern high-quality communications infrastructure.

Justification

- 8.16. The modern economy is changing and it is acknowledged nationally that good communications infrastructure is a basic requirement. The 2011 Census highlights how people are working differently to a generation ago – Wadhurst Parish has a high proportion of people who are self-employed: 19.3% in the 2011 census, compared to 15.7% across Wealden and 4% across the south east region. Many of these will be working from home, and changes to working practices in the last few years is likely to have caused this figure to increase.
- 8.17. It will be important to ensure that those working from home are able to access the facilities necessary to assist them in sustaining their businesses. Commonly this is in service activities that simply require access to a computer and an internet connection. There is poor mobile signal in parts of the Parish, which is a detriment to business and hence the WNP would support the provision of improved mobile reception subject to it being in accordance with Policy WAD11.
- 8.18. The Household Survey contained a series of questions aimed at small businesses and home-based workers including those that would like to work from home. The Survey received responses from 682 people to these questions, indicating that there are a sizable number of small and home-based businesses. The most significant finding from this group was that 86% of respondents would like improved broadband services.
- 8.19. Although some parts of the Parish have access to acceptable speeds/bandwidth, this is far from consistent in all areas and some users struggle with poor download speeds. It is notable that these findings were gathered well before the Covid-19 impact – improved broadband services will be even more important now with increased home working. Where development takes place, applicants should seek to ensure that wider access to the broadband network is enabled, to assist those properties that do not already have such a connection.
- 8.20. Major development, for housing, is defined as development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

POLICY WAD11: COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT

- A. Major development proposals should require the installation of fibre optic connection services to all the properties on site. Preference will be given to the installation of connections to multiple properties, where practicable, to reduce the number of installations required.**
- B. Subject to permitted development rights, providers of communication infrastructure apparatus must:**
 - a. have fully explored the opportunities to erect apparatus on existing buildings, existing masts, or other existing structures; and**
 - b. be located to minimise visual impact – consider artificial tree masts; and**
 - c. not require the removal of mature or veteran trees; and**
 - d. not interfere with any other radio or microwave networks in the area; and**
 - e. ensure the numbers of radio and telecommunication infrastructure are kept to a minimum consistent with the efficient operation of the network; and**
 - f. be of the minimum physical dimensions necessary to fulfil its function; and**
 - g. ensure the development has been sited and designed to minimise negative impacts to the character of the High Weald National Landscape and Conservation Areas, including through its integration with existing street furniture and/or the addition of softening landscaping and bespoke design in consultation with the Parish Council; and**
 - h. ensure the proposals are not detrimental to public safety and will minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity.**

Preference should be given to technologies that have little or no visual impact on the landscape, such as subterranean fibre optic cabling, unless other material considerations apply.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3, 5; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN31-EN33; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS5, WCS7, WCS13; AONB Management Plan objectives: LBE1; NPPF: 86, 118

9. THE ENVIRONMENT

Policy WAD12: Conservation of the natural environment, ecosystems and biodiversity

Purpose

- 9.1. This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of Wadhurst Parish's green and blue spaces, including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife habitats, promoting biodiversity and geodiversity, in off-setting the effects of air pollution, and contributing to the health and wellbeing of the population, are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy.

Justification

- 9.2. The NPPF states that plans should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including by identifying and mapping habitats and networks. The Environment Act 2021 includes provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain. The Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as "Nature Recovery Networks", joined-up systems of places important for wildlife on land (and at sea).
- 9.3. Figure 9.1 identifies on a map the green stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken green corridors within the Parish. It has been informed by the High Weald Management Plan, the Wealden Green Infrastructure Study and information sourced from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. The strategic Teise Valley green/blue corridor runs through the Parish. This has been identified by WDC as a potential priority landscape corridor with key opportunities for strategic green infrastructure enhancement, linkage and creation. It was identified as a proposed corridor in the Green Infrastructure Study on the concept map (it has not been designated in an adopted plan or strategy). In addition, the Northern Wealden Green Access Link provides a key opportunity for multi-user, predominantly off-road, strategic access routes/greenway. This has also not been designated yet in an adopted plan or strategy.
- 9.4. These are important corridors and spaces for the local community for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area, threading through the Parish itself. Access to open spaces is important for wellbeing and mental health. They also provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife and species of principal importance, such as bats and hedgehogs etc., to prevent species becoming isolated.

The [Defra biodiversity metric](#) has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value, in terms of habitats, and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10%. Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain. Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practise for planning and development.

- 9.5. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the Parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible and not detrimental to the landscape. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community.
- 9.6. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 9.7. Planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, veteran trees, ancient hedgerows and trees of a high conservation value unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered.



*Both informal and formal green spaces contribute to the green infrastructure network
Birchetts Wood (credit: Liz Randall, Woodland Trust) and Jardin d'Aubers*

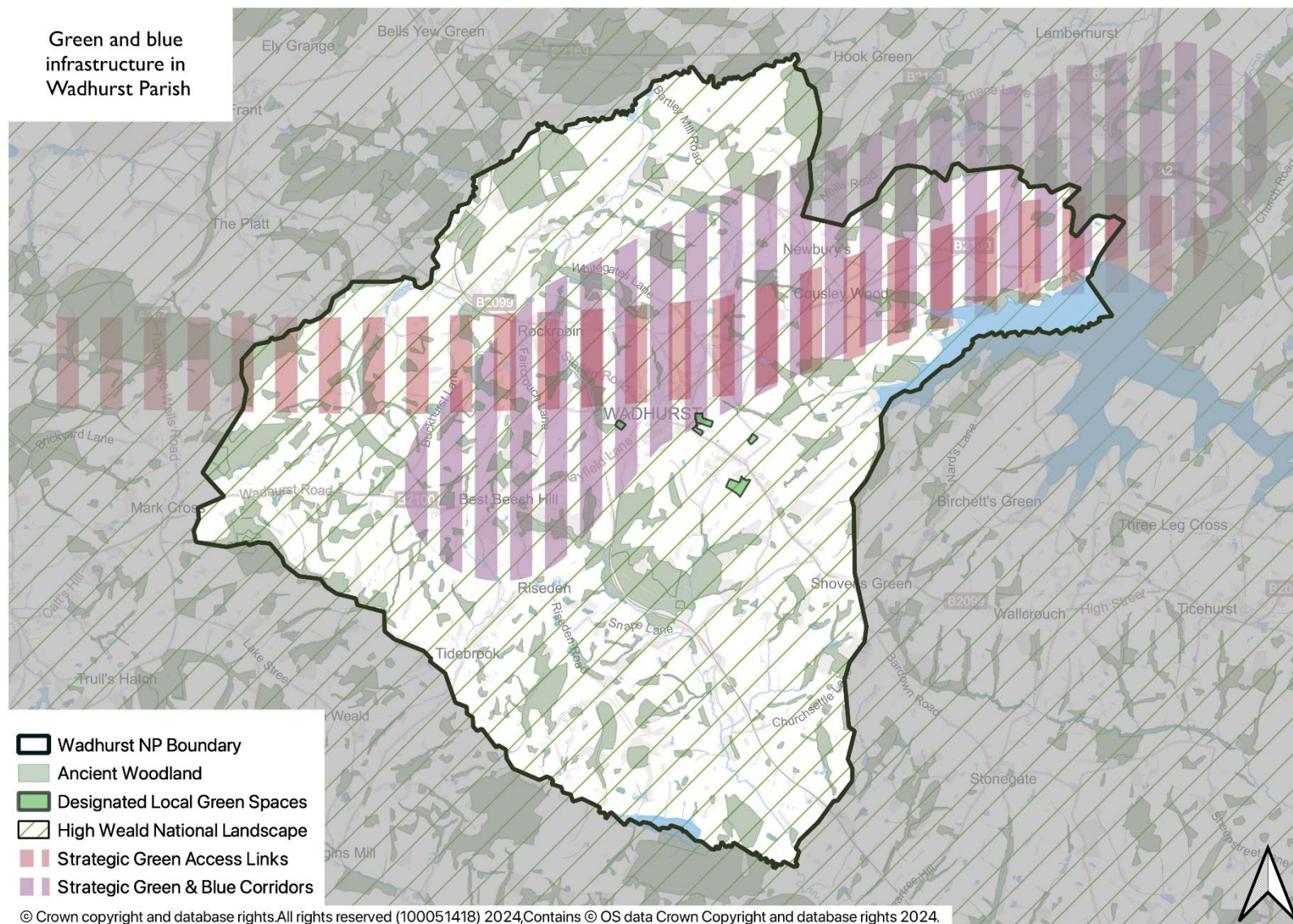


Figure 9.1: Green and blue infrastructure network in Wadhurst

Trees and ancient woodland

- 9.8. The Parish is home to a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees and ancient woodland (Figure 9.2). As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 136, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character.



Snape Wood, (credit: Liz Randall, Woodland Trust)

- 9.9. Ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats for wildlife and species of principal importance, while also having both heritage and cultural value. Natural England advises that development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 186 of the NPPF. It also advises that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. Also, to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.

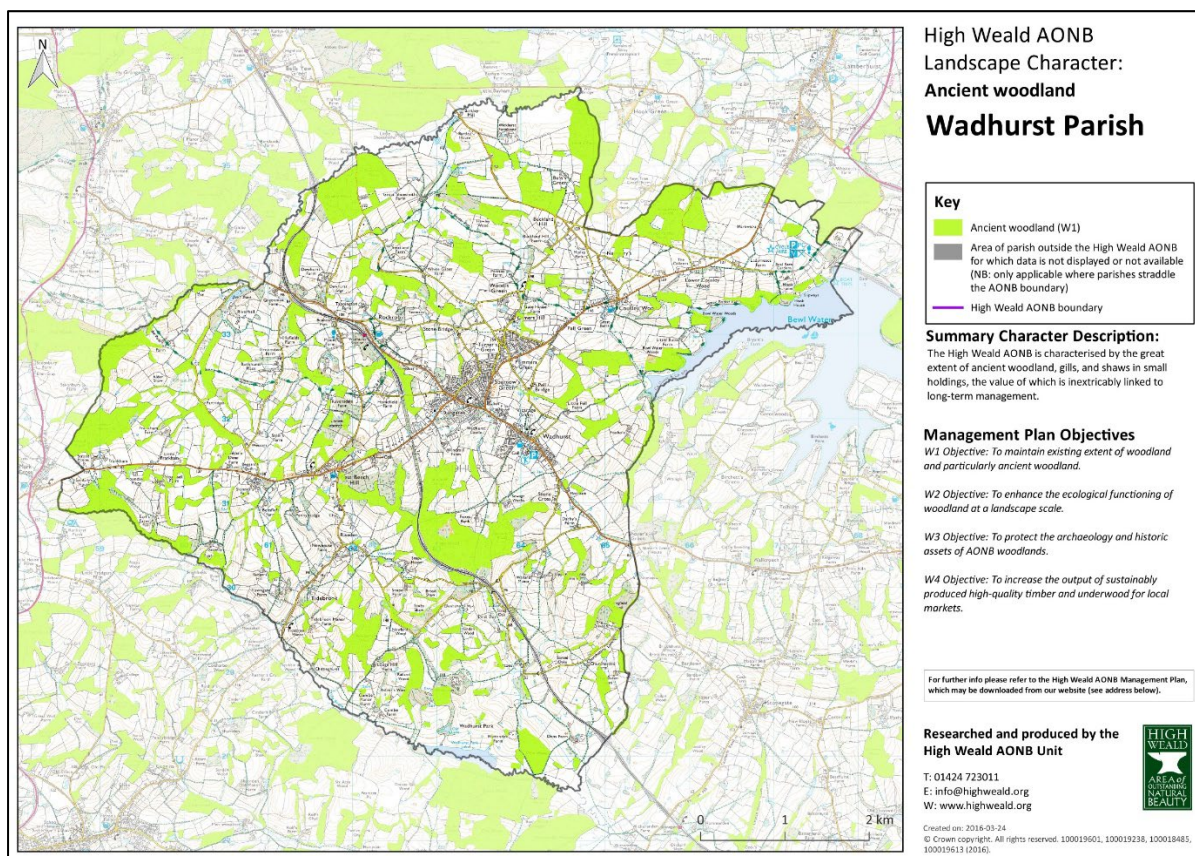


Figure 9.2: Ancient woodland recorded in Wadhurst Parish (source: High Weald AONB Unit)

Biodiversity opportunity areas within Wadhurst

- 9.10. Whilst developers are encouraged to deliver their biodiversity net gain on site, this is not always possible; equally there may be opportunities to enhance other parts of the Parish in need of attention. It is therefore useful to consider where Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) exist within the Parish. The following additional opportunities have been identified by the community for Wadhurst:
- 9.11. **Bewl Water:** Identified as a Biodiversity Opportunity Area. This reservoir is the largest expanse of open water in Sussex and was created by damming the River Bewl and flooding its three main tributary stream valleys. Bewl Water is extremely important for large numbers of waders and wildfowl during the winter and as a site of international significance for gulls. An application has been made to Natural England for the designation of Bewl Water as an SSSI. Specific management requirements are: Wetland habitat management, restoration and creation and access improvements. Policy WAD13 provides additional guidance on proposals that impact Bewl Water.
- 9.12. **High Weald landscape restoration:** There is a general aim to improve the biodiversity value of green spaces and green corridors within the High Weald (Figure 9.1 for Wadhurst Parish) for the benefit of wildlife, ensuring in particular the sensitive management of ancient woodland, veteran trees, hedgerows and heathland.

- 9.13. It should be noted that BOA boundaries can change over time, therefore it is recommended that the High Weald AONB Unit and the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre are consulted when drafting proposals.
- 9.14. Proposals for all new developments should be supported by a biodiversity appraisal, which must demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised and biodiversity net gain achieved.
- 9.15. The appraisal should demonstrate that where significant harm cannot be avoided, proposed development and other changes should adequately mitigate or, as a last resort, compensate for the harm. The appraisal must demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain (of at least 10%) by utilising the Defra biodiversity metric (or as amended).

POLICY WAD12: CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, ECOSYSTEMS AND BIODIVERSITY

- A. Proposals should be designed to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green infrastructure, as identified on Figure 9.1, with the aim of delivering a measurable net environmental benefit of a minimum of 10% for local people and wildlife.**
- B. Development proposals must follow the mitigation hierarchy when considering their impacts on biodiversity and seek to first avoid any adverse impacts, mitigate for impacts to minimise their effect and as a last resort compensate for any harm. Measures to achieve biodiversity net gain and / or mitigation measures should be provided on site wherever possible. If it is demonstrated that sufficient measures cannot be provided on site, they should be provided within the Parish and as close to the site as possible. Any measures must be agreed by the Local Planning Authority and include sufficient funding to support at least 30 years of post-development habitat management or land use change (in accordance with the Environment Act.**
- C. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged to enhance the green infrastructure of the neighbourhood area. Proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas will be supported. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.**
- D. The planting of additional native species trees and/ or continuous hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors and to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as a habitat for wildlife will be supported.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN6, EN12-EN16, EN18; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS12, WCS13; AONB Management Plan objectives: S1, S2, R2, G2, OQ3; NPPF: 96, 102, 103, 128, 158, 159, 180-183, 185

Policy WAD13: Bewl Water Reservoir area and associated public activities

Purpose

- 9.16. This policy seeks to protect and preserve Bewl Water as the only ‘accessible natural green space’ in the Parish. It also seeks to protect the water-based recreational activities possible at Bewl Water. This will help to maintain and improve its naturalness, biodiversity and access to it by parishioners and the wider public for the enjoyment of its open space, natural beauty, dark skies, tranquillity, recreational and leisure activities and beautiful views into and out of the area. Access to such green space contributes to the mental and physical health and wellbeing of the community.

Justification

- 9.17. Bewl Water, the largest reservoir in south east England, dammed and flooded in the mid-1970s, lies at the eastern edge of the Parish and continues across the boundary into neighbouring Rother. Part of the associated reservoir area borders Tunbridge Wells Borough Council area. The entire 800-acre site sits wholly within the High Weald National Landscape. The part within Wadhurst Parish is shown on Figure 9.3.
- 9.18. The reservoir itself forms part of the network of such resources managed by Southern Water. It can hold more than 31,000 million litres of water – enough to provide an average day’s water usage (about 150 litres) to nearly 200 million people.
- 9.19. Importantly the site also provides a 13-mile walking and cycling route around the reservoir and some 700 acres of leisure and recreational activities, on and off-water. These are run independently of Southern Water and activities include fishing, sailing, rowing and other water sports. There is a café and aquapark at the northwest part of the site, which also houses a temporary campsite. The entire area provides opportunities for walking, cycling, horse-riding and nature watching.
- 9.20. The reservoir is located in one of the darkest sky areas of the Parish (as demonstrated in Figure 9.7 of policy WAD16). It provides an important habitat for a range of flora and fauna and a tranquil spot for birdwatchers and nature lovers. Bird sightings include heron, kingfisher, white storks, grebe, various species of gull and osprey. Parts of the reservoir are designated specifically for nature conservation.
- 9.21. The Water Industry Act, 1991 requires that the reservoir, and particularly its water, is made available for recreational purposes “in the best manner”.
- 9.22. The Environment Agency’s 1997 ‘Water Related Recreation Strategy for its Southern Region’ noted that “the majority of visitors to the countryside and water areas ... do so for the ‘quiet enjoyment’”. The Strategy states as a principle that “existing opportunities for sailing both inland and coastal waters should be safeguarded. Participation for all should be encouraged through existing clubs and opportunities sought at water sports centres for all sections of the community”.
- 9.23. Bewl Water is also identified as a Landscape Character Area in the East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment (2016), which sets out considerations that should be taken into account in relation to any potential development in the area. These include:

- Protecting and enhancing the wetland habitat
- Maximising opportunities for biodiversity
- Maximising opportunities for and manage water based recreational activities where these would not conflict with wildlife
- Identifying areas where public access can be encouraged whilst protecting other areas where wildlife conservation is the priority, particularly in relation to the reservoir.

The strategy set out for managing change in the Bewl Water Local Character Area should be used to inform any development proposals in this area.

- 9.24. Bewl Water is the only natural 'accessible natural green space' in the Parish. Safeguarding Bewl Water as an accessible open space is important because there is already a deficit of such space in the Parish. The [WDC Open Space Study 2022](#) (p.33, Table 6.1) cites Bewl Water as the only such space in the Parish, providing 15.85 ha of space per 1,000 population. Whilst this is in excess of the guideline quantity standard recommended by Fields In Trust (1.80 hectares per 1,000 population), the Open Space Study also states that parts of Wadhurst Parish fall outside the recommended distance to access such spaces, where Natural England's 'Accessible Natural Green Space' Standard (March 2010) states that at least 2 ha. of provision is recommended no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from a person's home, with at least one accessible 20 ha. site within two kilometres of home. This Standard is based on three underlying principles – improving access to green spaces, the naturalness of green spaces and the connectivity with green spaces.
- 9.25. The site is highly valued by residents and attracts numerous visitors from outside of the Parish for its recreational and wildlife opportunities. The Household Survey revealed, for instance, that
- Bewl Water is one of the two most popular public open spaces in the Parish (alongside countryside footpaths).
 - 61% of respondents (571 out of 938) use Bewl Water for informal activities
 - 42% of respondents (392 out of 938) use Bewl Water for dog walking
 - 11% of respondents (107 out of 938) use Bewl Water for organised sport
 - 84% (721 out of 859) of respondents respectively strongly support or support 'improved recreational facilities at Bewl'
- 9.26. 80% of respondents (750 out of 938) said that they use Bewl Water and only 1% of respondents (10 out of 938) said they don't value Bewl Water.
- 9.27. It is important that a balance is struck between appropriate recreational provision and development, which could adversely impact on biodiversity or the quiet recreational enjoyment that is currently experienced by users.
- 9.28. The WNP supports the ongoing provision of on-water activity and of a clubhouse to serve water-sports clubs' members, where this can be achieved in harmony with the natural setting. The WNP would support such a proposal, where it can be achieved sensitively in the context of the sensitive High Weald setting.



Image shows: Bewl Water

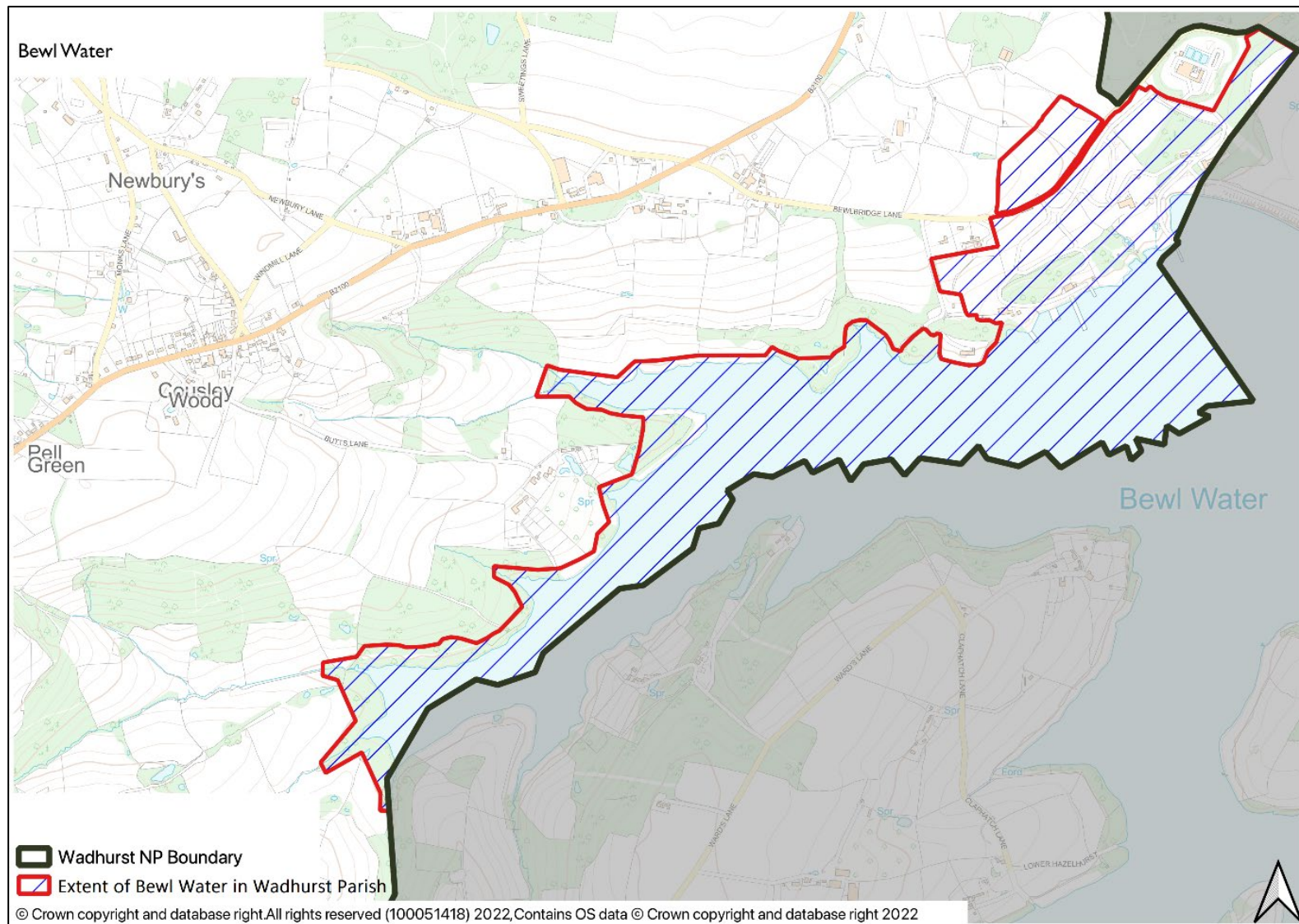


Figure 9.3: Bewl Water open space, showing area of Bewl Water that falls within Wadhurst Parish

POLICY WAD13: BEWL WATER RESERVOIR AREA AND ASSOCIATED PUBLIC ACTIVITIES

- A. Proposals for tourism-related development in the Bewl Water area as shown on Figure 9.3 will be supported (subject to complying with other relevant neighbourhood plan and strategic policies) provided they:**
- i. are guided by the landscape change and adaptation strategy set out in the [East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, Area 7 Bewl Water Character Area](#); and**
 - ii. protect nature conservation, biodiversity, dark skies and quiet recreation; and**
 - iii. promote sailing, rowing, canoeing or the use of other small non-motorised recreational craft or fishing or similar on-water activity; and**
 - iv. maintain and (where practicable) further enhance the publicly accessible network of open spaces and public rights of way; and**
 - v. encourage native waterside planting appropriate to the area.**
- B. Proposals for the repair, maintenance, enhancement or rebuilding of bridges, culverts, land drains, pipelines, dam wall, car and boat parks, roadways, slipways, jetties or similar infrastructure will be supported, subject to criteria i, ii, iv and v above.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 3, 4; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN18, EN28, TM1, TM4, TM5; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS13; AONB Management Plan objectives: OQ2, LBE2; NPPF: 88, 89, 96, 97, 102

Policy WAD14: Protection of distinctive and highly valued views

Purpose

- 9.29. Wadhurst Parish is blessed with being sited within the stunning High Weald National Landscape countryside. The rolling hills give rise to wonderful long-distance views across the protected landscape and to Bewl Water. This policy seeks to safeguard the most distinctive and highly valued views, judged by parishioners, from inappropriate development and, where possible, enhance them.

Justification

- 9.30. The parish of Wadhurst comprises the main historic village of Wadhurst itself and a cluster of other, smaller settlements, mainly situated atop ridgelines and affording views across the High Weald from various locations. The topography of the surrounding area means that there are some significant long-distance views which contribute to the character of Wadhurst both for residents and increasingly for visitors. In particular views take in aspects of the High Weald National Landscape, adding to the sense of place and sense of rurality.
- 9.31. The East Sussex County Landscape Assessment, 2016 recognises this, describing the *“stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges, some of the finest views in the High Weald”*. These views contribute to the sense of place and character of Wadhurst Parish, and in turn the mental and physical wellbeing of residents and visitors.
- 9.32. The visual impact of new development on the countryside was a top concern for residents (99.1% expressed a concern in the Household Survey). Because of the ridge line position and topography of Wadhurst, the impact of new development on views is significant as developments can often be seen over very wide areas.
- 9.33. In the context of the National Landscape setting, all development proposals should take advantage of and complement existing buildings, landscape and topography and should seek to mitigate their impact on the views across the wider countryside. To support this, development proposals must be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, following the guidelines set out by the [Landscape Institute](#).
- 9.34. The neighbourhood plan process affords communities an opportunity to identify specific views that they consider to be of particular local importance and worthy of protection. This is supported within the High Weald Management Plan objective OQ4. Ten such views have been identified, which are considered to fit this description. Figures 9.3 to 9.5 provide overview maps of the views and further details about why they are considered important is contained in Appendix D. The views are:
- View 1 - From the farm gate in Primmers Green Lane towards the steeple of St Peter and St Paul Church
 - Views 2a and 2b - From Cousley Wood Road / Primmers Green Lane junction southeast across Primmers field
 - View 3 - From Ben Grieg’s Garage forecourt across well used informal footpaths on field next to (Southwest) Primmers Green field

- Views 4a and 4b - From Wadhurst CoE Primary School fence northeast to Bewl Water (c. 3 miles)
 - Views 5a and 5b - From well used informal footpath on field (southeast of Primmers Green field with access from farm gate in Primmers Green Lane) northeast to Bewl Water (c. 3 miles) and north to Primmers Green
 - View 6 - From Church (Donkey Steps) public footpath across Vicarage Green to Bewl Water (c. 3 miles)
 - View 7 - From the Walk, in the High Street south towards the southern ridge (Burwash to Heathfield) c. 5 miles.
 - View 8 - From Wadhurst Lower High Street looking southwest over fields to southern ridge (c. 5 miles)
 - Views 9a, 9b and 9c - from Brinkers Lane farm gates (x2) to the spire of St Peter and St Paul Church (c. 1 mile) and to Mayfield Lane ridge (c. 2 miles); and View 9d looking east towards the Brinkers Lane ridge from footpath 27a from Stone Cross Farm to Snape Wood (this is the reciprocal view of View 9b)
 - View 10 – View of Bewl Water from Windmill Lane, Cousley Wood (by farm gate)
- 9.35. The policy requires that development proposals are designed in a way that safeguards, where possible, the locally significant view or views concerned. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period.
- 9.36. Planning applications for all proposed development should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment. This will assist in embedding a landscape approach to development and perpetuate a sense of place, connecting with the High Weald.
- 9.37. Where long distance views extend beyond the Parish boundary, it is the intention of the Parish Council to discuss with neighbouring parishes the impact on views in their area, if development is planned for those areas.

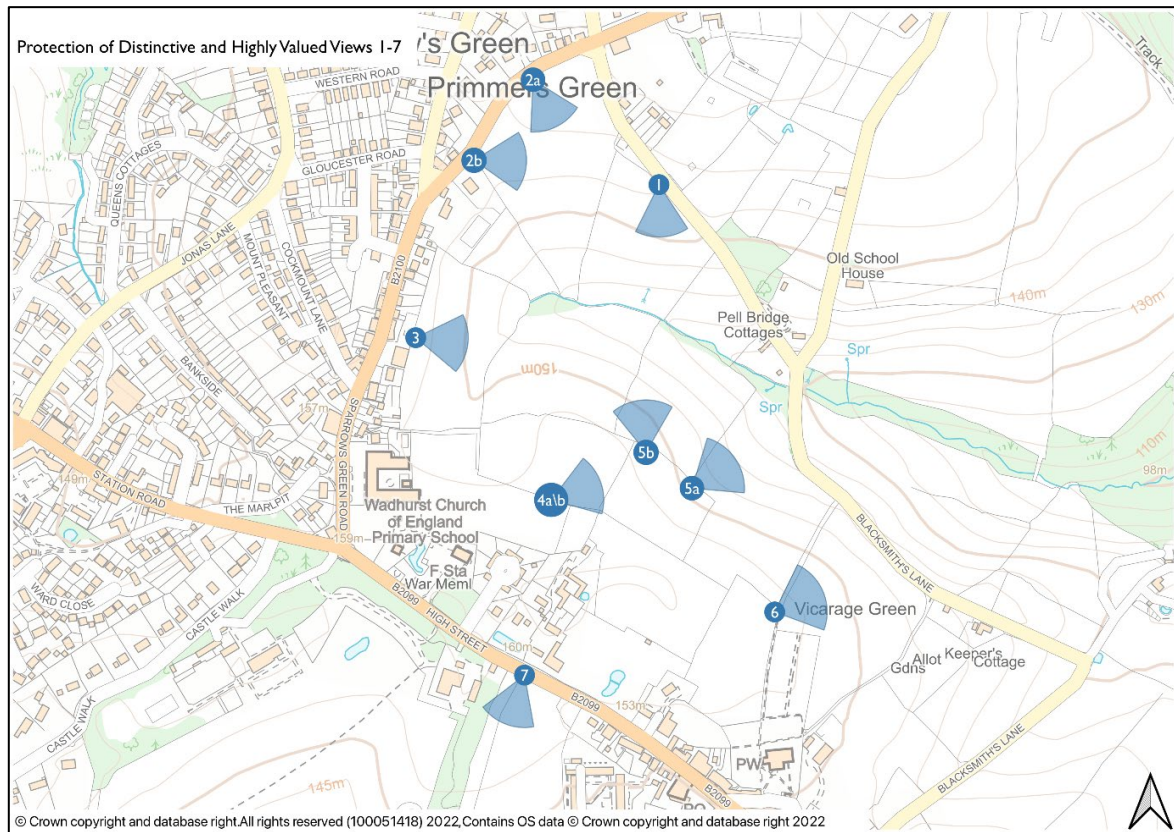


Figure 9.3: Map showing viewpoints 1 to 7



Figure 9.4: Map showing viewpoints 8 to 9

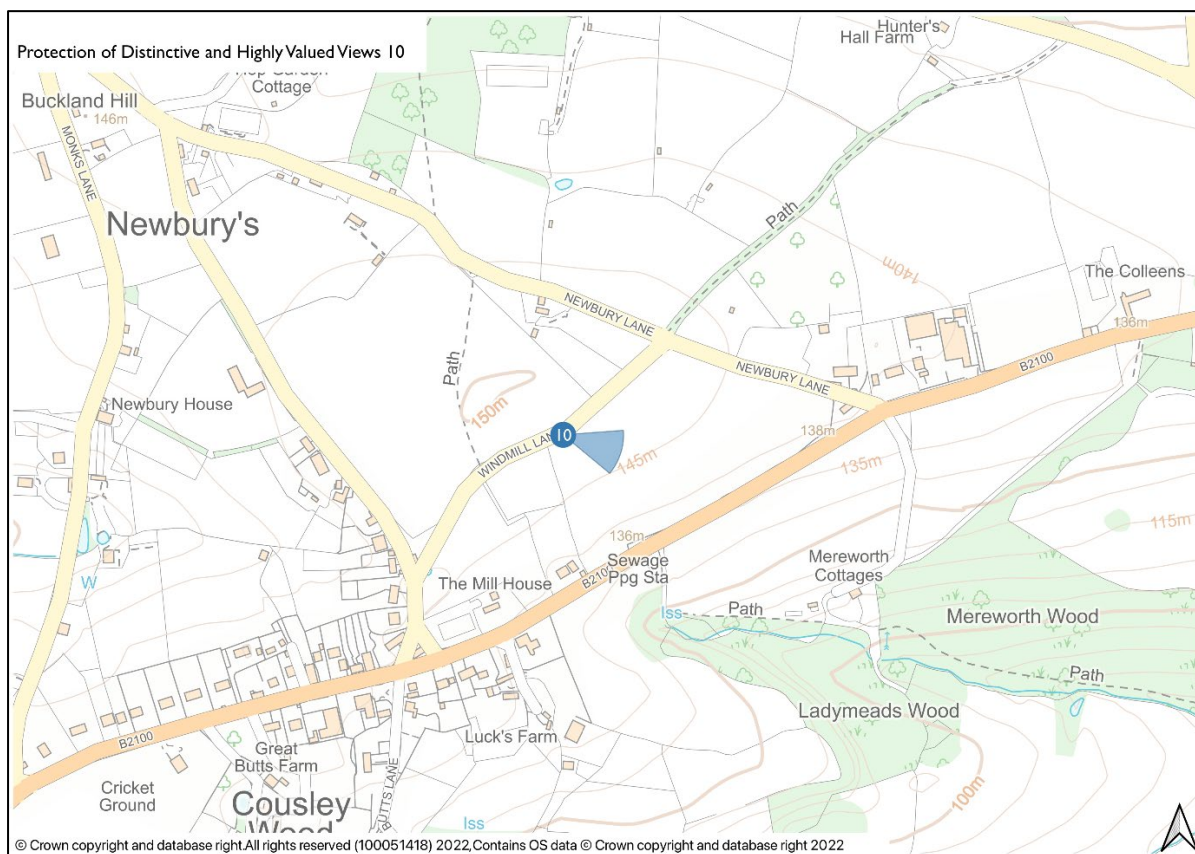


Figure 9.5: Map showing viewpoint 10

POLICY WAD14: PROTECTION OF DISTINCTIVE AND HIGHLY VALUED VIEWS

- A. The Plan identifies ten locally significant views/view clusters mapped in Figures 9.3, 9.4 and 9.5, with descriptions in Appendix D. Should development be proposed within the key views shown on Figures 9.3-9.5, the impact on the relevant view will be carefully considered. A prime factor in the decision will be whether the development can be designed in a way that safeguards the view.**
- B. Proposals for development should demonstrate the potential impacts that such a proposal would have on significant views where relevant and how these impacts will be mitigated.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 1, 4; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN6; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WSC13; AONB Management Plan objectives: 0Q4; NPPF: 130-135

Policy WAD15: Local Green Spaces

Purpose

9.38. This policy designates Local Green Spaces within Wadhurst Parish, that are demonstrably special to the local community. The spaces have been identified in partnership with the community. Many of the spaces contribute to the physical health and mental wellbeing of the community, for instance through increasing physical activity by enabling more walking and cycling within the area and access to play and recreational areas. It is important to maintain and improve the accessibility of green spaces for all ages and abilities and improve the quality and linkages between these spaces and key destinations.

Justification

9.39. Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the community. This will afford them protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 106 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

9.40. A survey of green spaces in Wadhurst was undertaken by the Character Assessment Group and the Environment Focus Group. Building on feedback from the local community via the surveys and workshops, the groups reviewed the green spaces across the Parish to ascertain whether they might be suitable for designation as a Local Green Space. The following five areas are considered to fulfil all the criteria of the NPPF (note that numbering of the spaces is carried forward from the original long-list of assessments):

1. LG3: Wadhurst Primary School Playing Field
2. LG4: Uplands Community College Playing Fields
3. LG6: Sacred Heart Playing Fields
4. LG8: Jardin d'Aubers
5. LG10: Vicarage Green Allotments

9.41. Figure 9.6 shows the location of each of the Local Green Spaces. Detailed maps of each space are shown in Appendix E along with details as to how they each meet the NPPF criteria.

9.42. Several green spaces that are considered important to the local community have not been proposed for designation as Local Green Space. This is because they are already adequately protected by other mechanisms.

POLICY WAD15: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following five green spaces, mapped in Figure 9.6 and detailed in Appendix E, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. LG3: Wadhurst Primary School Playing Field
2. LG4: Uplands Community College Playing Fields
3. LG6: Sacred Heart Playing Fields
4. LG8: Jardin d'Aubers
5. LG10: Vicarage Green Allotments

Development proposals within the designated local green spaces will be considered consistently with national policy for Green Belts.

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4, 5; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN18, LR1, LR2, LR6; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS13; AONB Management Plan objectives: S2; NPPF: 96, 102, 103, 105-107, 152-156

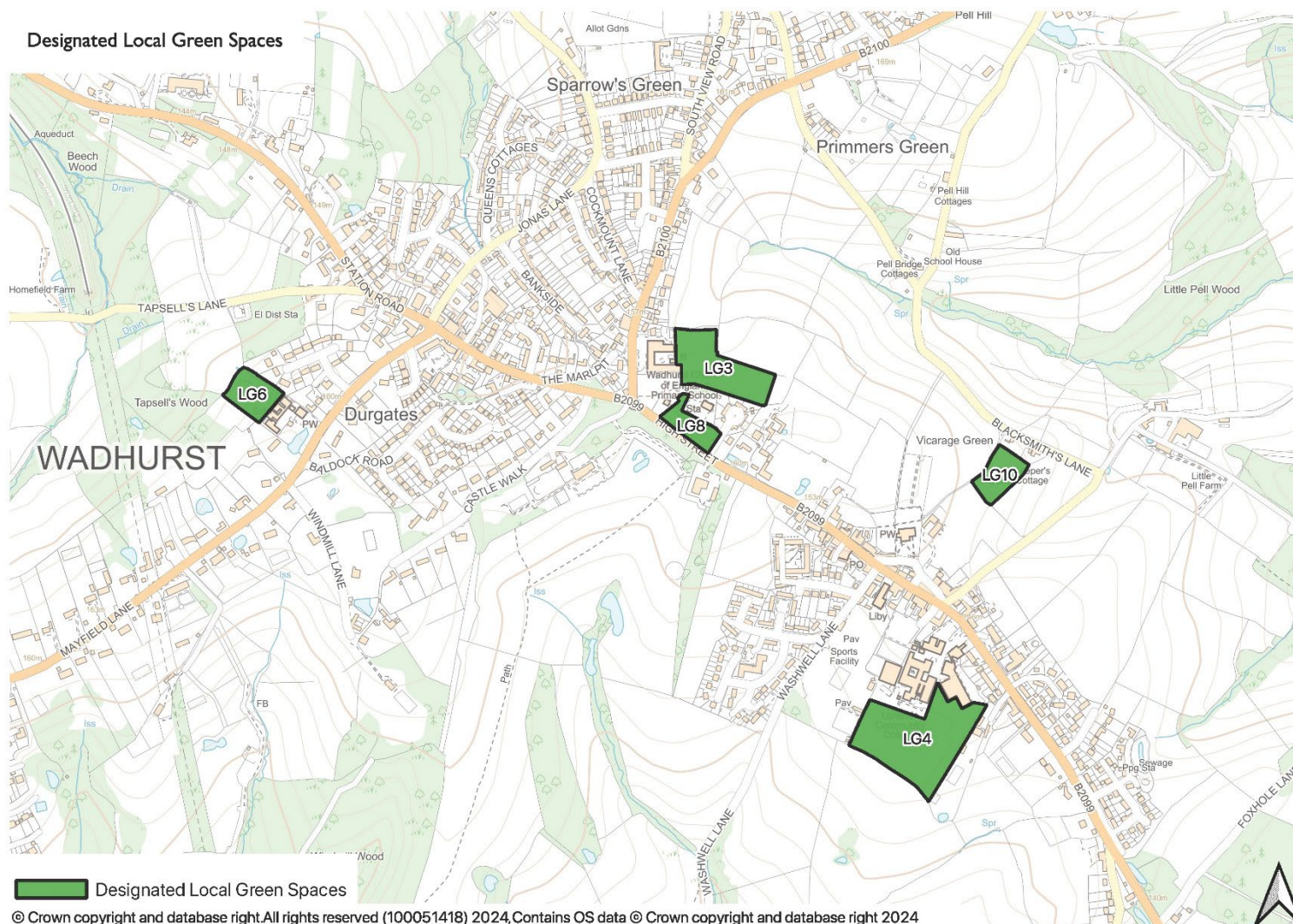


Figure 9.6: Map showing location of the Local Green Spaces

Policy WAD16: Protection of dark skies

Purpose

9.43. Situated in the High Weald National Landscape, parts of Wadhurst parish, particularly beyond the main settlements, provide ideal locations from which to enjoy dark skies and stargazing. These dark skies also support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife. This policy seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of the Parish.

Justification

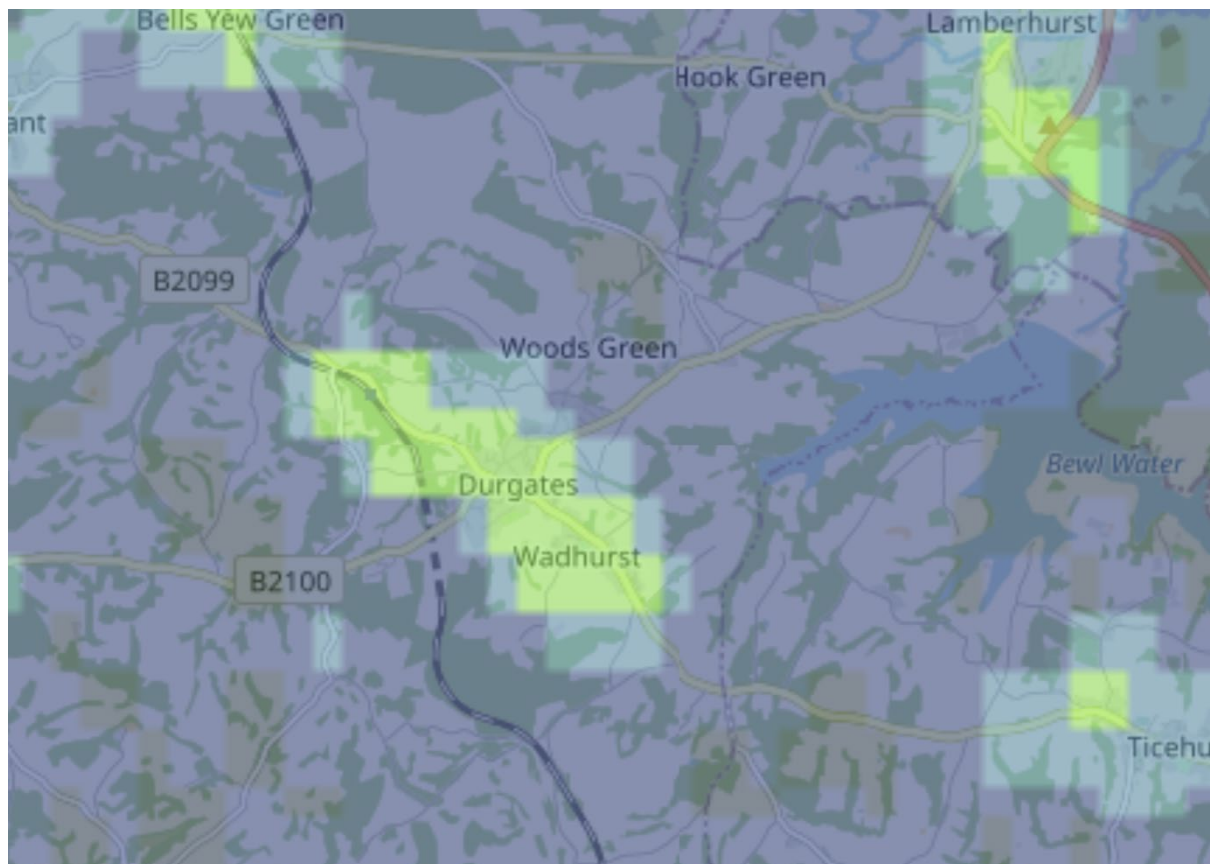


Figure 9.7: Map showing levels of radiance for Wadhurst Parish, 2019 (source: CPRE) Each pixel shows the levels of radiance (night lights) shining up into the night sky

- 9.44. Swathes of the Parish remain largely unlit (Figure 9.7), for instance the areas away from Wadhurst village and other smaller settlements. The dark night skies in these areas are predominantly unspoilt, and it is important that they are kept that way.
- 9.45. The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:
- mental and physical health and wellbeing – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
 - wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
 - energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the Parish's carbon footprint
 - enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- 9.46. The impact of light pollution is particularly harmful in the open countryside where rural character is eroded. Light pollution can also compromise the architectural and historical character of conservation areas and listed buildings or their settings. Artificial lighting has an impact on biodiversity especially for nocturnal animals and invertebrates can be seriously affected by artificial light at even very low levels, adversely affecting their ability to feed and reproduce.
- 9.47. The High Weald AONB Management Plan (Objective OQ4) requires that the special qualities that people value, such as tranquillity, dark skies and clean air, are recognised and taken into account in new developments. It encourages neighbourhood planning groups to include policies that minimise light pollution.
- 9.48. Policy WAD16 provides detail on two factors that contribute to light pollution:
- External lighting – considering the need for lighting and, where it is required, designing it in such a way as to minimise spillage.
 - Glazing – avoiding smooth, reflective building materials, including large expanses of glass, particularly near water bodies. Such materials may change natural light, creating polarised light pollution that can affect wildlife behaviour. The impact of the positioning of glazing should also be considered.

POLICY WAD16: PROTECTION OF DARK SKIES

- A. Proposals for development will be supported where it is clearly demonstrated that all opportunities to reduce light pollution have been taken.**
- B. If external lighting is required, the following must be demonstrated:**
 - i. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;**
 - ii. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing;**
 - iii. impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape is minimised; and**
 - iv. the guidance on lighting provided in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to.**
- C. Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.**
- D. The material, siting and size of glazing should be carefully considered to ensure that light spillage and reflection is minimised.**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 4; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN29; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS12, WCS13; AONB Management Plan objectives: OQ4; NPPF: 180, 182, 185, 186, 191

10. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Policy WAD17: Important Community Facilities

Purpose

- 10.1. The community facilities within Wadhurst Parish provide an important resource for its residents, both old and young. They enable a range of activities and services to be run, which are important for people's wellbeing and day-to-day needs. Whilst saved Policy LR1 of the Wealden Local Plan (1998) seeks to resist the loss of open space with recreational or amenity value, Policy WAD18 extends this by safeguarding those facilities and assets that have been identified as being particularly important to the local community. Some of these have been, or could be, nominated for designation as Assets of Community Value.

Justification

- 10.2. Infrastructure projects which increase physical activities and improve and increase play and recreation support both physical health and mental wellbeing benefits. Accessible community facilities provide important places for people to meet, reducing social isolation and improving the social cohesion of the area.
- 10.3. A wide range of community, social, recreational and sport facilities is available within the Parish. There is strong community support for the protection of these assets, which contribute to social cohesion and healthy communities. A number of additional facilities were put forward as being important. However, many of these have protection through other policies. Therefore, the following are taken forward, and are mapped in Figure 10.1.
- a. St. Georges Hall, Sparrows Green
 - b. Commemoration Hall, High Street
 - c. Institute Building, High Street
 - d. Commemoration Playing Fields, Washwell Lane
 - e. Carillon Cottage, High Street
 - f. Sparrows Green Recreation Ground & Pavilion
 - g. Uplands Gym, Lower High Street
 - h. Youth Centre, Lower High Street
 - i. Scout Hut, Lower High Street

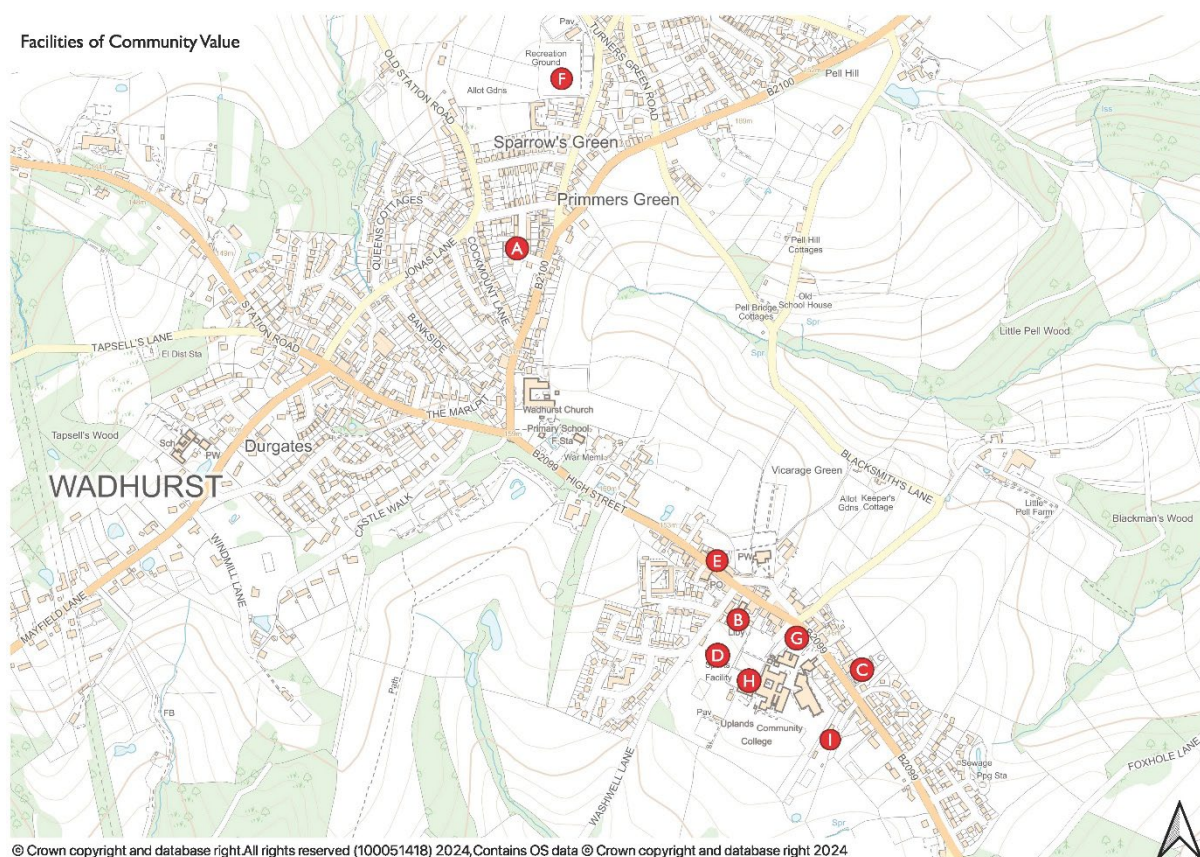


Figure 10.1: Facilities of community value

10.4. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of one of these assets, the application should be supported by:

- A viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts have been made to promote, improve, and market the facility/property, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the asset (a minimum of two independent valuations of the building will normally be required) have not been successful, and the use is no longer viable;
- such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the property; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the asset has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received with reasons for being rejected;
- the marketing of the property and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
- review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

10.5. In parallel with this policy, the Parish Council will consider formally nominating the important community facilities as Assets of Community Value.

POLICY WAD17: IMPORTANT COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A. Proposals that would result in the loss of all or part of the following important community facilities listed in Clause C and mapped in Figure 10.1, will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that:

- i. the facility is surplus to requirements and there is no longer a proven need for such a facility; or
- ii. facilities of equivalent or better standard to serve the Parish will be provided at a suitable location within the Parish and will be secured through an appropriate planning mechanism and made available prior to the commencement or redevelopment of the proposed scheme; or
- iii. the facility is no longer viable. This would require:
 - a viability report, prepared by a relevant professional, including financial accounts and marketing information, illustrating that efforts have been made to promote, improve, and market the facility asset, for sale or rent, at a reasonable value which reflects the existing use and condition of the asset (a minimum of two independent valuations of the facility asset will normally be required) have not been successful, and the use is no longer viable;
 - such information should also include: the history of previous uses and period/s of vacancy of the facility asset; details of agent/s used; copies of brochures, advertisements, and dates (showing that the asset has been marketed at both local and regional level); records of the response and interest shown; and any offers received with reasons for being rejected;
 - the marketing of the facility asset and the accompanying information should cover a sustained period of at least 18 months before any planning application is submitted;
 - review of the submitted information may be required by an independent consultant and it is expected that the applicant will cover the cost of this.

B. Proposals to upgrade or expand these community facilities, in order to enable either their continued operation or for an alternative community use, or to develop new facilities will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- i. the proposal would not have significant harmful impacts on the amenities of surrounding residents and the local environment; and
- ii. the proposal would not have significant unacceptable impacts upon the local road network; and
- iii. the proposal would respect the historic importance and integrity of the buildings.

C. Important community facilities to which this policy applies (numbering corresponds to Figure 10.1):

- a. St. Georges Hall, Sparrows Green

- b. Commemoration Hall, High Street**
- c. Institute Building, High Street**
- d. Commemoration Playing Fields, Washwell Lane**
- e. Carillon Cottage, High Street**
- f. Sparrows Green Recreation Ground and Pavillion**
- g. Uplands Gym, Lower High Street**
- h. Youth Centre, Lower High Street**
- i. Scout Hut, Lower High Street**

Conformity Reference: NP objectives: 5; Saved policies from WDC Local Plan (1998): EN28, SH1, SH10, LR1, LR2, LR5, LR7, LR8; WDC Core Strategy Local Plan (2013): WCS7; AONB Management Plan objectives: LBE2, OQ3; NPPF: 96, 97, 102, 103

11. IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN REVIEW

- 11.1. Wadhurst Parish Council is the qualifying body responsible for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 11.2. Once the Plan has been 'made', there will be a series of actions that will need to be undertaken to ensure that the policies within the WNP are being interpreted and applied in the way intended. It will also be necessary to maintain a watching brief on changes to the planning policy landscape, both at the national and local planning authority levels, which may have an impact on the Plan's policies, including WDC's emerging Local Plan. Finally, non-planning-related projects and activities that were identified during the extensive community engagement will need to be prioritised for delivery, in partnership with other organisations.
- 11.3. Specific actions to be undertaken are as follows:
 - Pursuing the projects and activities that are not policy-based, but nevertheless contribute to the delivery of the Plan - these are set out in Section 13, divided into priorities towards which developer contributions may be directed and broader, community projects, which have been collated throughout the process, but which sit beyond planning policy. A range of organisations may be involved in delivering these projects and there will be a need for a co-ordinated approach. Many will require funding and therefore it would be helpful to consult with the community to understand the potential costs and achievability of each. Funding may be sourced from developer contributions or tailored funds, such as the Big Lottery Fund.
 - Commenting on planning applications or consultations relating to the neighbourhood plan area – the Parish Council has a role in ensuring that the WNP policies are being adequately considered, where relevant, in decisions to determine the outcome of planning applications in the Parish. A meeting between local councillors, planning committee members and the supporting planning officers at WDC would be a useful step in ensuring that the purpose and application of the policies is fully understood by all parties. This will assist in ensuring that policies are interpreted and applied in the way intended.
 - Monitoring the application of the WNP policies to ensure they have been applied consistently and interpreted correctly in response to planning applications – there is scope to identify indicators to measure the effect that each policy is having and the extent to which this is delivering against the associated objective. As a minimum, the Parish Council would wish to maintain a log of planning applications relating to the neighbourhood area, detailing which WNP policies have informed the Parish Council response and the outcome of the decision. This will assist in understanding whether the policies have been used in the manner intended or whether changes may be required, for instance in any future review of the WNP.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with WDC regarding the timing and content of the emerging Local Plan – it will be important to consider the policies in the emerging document and how these may impact the WNP policies. The adoption of the new Local Plan may trigger a light-touch review of the WNP.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with WDC and the promoter/developers of any sites allocated within the Local Plan.

- Maintaining a watching brief on the national policy landscape – changes at the national level may impact on the policies contained in the Local Plan and the WNP. It is therefore important to keep abreast of this, as this could also provide a trigger to undertake a review of the WNP.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with neighbouring parishes on cross-boundary projects.
 - Maintaining a dialogue with the local community on the WNP implementation. It is also recommended that a regular update – for instance at the Annual Parish Meeting – is provided, to feed back to the community on progress about both the effectiveness of the policies and the pursing of the projects.
 - Considering gaps in the WNP – local issues, concerns or opportunities may arise during the lifespan of the Plan that trigger the need for the inclusion of a new policy. Such issues can be most effectively understood by maintaining open dialogue with the community and other partners.
- 11.4. Whilst it is not a legislative requirement to review a Neighbourhood Plan, it is good practice to do so periodically. This may be because of any of the points noted above. A review will enable the Parish Council to keep the WNP up to date in general terms, and to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the wider development plan. Any review should be undertaken in partnership with and ensuring the engagement of the wider community.
- 11.5. The Parish Council will consider how best to progress these actions.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AND PROVISION

- 12.1. Throughout the community engagement and consultation, concern has been expressed about the pressures that exist on the existing infrastructure in the Parish. This includes the roads, schools and health services. Policy WSC7 of the adopted Core Strategy states:

“...the release of land for development will be conditional upon there being sufficient capacity in the existing local infrastructure to meet the requirements generated by the proposed development. Where development would create the need to provide additional or improved community facilities, services and infrastructure to mitigate its impact, a programme of delivery must be agreed with the relevant infrastructure providers which will ensure that these improvements are provided at the time they are needed”.

- 12.2. It is imperative that this policy is adhered to and the Parish Council commits to working with WDC, developers and infrastructure providers to represent fully the needs of the Parish. New and improved utility infrastructure will be encouraged and supported in order to meet the identified needs of the community subject to other policies in the plan.
- 12.3. The Parish Council is keen to influence the way in which developer contributions are spent in the neighbourhood area to the full extent of their powers under national legislation and planning guidance.
- 12.4. There are different types of contributions arising from section 106 agreements, section 278 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):
- A section 106 agreement (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) or planning obligation is a private agreement made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.
 - A section 278 agreement refers to a section of the Highways Act 1980 that allows developers to enter into a legal agreement with the local authority to make alterations or improvements to a public highway as part of a planning application.
 - CIL is a non-negotiable charge on development based on a fixed rate per square metre of net additional development on a site and levied by the District Council (WDC). Different charge rates would apply for different types of uses and in different areas. The levy is intended to fund the provision, improvement, replacement or maintenance of infrastructure required to support development in an area as set out in its local plan. With a ‘made’ (adopted) Neighbourhood Plan, the local community would benefit from an uplift in the level of CIL received, from 15% (capped at £100 per existing property) to an uncapped 25% of CIL receipts from the neighbourhood plan area.
- 12.5. The Parish Council intends to regularly review its spending priorities. Any proposed changes to spending principles or priorities will be published for comment by the community and other interested parties. Once finalised, any updated list will be published on the Parish Council website and in relevant literature.

13. COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS – MAJOR PROJECTS

Community Aspirations are non-statutory elements of the WNP. They have been generated from parishioners' input into the Neighbourhood Plan consultations and the Household Survey and will guide the Parish Council and other stakeholders, including parishioners and voluntary groups, on how to prioritise and allocate efforts and funding.

Community Aspirations are closely linked to Parish development, because part of their funding may come from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which in turn is generated by the number of homes built in the Parish in coming years.

A great number of projects and aspirations were raised during the consultation. Many are considered to form part of the normal business of the Parish Council. A full detail of all the projects identified, and relative support for each, is included in the Evidence Base (Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Community Aspirations). Projects needing higher levels of funding, planning and engagement with the community are considered 'major projects' and these are detailed below as priorities.

Ref.	Issue	Possible Actions	Lead agencies / partners
D1.	Improve road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the introduction of traffic calming measures such as including 20mph limit and / or traffic lights at key congestion times. 	ESCC (Highways)
D2.	Reduce congestion and improve parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add parking space in Wadhurst village or investigate edge-of-village carpark and a park 'n' ride scheme. Encourage parkers to help our High Street by only parking on the road to use the shops (through notices etc.). Explore options for the improved management/ enforcement of on-street and off-street car parking. 	WDC and ESCC (Highways)
D3.	Promote non-car transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate viability of an expanded community shuttle bus to provide a link between key areas of the Parish, including Wadhurst village, Durgates, Station, Tidebrook with potential to extend further and / or link with any possible park 'n' ride scheme. 	Wealden Community Link
D4.	Encourage cycling and walking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the provision of footpaths and cycleways between settlements within the Parish and improve cycle connection to local facilities, e.g., Bewl Water. 	WDC and ESCC (Highways)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide cycle stands/rack in the Parish and at key points throughout the area. Provide improved and more secure cycle storage at the station. 	WPC, ESCC (Highways), Network Rail and South Eastern
D5.	Promote tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve visitor information including signposts and information points in the village, at the station, and at key points around the Parish. 	WDC, WPC, ESCC (Highways), Network Rail and South Eastern Rail
D6.	Encourage composting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate community desirability and commercial viability of community composting. 	WDC and ESCC
D7.	Green transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide electric car power points in Parish car parks. 	WDC and UK Power Networks
D8.	Better recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the feasibility of identifying an area to house recycling facilities. 	WPC
D9.	Better health facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new, fit-for-purpose Health Centre to accommodate health professionals, including doctors, nurses and physiotherapists with adequate dedicated off-street parking. 	Sussex Primary Care Trust and Clinical Commissioning Group
D10.	More community space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a new village green, or pocket park, with seating situated near the centre of Wadhurst village. 	WPC and landowners
D11.	Better leisure facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the viability of a public swimming pool. Options could include: re-opening Uplands open-air pool or commissioning a feasibility study for a new indoor / lido pool. 	WPC, Uplands Academy and WDC
D12.	Outdoor facilities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the feasibility of an outdoor area for young people (e.g., a skatepark and hangout area) perhaps at the Sparrows Green Recreation ground. 	WPC
D13.	Indoor space for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the feasibility of an indoor social area for young people in the village, to include a low-cost café and activities which meet their needs. 	WPC and WSCC

14. POLICIES MAPS

Figure 14.1 overleaf shows the policies as they apply to the Parish.

Cumulative Effect on the Parish of WNP Policies

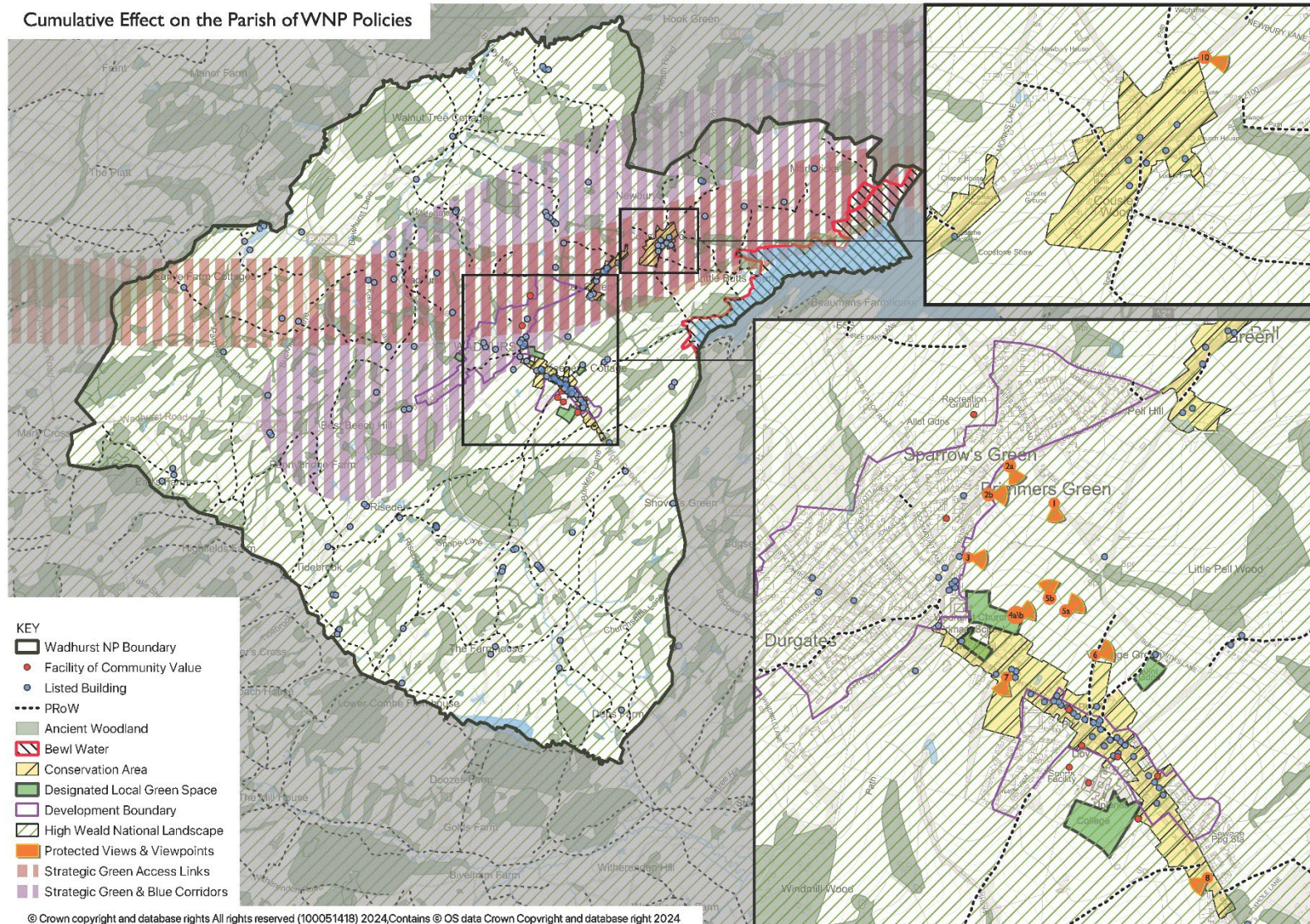


Figure 14.1: Policies Map

15. GLOSSARY

- **Affordable housing:** Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions.

a) **Affordable housing for rent** meets all the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent schemes (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) (Starter homes: In January 2020 the Department announced that the Starter Homes policy was no longer being pursued. In February 2020 it launched a new initiative, First Homes, which also aims to deliver discounted homes for first-time buyers. See below for more information on First Homes).

First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of 'affordable housing' for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- i. must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- ii. are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria;
- iii. on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- iv. after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

First Homes are the government's preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations

c) Discounted **market sales housing** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts

to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

- **Ancient or veteran tree/tree of arboricultural value:** A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
- **Ancient woodland:** An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes: ancient semi-natural woodland mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration; and plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer or broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi
- **Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- **Assart:** A field that has been created by clearing woodland.
- **Blue infrastructure:** Blue infrastructure refers to water elements, like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, water treatment facilities, etc. Green infrastructure refers to trees, lawns, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests, etc. These terms come from urban planning and land-use planning.
- **Change of Use:** A change in the way that land or buildings are used (see Use Classes Order). Planning permission is usually necessary to change a "use class".
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** a fixed, non-negotiable contribution that must be made by new development. It is chargeable on each net additional square metre of development built and is set by WDC.
- **Conservation area:** an area of notable environmental or historical interest or importance which is protected by law against undesirable changes.
- **Create Streets:** A social enterprise company founded by Nicholas Boys Smith, who is a commissioner of Historic England and a member of the Government's Design Review Panel. He is also Chair of the advisory board for the Government's Office for Place, that was launched in July 2021 alongside the National Model Design Code and revised NPPF.
- **Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation
- **Development:** defined in Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operation's in, on, over or under land; or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land.
- **Disability:** There is no single definition for 'disability'. Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is defined as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
- **East Sussex County Council (ESCC):** The county-wide authority has responsibility for strategic matters including waste and minerals planning, maintaining the public rights of way network, education, libraries and roads.
- **Green infrastructure:** A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.
- **Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).
- **Limits to built development:** These identify the areas of primarily built form, rather than countryside. They identify areas within which development of Brownfield land may normally be

appropriate, including infilling, redevelopment and conversions in accordance with Government Policy and Guidance (NPPF and NPPG). They do not include a presumption for the development of Greenfield land such as playing fields and other open space. Identified built-up area boundaries do not necessarily include all existing developed areas.

- **Local Green Space:** A green area of particular importance to the local community it serves. Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against inappropriate development.
- **Local housing need:** The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance.
- **Local Plan** – Local Plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure – as well as a basis for safeguarding the environment, adapting to climate change and securing good design for the area they cover. They are a critical tool in guiding decisions about individual development proposals, as Local Plans (together with any Neighbourhood Development Plans that have been made) are the starting point for considering whether applications can be approved. It is important for all areas to put an up-to-date Local Plan in place to positively guide development decisions.
- **Major Development:** Normally this is defined as: for housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. However, the NPPF disapplies this definition in National Landscapes and substitutes: “For the purposes of paragraphs 182 and 183, whether a proposal is ‘major development’ is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined”.
- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** the national planning policy document which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG):** This is an extensive online resource of detailed policy guidance provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Along with the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework), NPPG sets out how the government envisages the day to day working of the planning system in England to operate.
- **Nature Recovery Network:** An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.
- **Non-strategic policies:** Policies contained in a neighbourhood plan, or those policies in a local plan that are not strategic policies.
- **Older people:** People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
- **Permitted development:** Permitted development rights are an automatic grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Most houses have permitted development rights, but flats and maisonettes do not, so planning permission is required. A further example is the conversion of offices, for instance to flats, without the need for planning permission. Note that permitted development rights do not automatically apply in the High Weald National Landscape.

- **Previously developed land/ Brownfield land:** Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.
- **Section 106 agreement:** A mechanism under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which makes a development proposal acceptable in planning terms that would not otherwise be acceptable.
- **SMEs (Small to medium-sized enterprises):** The UK definition of SME is generally a small or medium-sized enterprise with fewer than 250 employees. While the SME meaning defined by the EU is also business with fewer than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than €50 million, or a balance sheet total of less than €43 million. Within this umbrella there are three different categories: medium-sized, small, and micro-businesses. These categories are defined by turnover and number of employees.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** Supplementary Planning Documents may cover a range of issues, both topic and site specific, which may expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained in a Development Plan Document, where they can help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery.
- **Twitten:** a narrow path or passage between two walls or hedges.
- **Use Classes Order:** The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (As amended in 1995, 2005 and 2013) puts uses of land and buildings into various categories. Planning permission is not needed for changes of use within the same use class.
- **Wadhurst Parish Council (WPC):** The local authority that makes decisions on behalf of the people in Wadhurst parish and has an overall responsibility for the well-being of its local community. It is the level of government closest to the community, with the district authority above it in the hierarchy. Wadhurst Parish Council is the Qualifying Body responsible for the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Wealden District Council (WDC):** Covering a smaller area than the county council, WDC is responsible for services like: rubbish collection, recycling, Council Tax collections, housing and planning applications.

16. LIST OF EVIDENCE DOCUMENTS

All links correct at February 2023.

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
Adopted Wealden Local Plan (saved policies)	Wealden District Council	1998
Affordable Housing Delivery Local Plan	Wealden District Council	2016
AddressPollution.org	Imperial College London	2021
Ancient tree guide 4: What are ancient, veteran and other trees of special interest?	Woodland Trust	2008
Biodiversity metric	Defra	2021
Census	Office for National Statistics	2011
Climate Change Act 2008	HM Government	2008
Detailed information about the community aspirations (see page 88 Community Aspirations – Major Projects)	Wadhurst Parish Council	2022
East Sussex Design Guide for Residential Development	East Sussex County Council	
East Sussex Landscape Character Assessment	East Sussex County Council	2016
Ecological data search for land at Turners Green Road, Wadhurst (see Wadhurst Parish Council website)	Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre	2021
Environment Act 2021	HM Government	2021
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Turners Green Road (see Wadhurst Parish Council website)	AEWC Ltd.	2019
Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development	High Weald AONB Unit	2017
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report for the Regulation 14 (Phase 1) Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan	Wealden District Council	July 2021
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report for the Regulation 14 (Phase 2) Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan	Wealden District Council	October 2022
Heritage at Risk Register	Historic England	ongoing
High Weald Housing Design Guide	High Weald AONB Unit	2019
The High Weald AONB Management Plan	High Weald AONB Unit	2019 to 2024
Historic Environment Record	Historic England in partnership with ALGAO and IHBC	ongoing
Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI)	Housing LIN	2012
Localism Act 2011	HM Government	2011
National Heritage List for England (NHLE)	Historic England	ongoing
National Planning Policy Framework (amended July 2021)	HM Government	Amended 2021

Document/ Evidence	Author	Year
The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012	HM Government	2012
Pell Green and Cousley Wood - Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal	Wealden District Council	2020
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	HM Government	2004
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for the Regulation 14 (Phase 1) Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan	Wealden District Council	July 2021
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Opinion for the Regulation 14 (Phase 2) Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan	Wealden District Council	October 2022
The Future – What Parishioners Want (see Wadhurst Parish Council website).	Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group	2022
The Reduction of Obtrusive Light. Guidance Note 01/21	Institution of Lighting Professionals	2021
Tourism in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	High Weald AONB Unit / Acorn tourism development consultants	2013
Town and Country Planning Act 1990	HM Government	1990
Town Centre and Retail Study 2016 (stages 1 to 3)	Wealden District Council	2016
Urban Air Quality	Woodland Trust	2012
Use Classes	Planning Portal	2021
Wadhurst Character Assessment Report	Sussex Extensive Urban Survey	2007
Wadhurst Design Code (See Appendix B Wadhurst Parish Council website)	Create Streets	2021
Wadhurst - Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal	Wealden District Council	2020
Waste and Minerals Local Plan	East Sussex County Council	2013
Waste and Minerals Sites Plan	East Sussex County Council	2017
Weald & Downs Ancient Woodland Survey	High Weald AONB Unit	2007
Wealden Design Guide	Wealden District Council	2008
Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan	Wealden District Council	2013
Wealden Economic Impact Study (summary)	Wealden District Council	2019
Wealden Local Housing Needs Assessment	Wealden District Council	2021
Wealden Local Plan Direction of Travel Consultation	Wealden District Council	2020
The Wealden Open Space Study (2016-2028)	Wealden District Council	2016
Wealden District Council Open Space Report (April 2022)	Wealden District Council	2022

Appendix A – Detail of development in Wadhurst since April 1, 2013

A1. This Appendix sets out key information that has been gathered about housing development at the Parish level, which is helpful when considering future housing need, including type, size, tenure and affordability.

A2. Housing need for the district: The adopted Core Strategy Local Plan sets out a need for 4,525 net additional dwellings in Wealden District to provide for 9,440 dwellings over the period 2006-2027, equivalent to 450 dwellings per annum (dpa).

A3. The latest District Housing Needs Assessment, prepared for the emerging Local Plan, suggests that the housing need for Wealden District has risen from 450 dpa to c. 1,200 dpa at the time of writing.

A4. Number of homes delivered in Wadhurst: Since the adoption of the Core Strategy Local Plan in 2013, WDC report that a total of 144 homes (net) have been completed in Wadhurst, with a further 56 homes approved, totalling net 200 dwellings. Analysis by the Steering Group records 245 completed, approved and current applications in the period 2016 to October 2022 (Table A1).

APPLICATIONS FOR DWELLINGS IN THE PARISH

APPLICATIONS FOR DWELLINGS IN THE PARISH					FLATS			HOUSES				
Development	Reference	Green field?	Status	Dwellings	1BR	2BR	3BR	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR	5BR
Completed developments												
Waters Reach	WD/2017/2531/PO	Y	Completed	35	4				12	8	7	4
Wadhurst Place	WD/2013/1737/MAO	Y	Completed	26								26
Wadhurst Place	WD/2015/2598/MRM	N	Completed	17		10	2		4	1		
Wadhurst Place	WD/2017/2405/MAJ	Y	Completed	15						14		1
Best Beech pub conversion	WD/2017/1467/F	N	Completed	6		3	2		1			
Red Lion pub site	WD/2015/1585/F	N	Completed	4						4		
Queens Cottages (2)	WD/2019/2626/F	N	Completed	1		1						
Methodist Hall conversion	WD/2017/2023/F	N	Completed	3		3						
Current applications or developments												
Old Station Road	WD/2020/2426/MRM	Y	Approved	21					10	7	4	
Weald Hall (3)	WD/2021/0559/MAJ	Y /N	Application	21		6	2		6	7		
George Street	F/201/2052	N	Approved	2							2	
Balaclava Lane	WD/2017/0356/F	N	Approved	1						1		
Balaclava pub conversion	WD/2020/0805/F	N	Approved	6	3	3						
Southview Road	WD/2020/1722/F	N	Approved	2							2	
Nat West bank conversion (4)		N	Approved	4	4							
Townlands Road (5)	WD/2019/0061/F	N	Approved	3		2					1	
Jonas Lane		N	Approved	1							1	
Marling House	WD/2022/0535/MAO	Y	Application	29	8				12	4	5	
Primmers Green	WD/2022/1610/MAO	Y	Application	15	3	2				4	4	2
Styles Lane	WD/2022/0391/MAJ	Y	Application	18				2	7	6	3	
Tapscells Lane	WD/2022/0550/F	Y	Application	3								3
Little Windmill Farm (6)	WD/2022/0662/MAO	Y	Application	12						8	4	
Totals				245	22	30	6	2	52	64	33	36
Per cent				100%	9%	12%	2%	1%	21%	26%	13%	15%

Notes

(1) Estimated by NPSG based on information available up to 07/11/22

(2) Property converted to 1x 2BR and 1x 3BR flats. 3BR flat is assumed to replace existing site so is not counted as additional housing.

(3) 8 flats are on brownfield and 13 houses are on AONB

(4) Assumed to be 4 x one bedroom flats

(5) Additional 3 dwellings on existing 1 dwelling site, comprising 2 x 2BR flats, 1 x 3BR, 1x4BR houses. 3BR house is assumed to replace existing site so is not counted as additional housing.

(6) Application for outline planning permission for 12 bungalows, assumed to be 8 x 3BR and 4 x 4BR dwellings

Table A1: Completed, approved and current applications in Wadhurst Parish (note Balaclava Pub is now known as Dobbin Inn)

A5. Notable larger developments that have been delivered include:

- Rydon Homes Waters Reach: 35 dwellings (including 12 affordable).

- Wadhurst Place: (ex Bellerbys/Wadhurst College grounds): 41 dwellings on Greenfield Countryside and 17 apartments (Brownfield), now mainly developed. No affordable homes allocation.

A6. Notable Brownfield developments that have taken place or have been permitted since 2016:

- Best Beech Pub conversion: 6 (mixed)
- NW Bank: 4x1/2 bed apts
- Methodist Hall: 3x2 bed apts
- Balaclava Pub/ Dobbin Inn conversion: 6 (3x1,3x2)
- Balaclava Lane: 1x3 bed
- Southview Road: 2x4 bed
- Red Lion Pub: 4x3 bed
- Jonas Lane: 1x4 bed
- Queens Cottages 1 x 3 bed
- Townlands Rd: 3 x 3 bed

A7. Type of development: The information in Table B1 demonstrates the number of bedrooms delivered by type of development.

A8. Flats have comprised 23% of completed and current developments, while houses have comprised 77%. Of the homes delivered, the majority have been two and three-bedroom dwellings 33% and 38% respectively (combined % for flats and houses)). Key points are as follows:

- The largest category of homes delivered is three-bedroom houses (26%).
- So-called executive homes (four and five-bedroom houses) comprise a sizeable 28% of the total, which seems inconsistent with respondent needs as expressed in parishioner surveys.
- More affordable dwellings (up to two bedrooms) comprise 43% of the total development – though genuine affordability has to allow for pricing. It is noticeable that these are mainly on Brownfield sites.

A9. Tables A2 and A3 show a breakdown of tenure and size required by households with affordable housing needs (based on figures collected by WDC).

Tenure (1)	Total number of 'in-need' households (based on an inability to afford a suitable market property)	Number of 'in-need' households (who also meet WDC eligibility criteria for the Housing register and the local parish connection criteria)
Social Rent	17	12
Affordable Rent	1	1
Shared ownership (Part own / Part rent)	3	0
Starter home	0	0
Totals	21	13

Notes: (1) this is based on each household's current circumstance and a financial assessment

Table A2: Tenure of homes in Wadhurst Parish requested by those with an affordable housing need

Size of Property needed	Total number of 'in-need' households (based on an inability to afford a suitable market property)	Number of 'in-need' households (who also meet WDC eligibility criteria for the Housing register and the local parish connection criteria)
1 bed	15	9
2 bed	1	1
3 bed	4	2
4 bed	0	0
5+ bed	1	1
Totals	21	13

Table A3: Size of homes in Wadhurst Parish requested by those with an affordable housing need

A10. Prioritising Brownfield sites: WPC is promoting Brownfield development by setting up a WPC Brownfield Register, which will then be shared with WDC to populate their District Brownfield Register.

A11. Currently, WDC only has one (Balaclava Lane) Brownfield Site on their District Brownfield Register for the Parish. Therefore, WPC will promote to Brownfield site owners in the Parish the need to register their sites for further development.

Appendix B - Wadhurst Design Code

B1. The Design Code for Wadhurst Parish forms an integral part of the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan. It can be accessed on the Parish Council website: [\(click here\)](#)

APPENDIX C – Non-designated heritage assets

C1. In the absence of district-wide criteria, the criteria shown in the table below may be used to identify non-designated heritage assets in the parish. Such assets would be subject to Policy WAD5 (Conserving Heritage Assets) and may be nominated for inclusion on any Local List prepared by WDC. The criteria have been identified based on the guidance provided by Historic England in their publication [Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage](#) [Historic England Advice Note 7 \(Second Edition\)](#) and following a desktop review of criteria used by other planning authorities. Not all criteria may be required, depending on the nature of the asset.

Criterion	Description and information to provide
Asset Type	All types of asset, including monuments, sites, places, fields, areas, parks, gardens and designed landscapes, may be considered for inclusion.
Age	<p>The age of the asset may be an important criterion. Simply being 'old' is not a reason to list something and indeed some things that are more modern might also be of local interest or importance to list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many eras of development in Wadhurst; does the building/structure/landscape represent a noteworthy example of a type or style of development? • Does the identified building/structure/landscape represent an important element in the development of the area?
Architect, designer and/or builder	<p>There are many locally noteworthy examples of work by particular architects and builders and knowledge of this 'up front' will aid in the nomination of an asset. This may well also be referenced in later criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the architect or designer and/or builder worked in a number of locations in the town? • Has the architect or designer and/or builder gone on to build particularly important buildings else where? • This information can be obtained from the local library, museum or potentially from Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) archives
Rarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the asset a unique or special example of its type? • Is it locally distinctive? • Are there few surviving examples of this type of asset locally?
Authenticity	<p>Buildings or structures should be substantially unaltered and should retain the majority of their original features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it remain in a substantial and recognisable form? • Does it retain its historic features and layouts?
Architectural and artistic interest	<p>This considers the intrinsic design value of an asset relating to local styles, materials or any other distinctive local characteristics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it show qualities of age, style or distinctive characteristics relative to the parish? • Is the surviving building/structure/park or garden the work of a particular architect or designer which illustrates local or regional architectural history or design?

Group value	A group of assets may be considered collectively for their value as opposed to individually. For instance, number of public parks and gardens designed by a local parks superintendent together might demonstrate his range of work, even though some may not be worth listing in their own right. A local architects 'portfolio' of development might be of interest, even if individual buildings are not of particular heritage value in their own right
Archaeological interest	An appropriate reason may be on the grounds of archaeological interest - if the evidence is sufficiently compelling and if a distinct area can be identified. For example, some designed landscapes will have garden archaeology of relevance to their development.
Historic interest	<p>This considers the historic value of the asset, this value or interest could be for a number of reasons, some of which are:</p> <p><u>Evidential Value (existing written record):</u> The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be increased by the existence of an extensive and/or important contemporary or historic written record</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does a building/structure/landscape have an extensive archive, in either private or public ownership? • Is it well documented in local travel guides or journals or newspapers? <p><u>Historic association:</u> The significance of a local heritage asset of any kind may be increased by a significant historical association of local or national note, including links to important figures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it relate to an important aspect of local social, cultural, religious, political or economic history? • Is it historically associated with an important local feature? • Is it closely associated with: famous local people, local historic events, strong community or social development, significance or people? (Must be well documented and preferably published) • Does it relate closely to any statutorily protected structure or site? e.g. is it in a conservation area or does it have Tree Preservation Order on it?
Social and communal value	This helps identify places perceived as a source of local identity, distinctiveness, social interaction and coherence; the value of a place often lies in intangible aspects of heritage which contribute to the 'collective memory' of a place.
Landmark status	<p>An asset with strong communal or historical associations, or because it has especially striking aesthetic value, may also function as a landmark within the local scene of the settlement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it provide an important visual amenity locally? • For instance, does it make interesting use of visually significant sites and form a landmark? • Is it a notable building on an important route into the area, which creates a vista or contributes to the skyline? • Does it emphasise a corner site or provide focal points in the settlement?

C2. Nominations for non-designated heritage assets should be accompanied by:

- The approximate date that the building or other structure was built/created
- Information on its historical relationship to the local area
- Information on its architectural merit and design
- Information on any historical association to famous local people, local historic events, strong community or social development. This must be well documented, evidenced and available
- Up to date photographs
- Historical photographs/illustrations
- Maps (past and present)
- Information about ownership (and contact with any owner)

C3. Nominations would be considered by the Parish Council and/or District Council and will be formalised in one of the following ways:

- Nominated for inclusion on the Local List (once prepared at a district level)
- Within a future review of the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan

APPENDIX D – Locally distinctive and highly valued views

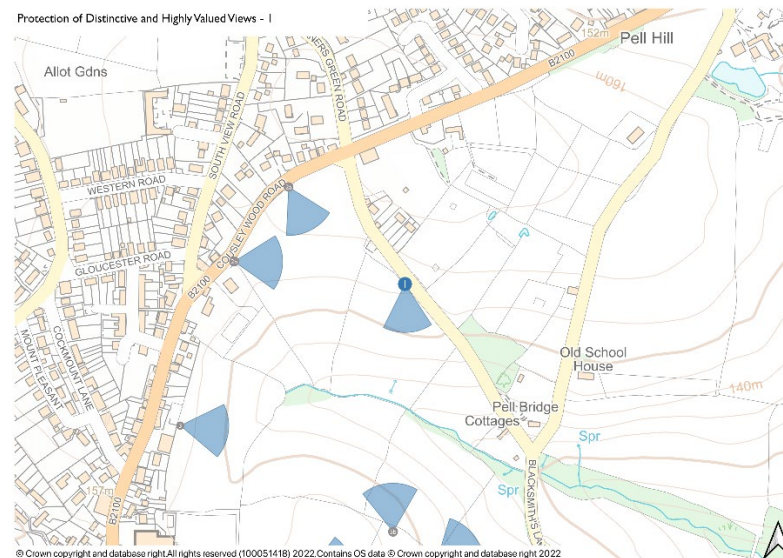
- D1. Wadhurst Parish is located within the High Weald National Landscape, towards the eastern end of the east-west Forest Ridge. This part of the ridge has the valleys of the Bewl River to the northeast and the Tide Brook to the southwest. The High Weald, which encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald, is an area of countryside representing one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe.
- D2. The general appearance of the High Weald is one of a densely wooded landscape, which comprises a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields and woods forming both open and enclosed landscapes along rolling ridges and within valleys. These fields continue to hold the medieval shapes as it was then. Along the ridge top roads briefly glimpsed extensive views open, stretching away over rolling ridges, with church spires often present within the views between the ridges, and green valleys below. The mosaic of small, hedged fields and sunken lanes, together with the wooded relief and comparative inaccessibility, provides a sense of remoteness which is rare within lowland English landscapes and creates a strong sense of place.
- D3. The landscape of the Weald is characterised by thickly wooded areas, with some historic, often ancient, woodland used for coppicing.
- D4. The historic settlement setting of Wadhurst village, and the Parish overall is created by:
- remnant historic landscapes around the settlements.
 - a ridge that runs northeast to southwest facilitating long and dramatic views of the streams, medieval forests and valleys below.
 - undulating fields interspersed with small stream corridors and extensive patches of woodland.
 - an ancient landscape comprised of irregular piecemeal enclosure, cohesive and aggregate assarts and Ancient Woodland.
 - Grade II listed Wadhurst Castle, and its associated registered park and garden, adding historic interest to the settlement setting.
 - Bewl Water and Kent, which can be seen to the northeast.
 - narrow streams scattered across the countryside.
 - a network of footpaths connecting the settlements with the surrounding countryside.
 - Landscape characteristics include large linear settlement, residential and including local shopping facilities; many historical buildings throughout the settlements; the church, which is central and dominant in Wadhurst village and can be seen from all around on the high ridges; sensitive urban edges all around the settlements, surrounded by mature vegetation; outstanding views to and from Wadhurst village.
- D5. Information about the particularly valued views identified through local engagement is provided below.

- D6. The community have been heavily engaged in determining the views. This includes the running of a photograph competition, run in partnership with Wadhurst Culture, asking residents to submit their favourite views. The photographs [Wadhurst's Wonderful Views](#) website. At various events that took place during the development of the WNP, the community were invited to nominate their favourite views and provide reasons as to why they considered them important to safeguard. The initial SG Chair visited each view to take photographs.
- D7. In the context of Wadhurst's location, there are a great number of beautiful views within parish, as evidenced in watercolour books of the Parish. The majority, however, including many of those suggested by the community, are in places that are located in the wider National Landscape (well out of the development boundaries) and therefore unlikely to be significantly impacted by development.
- D8. Those views that are closest to the settlements, or which are within walking distance from the settlements, have been prioritised within the policy. All views are viewable from publicly accessible locations.
- D9. Four criteria were used to assess each view:
- The view offers an expansive National Landscape view
 - The view takes in Bewl Water
 - The view is of a local heritage asset
 - The view is from a ridgeline.
- D10. In addition, the Wealden Landscape Sensitivity Criteria have been considered to assist in demonstrating the importance of the views:

Ref.	Criteria1	Criteria 2	Criteria 3	Criteria 4	Criteria 5	Criteria 6
	Contribution to landscape setting	Distinctiveness	Continuity	Strength of place	Visibility Landform	Visibility Tree cover
View 1 Field East of Primmers Field	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 2a, b Primmers Field	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 3 Field Southwest of Primmers Field	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 4 Field Southeast to View 3	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 5 Field East next to View 4	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 6 Vicarage Green	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 7 Hill House Field	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 8 Stone Cross Farm	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 9a, b Brinkers Lane	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant / Panoramic	Open
View 10 Windmill Lane. Cousley Wood	Major	Unique/rare	Ancient	Strong	Dominant/ Panoramic	Open

D11. Further information on each view is provided below. Each has the name of the view, a photograph showing the view, a map (where the individual view number is noted in blue, where more than one view can be seen) and a description as to what the view is and why it is special.

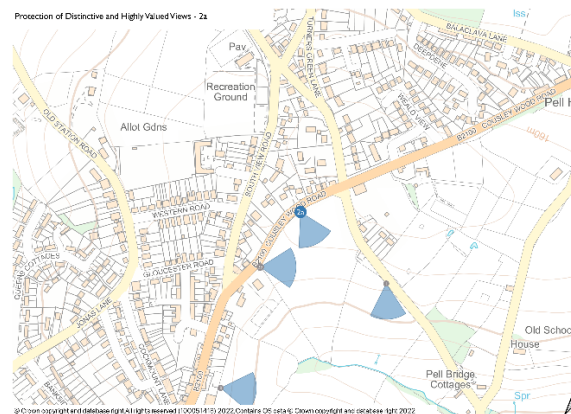
View 1 –From the farm gate in Primmers Green Lane towards the steeple of St Peter and St Paul Church



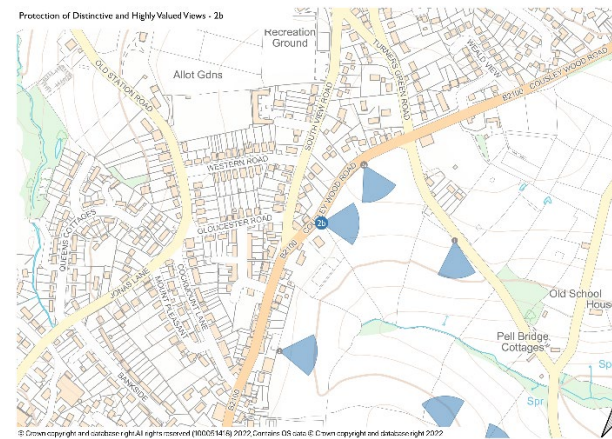
Description: Primmers Green lane farm gate: View from popular country walk of the iconic 124 foot spire of the nearly 1,000 year old grade 1 listed parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which houses the largest collection of iron tomb slabs in England and also the names of 24 men from the Parish lost on a single day in WW1. Extensive views across rolling High Weald National Landscape / sheep grazing lands towards St Peter and St Paul Church steeple (Grade I listed). Primmers Green Lane is a single-track narrow and is a tranquil backwater. Informal footpaths well-used by the public.

Views 2a & 2b – From Cousley Wood Road / Primmers Green Lane junction southeast across Primmers field

View 2a - Looking southeast towards the steeple of St Peter and St Paul Church (Grade I listed) from Cousley Wood Road. View from well used pavement linking Turners Green and Primmers Green with the facilities of Wadhurst village, Sparrows Green and Durgates, of the iconic 124 foot spire of the nearly 1,000 year old grade 1 listed parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul, which houses the largest collection of iron tomb slabs in England and also the names of 24 men from the Parish lost on a single day in WW1.

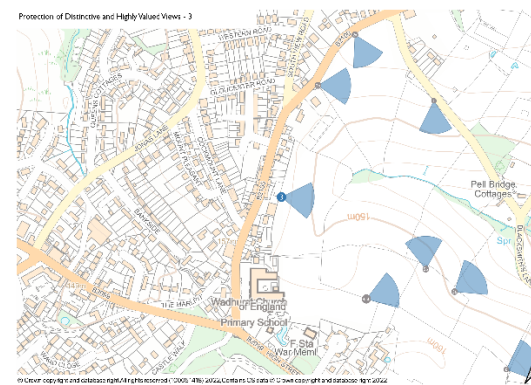


View 2b – Looking southeast over the High Weald National Landscape from start of Sparrows Green Road, where informal footpath starts.



Description: Views are taken from the large southeast sloping field, which offers outstanding views across rolling open High Weald National Landscape, predominantly sheep grazing countryside. This is an important view southeast between Primmers Green Lane and Wadhurst village, with a view of the Church steeple. This is a view that would have been in existence for many centuries. View from well used pavement linking Turners Green and Primmers Green with the facilities of Wadhurst village, Sparrows Green and Durgates, of the typical rolling countryside that gives the Parish the “rural aspect” and “countryside feel” so appreciated by parishioners in the Plan’s Launch Event ‘post-it-note’ survey.

View 3 – From Ben Grieg’s Garage forecourt across well used informal footpaths on field next to (Southwest) Primmers Green field

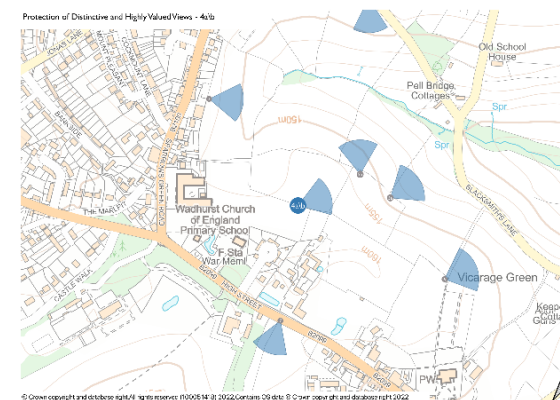


The image on the left shows the view east across rolling National Landscape / sheep grazing field.

Description: Views are visible to the public from Ben Grieg’s Garage forecourt. The view is seen across the large southeast sloping field. It provides views across open rolling High Weald countryside. View from the open forecourt of Ben Grieg’s Garage in Sparrows Green of the typical rolling countryside that gives the Parish the “rural aspect” and “countryside feel” so appreciated by parishioners in the Plan’s Launch Event ‘post-it-note’ survey. Ben Grieg’s Garage is a potential brown field site and this view should be protected within any development plans here.

Views 4a and 4b – Across to Bewl Water from Wadhurst Primary School Recreation Ground Fence

View 4a (image on the left): From Wadhurst CoE Primary School Recreation Ground and **View 4b (image on the right):** From other side of the fence on well used, informal footpaths on field (access from *stile from the Recreation ground*) - northeast to Bewl Water (c. 1 mile)

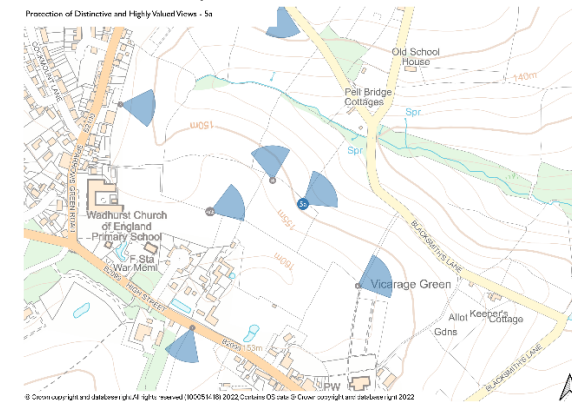


Description: The open views across farmland/sheep grazing areas towards Bewl Water have been identified by the community as providing an attractive backdrop in this tranquil part of Wadhurst behind the High Street. Here the ridge top land is partly bordered by the school playing fields, which themselves are identified as a Local Green Space. Other notable features of the view include the visibility at sunrise. The views are also accessible via informal footpaths which are well-used by the public.

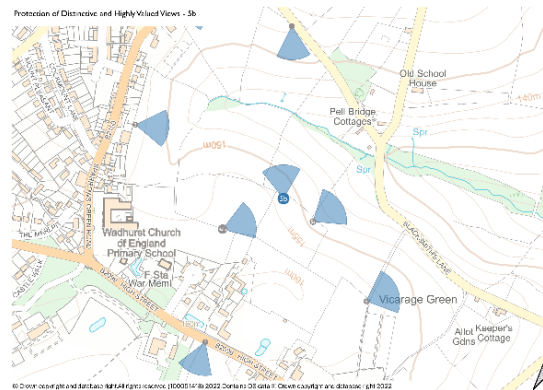
In addition to being used by the primary school children, the sports field is also used for outdoor public events like School fete and community events such as travelling theatre performers (Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company)

Views 5a and 5b - From well used footpath on field (southeast of Primmers Green field with access from farm gate in Primmers Green Lane) northeast to Bewl Water (c. 3 miles) and north to Primmers Green

View 5a - Bewl Water can be seen in the northeast distance across rolling National Landscape farmland.

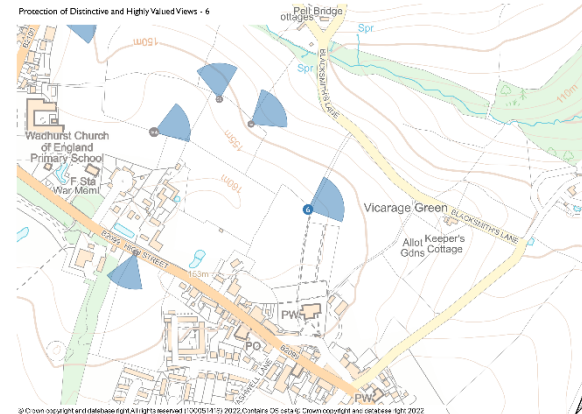


View 5b: Primmers Green can be seen to the north



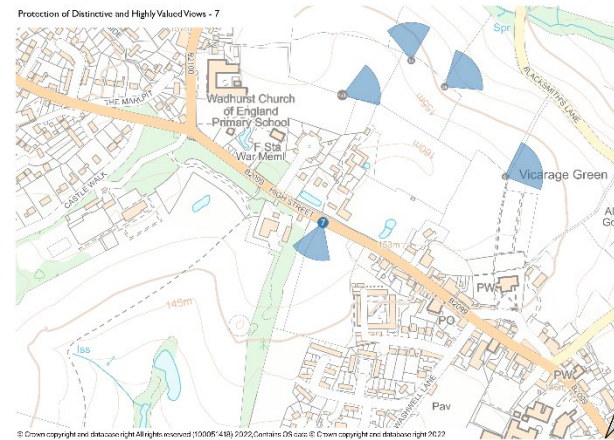
Description: The open views across farmland/sheep grazing areas towards Bewl Water provide an attractive backdrop in this tranquil part of Wadhurst behind the High Street. The view is from the top of the ridge top. At night, the area affords dark skies views and, in the mornings, sunrises have been flagged as particularly beautiful from this location. Although the land here is privately owned, there are informal footpaths well-used by the public, and these views can also be seen from the Primary School Recreation Area.

View 6 - From Church (Donkey Steps) public footpath across Vicarage Green to Bewl Water (c. 3 miles)



Description: Providing a short-cut from Wadhurst village to Blacksmiths Lane, this footpath is popular because it is one of only three footpaths connecting to Wadhurst village. Bewl Water can be seen in the distance across rolling High Weald National Landscape farmland. The open National Landscape views across this particular piece of farmland/sheep grazing land towards Bewl Water provide an attractive backdrop in this tranquil part of Wadhurst behind the High Street. At night, the area affords dark skies views and, in the mornings, sunrises have been flagged as particularly beautiful from this location.

View 7 – From the Walk, in the High Street south towards the southern ridge (Burwash to Heathfield) c. 5 miles

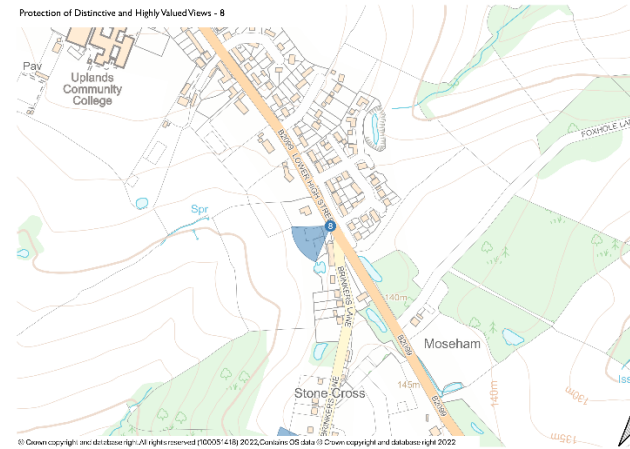


Description: The view is taken from the public bench on The Walk, in the High Street. This is the last easily accessible southern view going northwest of Wadhurst High Street. Rural field fronting onto B2099 (Wadhurst High Street) with long distance views across National Landscape to the far southern ridge (Burwash – Heathfield).

The Wadhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal (para. 5.4.4) notes this view *“is particularly significant to the historic setting of Hill House and contributes to the rural setting of this area of the village, affording views to the High Weald”*. In para. 5.5.7 it notes *“There are important panoramic views over the field opposite Hill House across the High Weald towards the next ridge. The panoramic views across the High Weald to the southeast and southwest and this open landscape setting, interspersed with woodland and open fields, has a very strong sense of place and strong links to the historic development of the area.”*

At night, the area affords dark skies views and, in the mornings, sunrises have been flagged as particularly beautiful from this location.

View 8 - From Wadhurst Lower High Street looking southwest over fields to southern ridge (c. 5 miles)



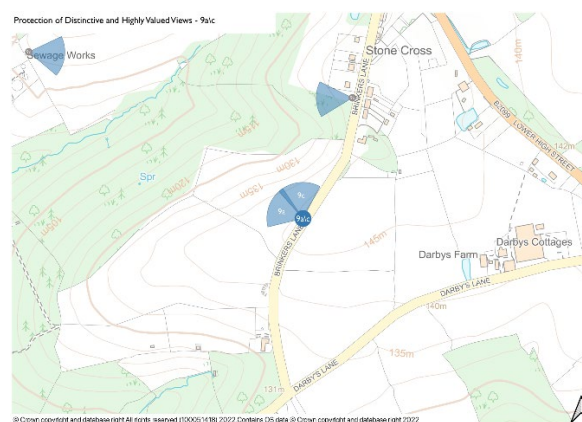
Description: The view taken looking southwest from Lower High Street. The open views across farmland/sheep grazing areas/ medieval woods towards the southern ridge (Burwash to Heathfield) provide an attractive backdrop to the busy B2099 Lower High Street Road.

This is an important green corridor view going northwest and looking southwest from Lower High Street. Similar view from public footpath running alongside and into these fields.

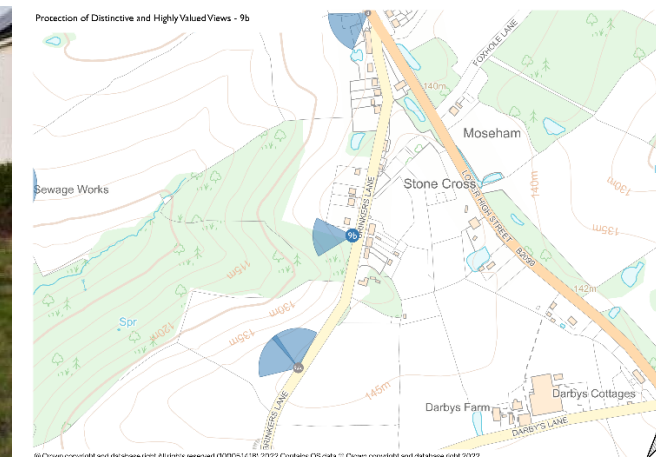
At night, the area affords dark skies views, beautiful sunsets and, in the mornings, sunrises have been flagged as particularly beautiful from this panoramic location.

Views 9a, 9b and 9c - from Brinkers Lane farm gates (x2) to Mayfield Lane ridge (c. 2 miles) and to the spire of St Peter and St Paul Church (c. 1 mile); and View 9d looking east towards the Brinkers Lane ridge from footpath 27a from Stone Cross Farm to Snape Wood (this is the reciprocal view of View 9b)

View 9a: from farm gate 2 - West to Mayfield Lane ridge.



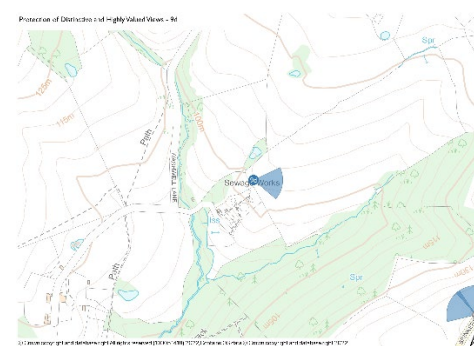
View 9b – from farm gate 1 - West to Mayfield Lane Ridge from ‘Four Winds’ house



View 9c – from farm gate 2 - northwest to St Peter and St Paul Church Spire



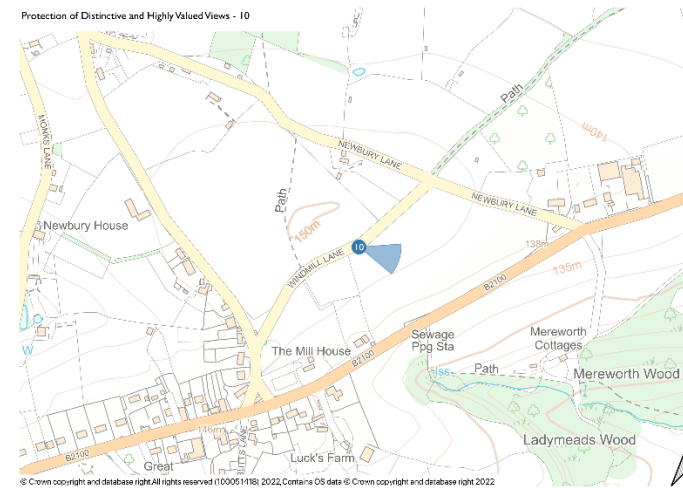
View 9d – looking East towards the Brinkers Lane ridge from footpath 27a from Stone Cross Farm to Snape Wood (this is the *reciprocal* view of View 9b)



Description: Beautiful views in a 180-degree arc are across the High Weald and open farm / sheep grazing land, deer grazing, owls and bats flying, streams, medieval woods, (Birchetts wood and Snape) and to Wadhurst village and the spire of St Peter and St Paul Church (Grade I listed). The views are visible from two farm gates on the right as you proceed down Brinkers Lane just past the houses. The Wadhurst Conservation Area Character Appraisal (para. 5.5.6) says "*There are views from Stone Cross, across the fields and through to Wadhurst Castle planned parkland and garden*" These views are

spectacular especially when the mist gathers in the valley and hangs there with Wadhurst and trees poking through or a spire sitting above it, These wooded areas are managed by the forestry commission and are used for walking all the time. One of the most peaceful gentle natural nature settings in Wadhurst.

View 10: – Windmill Lane, Cousley Wood (by Farm Gate)



Description: Windmill Lane: Ridgetop Windmill Lane, Cousley Wood, above the busy and vergeless B2100 Cousley Wood Road, connects with bridle and footpaths and is popular with walkers, horse riders and cyclists for its views, connections and lack of traffic. From all along the northeast end of Windmill Lane, there are spectacular long distance views over a wide arc to the south east to the East/West Weald Ridge on the skyline, with Bewl Water below in the middle distance, where wooded spurs separate fingers of water. Due to the uniqueness of this waterbody, views of it are valued by parishioners. This is a beautiful view towards Bewl Water in a 120-degree arc are across the High Weald and open farmland.

Appendix E - Local Green Spaces

E1. The list of Local Green Spaces (LGS) has been developed and tested following the Locality guidance “Making local green space designations in your neighbourhood plan”.

(<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/making-local-green-space-designations-neighbourhood-plan/>)

E2. Members of the Character Assessment Group and the Environment Focus Group drew up a long list (Table E1) of 16 potential green spaces. This included:

- Spaces identified from desk-top research and local walkabouts
- Spaces proposed by the community through the various local engagement activities

E3. A high-level review of the spaces was undertaken. Some of the spaces were considered to be already adequately protected.

Site name	Selected for designation in Submission Plan
LG1 Sparrows Green Recreation Field	No - Wadhurst Parish Council owned, hence considered to be adequately protected from inappropriate development.
LG2 Commemoration Hall Field	No - This field is managed and owned by the Wadhurst Institute Hall & Field Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The CIO constitution requires a Wadhurst Parish resident meeting to be held and subject to approval by them if any sale or part sale of the field is proposed. A recent (Nov 2018) proposed development of a new Hall and 22 houses was rejected by the resulting resident's referendum. The Field was then removed from the WDC SHELAA.
LG3 Wadhurst Primary School Playing Field	Yes.
LG4 Uplands Community College Playing Field	Yes.
LG5 Cousley Wood Cricket Ground	No - The field is registered with Sports England as an active place and is an emergency area for Wadhurst Parish Council. The LGS designation is not considered to be required.
LG6 Sacred Heart School Playing Fields	Yes.
LG7 ex Wadhurst College Playing Field (Mayfield Lane)	Yes.
LG8 Jardin d'Aubers (World Wars Memorial, Gardens and Pond)	Yes.
LG9. Round Oak Allotments	No - Wadhurst Parish Council owned (which has a duty to provide allotments under the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908). Considered to be adequately protected from inappropriate development.
LG10 Vicarage Green Allotments	Yes.
LG11 Turners Green Field 2	Yes.

LG12 Turners Green Field 3	Yes.
LG13 Bewl Water Reservoir Recreation Area	Yes.
LG14 Waters Reach Ecological Area	No - Owned by Waters Reach Management Company and designated as an Ecological Area in the S106 Planning Document for this new estate of 35 homes.
LG15 Wadhurst Castle Grounds	No – the grounds are a registered garden
LG16 Stone Cross Farm Field	Yes.

Table E1: Long-list of potential Local Green Spaces

E4. The remaining 10 sites were all assessed using the criteria from paragraphs 105-107 of the NPPF as detailed below:

- The Focus Group checked to make sure none of the sites have been allocated for any other purpose or usage in the Local Plan or in any other statutory plan.
- The Focus Group also checked that the land or site in question has not already been granted any planning permissions for development.
- Landowners were notified of the possibility of using the Neighbourhood Plan to designate their sites.

E5. Table E2 provides a high-level review of the proposed sites.

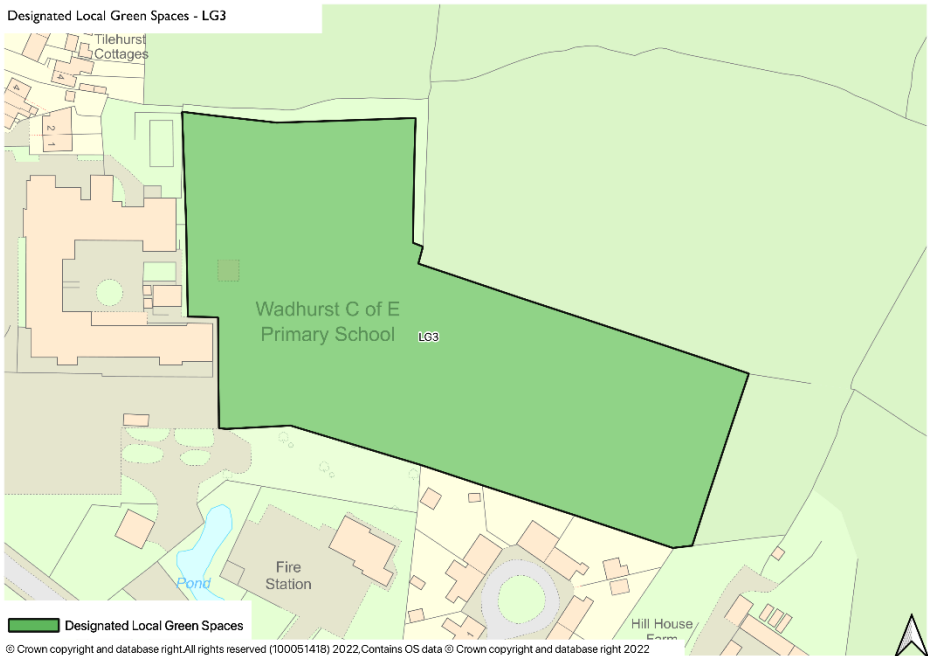
E6. Following the examination of the Submission Version Plan, five spaces were retained. The tables below provide the detailed justification for these five sites considered appropriate for Local Green Space designation. The reference provided refers to the original reference assigned (see Table E2) to the individual space.

Ref	Site name	Proximity to community (yes/no)	Beauty (yes/no)	History (yes/no)	Recreation (yes/no)	Tranquillity (yes/no)	Wildlife (yes/no)	Extensive Tract of Land? (Size)	Owner	Allocated for any other use?	Public access (not essential)
LG3	Wadhurst Primary School Playing Field	Yes	Yes / Views	No	Yes	No	Yes	No (1.8ha)	ESCC Education	Yes, Annual School Fair and Open-Air theatre group.	Yes
LG4	Uplands Community College Playing Fields	Yes	Yes / Views.	No	Yes	No	Yes	No (3.0ha)	ESCC Education	Yes. Annual Village Fair	Yes
LG6	Sacred Heart Playing Fields	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No (0.6ha)	Catholic Church	No	Yes
LG7	Ex Wadhurst College Recreation Field	Yes	Yes / Views	No	Only dog walking currently	Yes	Yes	No (2.5ha)	Greymouth Homes	Highest point in Wadhurst Parish (Beech Hill)	Yes
LG8	Jardin d'Aubers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (0.4ha)	ESCC Fire Service	Village Green and wildlife area	Yes
LG10	Vicarage Green Allotments	Yes	No but Views.	No	Yes	No	No	No (0.3ha)	Ticehurst Parish Council	No	Yes
LG11	Turners Green Field 2	Yes	Yes / Views.	Yes	Yes Walking	Yes	Yes	No (1.0ha)	Privately-owned	Horse / Sheep grazing	Footpath 46
LG12	Turners Green Field 3	Yes	Yes / Views.	Yes	Yes Walking	Yes	Yes	No (1.3ha)	Privately-owned	Horse / Sheep grazing	Footpath 46
LG13	Bowl Water Reservoir Recreation Area	Yes	Yes / Views	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (13ha)	Southern Water (Salomons UK Ltd - Lessee)	Camping (3-year permission)	Major Recreation Area
LG16	Stone Cross Farm Field	Yes	Yes / Views.	Yes	Yes Walking/Fireworks	Yes	Yes	No (0.7ha)	Privately-owned	No	Footpath 27a,

Table E2: High-level summary of the Local Green Spaces

LG3 Wadhurst Primary School Playing Field

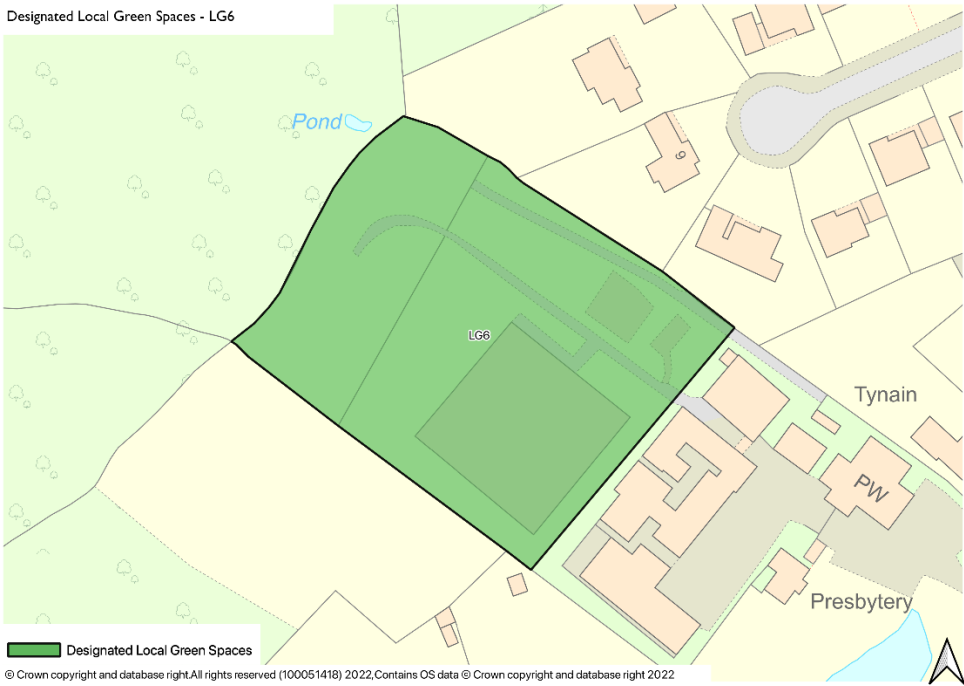
Address and location	Sparrows Green Road, Wadhurst, TN5 6SR
Ownership details	ESCC (Education)
Description and purpose / current use	This is a large integrated school playing grass field with sports pitches, for instance for football.
Any designations	National Landscape
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	No.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Yes, the site is located close to homes.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: The space provides an important facility for local school children attending the school. Importantly it is also used for outdoor public events like School fete and community events such as travelling theatre performers (Rude Mechanicals Theatre Company). Its use as a community space – in a parish where such space is at a deficit - is considered important to safeguard.</p> <p>Beauty: There are valued views over the National Landscape open countryside to northeast.</p>
Local character? in	1.8 ha

Photo	
Location map	 <p>Designated Local Green Spaces - LG3</p> <p>Tilehurst Cottages</p> <p>Wadhurst C of E Primary School LG3</p> <p>Pond</p> <p>Fire Station</p> <p>Hill House</p> <p>Designated Local Green Spaces</p> <p>© Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100051418) 2022. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022</p>

LG4: Uplands Community College Playing Fields

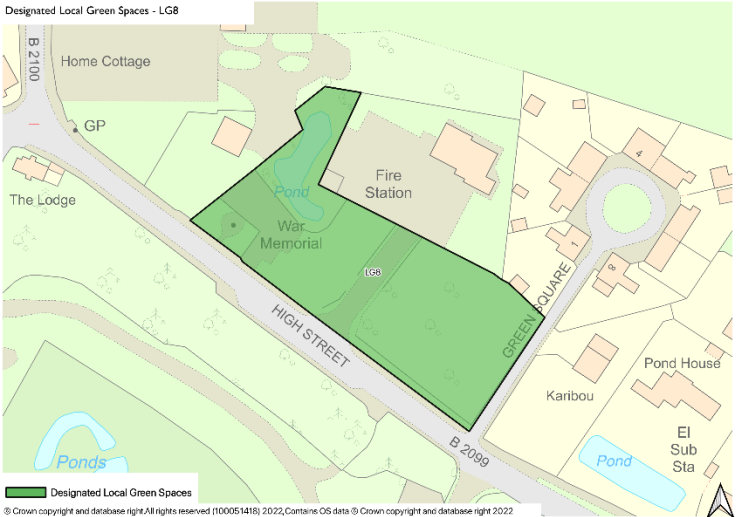
Address and location	Lower High Street, Wadhurst, TN5 6AZ
Ownership details	ESCC (Education)
Description and purpose / current use	These are large integrated school playing fields, laid to grass.

Any designations	National Landscape
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.
Planning permissions?	No live applications. In 2020, a new School Accommodation Block was approved and built near to the field.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Surrounded by homes, within development boundary.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: In addition to providing an outdoor recreational facility for the school, the fields are also used by the community, for instance to host the Annual Village Fete.</p> <p>Wildlife: There are a number of mature trees bounding the fields, which provide an important habitat and part of the wider network of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Beauty: There are wonderful distinctive and valued views across the National Landscape to the southern ridges.</p>
Local character? in	3.0 ha
Photo	 

	<p>playground and grassy areas for informal activities. The school hosts parent and toddler mornings, where those attending can use the grounds. The space is used by the public to access the Church cemetery.</p> <p>Wildlife: Parts of the field are left to wildflower, providing an important haven for wildlife and bringing a taste of the National Landscape into the school and local community.</p> <p>Historic: The school itself was established in 1938 by the Sisters of the Order of Notre Dame to provide an education to the children of local Catholic families. It has a close relationship with the Parish Church. The use of the site – including the field – is considered important to safeguard.</p>
Local character?	0.6 ha.
Photo	
Location map	<p>Designated Local Green Spaces - LG6</p>  <p>© Crown copyright and database right All rights reserved (100051418) 2022, Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022</p>

LG8: Jardin d'Aubers (Memorial Gardens)

Address and location	Wadhurst High Street, TN5 6SR
Ownership details	ESCC (Fire Service) (leased to WPC)
Description and purpose / current use	A community recreational accessible area with picnic tables, mature trees, two ponds, village flagpole, the village sign (stone), and a War Memorial to both World Wars.
Any designations	National Landscape. The memorial is a Grade II listed building.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No
Planning permissions?	No
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	Located within the development boundary and surrounding by homes.
Demonstrably Special?	<p>Recreation: Being in close proximity to the local schools and nursery, the space provides a meeting point for the families with school children. They use it for informal recreation.</p> <p>Tranquillity: The benches in the area encourage older members of the community to use the space as well. This provides a space to sit and reflect.</p> <p>Historic: The space houses a village memorial to both World Wars and importantly to the 28 men from the Wadhurst area whose lives were lost on 09/05/1915 at Aubers Ridge in WW1 (hence the name). The Memorial is where the local schools will come to commemorate Armistice Day every year. The memorial is a Grade II listed building.</p> <p>Wildlife: There is an established small wildlife garden with mature trees and a wildflower section. Two ponds with the consequent rare wildlife.</p>
Local in character?	0.4 ha

Photo	
Location map	

LG10: Vicarage Green Allotments

Address and location	Vicarage Green, Wadhurst, TN5 6AA
Ownership details	Vicarage Green Allotments Association
Description and purpose / current use	An allotment site with approximately 20 spaces.
Any designations	National Landscape.
Site allocations in Local Plan	No.

Planning permissions?	No.
Access & proximity including how close to the community it serves	The site is located towards the edge of the village, accessible to the local community.
Demonstrably Special?	Recreation: This is one of two allotment sites serving parishioners. Allotments are valued as places for informal recreation and enable local people to have access to fresh air and to grow their own food. They are well used.
Local in character?	0.3 ha.
Photo	
Location map	<p>Designated Local Green Spaces - LG10</p>  <p>© Crown copyright and database right. All rights reserved (100051418) 2022. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022</p>
