The Future – What Parishioners Want

Contents

The Future – What Parishioners Want 1

1. Introduction 2
2. Household Surveys, Consultations and Focus Groups 2
3. Focus Group 1: Design, Development and Character 3
4. Focus Group 2: Getting Around 6
5. Focus Group 3: Local Economy 21
6. Focus Group 4: Environment 23
7. Focus Group 5: Wellbeing and Leisure 25

Appendix A: Car parking in and for Wadhurst 28

Appendix B: Adopted Local Plan Development Boundary 32

1. Introduction

1.1. This report summarises the findings of the Focus Groups, based on the extensive community engagement that took place throughout the Plan period. It has informed the challenges and opportunities for the Wadhurst Neighbourhood Plan (WNP). This in turn has led to the development of the Vision and Objectives, which are addressed through planning policies and community aspirations.

1.2. In principle, neighbourhood planning is intended to enable communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work. Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the next 15-20 years in ways that meet identified local needs and make sense for local people.

Neighbourhood Planning can therefore help to ensure that new development is sympathetic to the surrounding area and meets the needs of the local community. However, the Government is very clear that it will not be possible to use Neighbourhood Plans to stop development.

1.3. In practice, it is important to note the limitation of Neighbourhood Plans, which are restricted to development and land use only, in addressing the objectives that emerged from the Focus Groups.

Also outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, is the ability for parish councils to 'mandate' the provision of improved infrastructure, such as better road systems and increased connectivity within the parish. Our Neighbourhood Plan's policies cannot deal with strategic infrastructure matters that are the responsibility of East Sussex Highways, East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council, utility contractors (e.g. concerning matters of drainage capacity, or broadband) or the NHS. In particular, plans are unable to prevent development, or to make it conditional on the provision of more community resources, such as increased numbers of healthcare professionals or improved drainage in the parish.

Whilst the planning system allocates some proceeds of development (the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 payments) to Parish Councils to spend on small capital projects for the benefit of the local community, the decision-making and implementation of strategic local infrastructure projects remains with the bodies noted above. Potential projects that the community would like the Parish Council to consider are covered in a separate, non-statutory, section of the Plan entitled Community Aspirations.

2. Household Surveys, Consultations and Focus Groups

2.1. Since the initiation of the Plan project in September 2017, a considerable amount of work has been done to gauge the views and aspirations of parishioners and businesses of the Parish: through various communications, parishioner meetings and consultation events, a parishioners Household Survey, the formation of five parishioner Focus Groups, the Create Street's Design Preference Mapping Survey, Uplands School Survey, a Business Survey and initial Regulation 14 Consultation (17th June-15th August 2021) Feedback Survey.

2.2. The Focus Groups reviewed five core subjects, comprising:

- Design, Development and Character;
- Getting Around;
- Local Economy;
- Environment; and
- Wellbeing and Leisure

2.3. Additionally, a Parish Character Assessment was constructed.

2.4. The Focus Groups' closing reports covering each subject area, led to the derivation of a Vision and Objectives for the Plan. Some of the key issues that emerged from the surveys and reports are summarised below, by Focus Group topic.

Traffic Gridlock (13/12/21) in Lower High Street after A21 blockage had diverted traffic, where the clear lanes show that traffic is also being held up in the High Street from the north

3. Focus Group 1: Design, Development and Character

3.1. The Design, Development and Character Focus Group highlighted concern over major development (ten or more houses) and associated overdevelopment (45% of Household Survey (HS) comments on this theme). This includes concerns that there are: too many houses; houses of the wrong type; inappropriate design; buildings positioned in layouts that are unsympathetic to the historic High Weald; encroachment on High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) countryside and its distinctive and highly valued views; development in the wrong locations to reduce traffic impacts within the Parish; and a lack of infrastructure to support new development.

3.2. The design of any new housing stock is regarded as a source of major concern.

3.3. The visual impact of new development on the countryside was a top concern (99.1% HS). Because of the ridgeline position and topography of Wadhurst, the impact of new development on views is significant as developments can often be seen over very wide areas (for instance, the new Waters Reach estate can be seen on the Lower High Street ridge, across rolling HWAONB from Bewl Water – 2 miles away). Therefore to minimise adverse impacts,

developments must have high-quality designs and incorporate significant landscaping and screening.

3.4. Public access to these views must be maintained (one of the best views in East Sussex looking across Bewl Water to Goudhurst in Kent, was blocked from public access by the Waters Reach estate development).

3.5. New housing also needs to be sympathetic to existing stock (94.3% HS). Comments included that "recent developments have not had sympathetic design, layout or scale to existing surroundings."

3.6. The use of natural/ locally appropriate building materials also featured highly (92.5% HS) to retain and enhance the locally distinctive character and ensure new buildings complement and reinforce the existing High Weald built environment.

3.7. As detailed previously, the household survey indicated very high support for designs to be sympathetic to existing houses, use local /natural materials and have no detrimental visual impact on landscape.

3.8. Distinctive and valued characteristics of the Parish include**:**

- *"Stunning views across the valley from the enclosing ridges, some of the finest views in the High Weald*" (source: East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Landscape Assessment)
- *"'Picturesque' farms and cottages and scattered historic farmsteads which are a key characteristic of the High Weald*' (source: ESCC Landscape Assessment)
- *'Extensive areas of remote countryside and exceptional remoteness especially in the valleys and larger woods'* (source: ESCC Landscape Assessment)
- *'Traditional building materials for the area are red brick, often laid as Flemish bond with blued brick ends, red tiled roofs and tile hung upper stories'* (source: ESCC Landscape Assessment)
- *Oak timber framed and sandstone houses that reflect the abundance of locally sourced timber and quarried stone*' (source: ESCC Landscape Assessment)
- Other typical materials such as: weather boarding laid horizontally, painted render and slate. All in a restricted palette.
- Height - Two storey throughout with some attic (dormer) windows. Limited variation in eaves and ridges with substantial chimneys.
- Steep roof pitches 42 degrees or more such that they are compatible with use of handmade clay tiles.
- Distinctive form - Domestic scale with terraces, semi- detached cottages and detached houses; properties face the streets with the majority of pitched roofs sloping towards the street providing simple roof lines.

- Layout /Orientation - Linear along roads with greenspaces in front, with small front gardens and large gardens to rear.
- Partially revealed 'glimpse' views created by the gaps between buildings into and out of the ridge top locations.
- A highly visible and important roofscape, a medley of historic clay-tiled roofs on the High Street.
- The distinctive and unique, often historic, shop fronts in the conservation area High Street.
- Greenness and boundaries that fit in with rural pasture and classic AONB characteristics. Boundaries in settlements are marked by hedgerows, low walls, estate, post and rail or picket fences. Outside the settlements, hedges of native species are the predominant boundary treatment.
- Architectural details, such as timber porches, Sussex style windows, decorative barge boards, traditional wood doors & substantial chimneys.

(Sources: Wadhurst Character Assessment, High Weald Housing Design Guide, Wealden Design Guide, Wadhurst Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal, and Pell Green and Cousley Wood Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal)

3.9. In response to this, a core part of the Plan is a project facilitated by Create Streets' Consultants, which has delivered a Design Code for the Parish, following consultation including an interactive mapping tool with proprietary algorithms. The resulting Wadhurst Design Code is one of the first for a rural parish to follow the latest government thinking in the evolution of neighbourhood plans and uses the new National Design Code format. The Wadhurst Design Code is an integral part of the Neighbourhood Plan and can be found in Appendix C.

3.10. The HS gives some very clear guidance on the type of housing which parishioners would like to see in the Parish:

- Family homes were preferred by 61% of respondents (3 and 4 bed).
- Retirement homes (1, 2 bedroom) / sheltered accommodation 42%.

  (Due to the large percentage of the elderly in the Parish, there is a need to provide 'healthy homes' and 'age friendly homes that support people through the life stages in order to help people to stay safe and independent at home'. Housing also needs to be accessible as people are living longer with more complicated conditions).
- Larger Homes 8% (5, 5+ bed).
- Affordable Housing* 75% (Social Housing 33%, Shared Ownership 26%, Private rented 16%).

(Note: these %'s are similar to survey approval ratings and are impressionistic and will not add up to 100%)

* The survey used the Government's definition of Affordable Housing (Affordable Housing is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF and includes several categories, which include Affordable Housing for rent (rent set at 80% of market) or Discount market sale (house sold at a discount of at least 20% of market).

However, it is likely that some respondents read this option as “something that my children could afford or affordable to purchase, by Wadhurst Parish workers within lower income brackets”.

3.11. Recent major housing developments in the Parish have included large uniform housing estates on greenfield HWAONB sites outside the development boundary. The development boundary has been defined to take full account of the sensitive ridge-top setting (as described in Appendix B). Parishioners expressed a clear preference for smaller, more organic developments that are closer to the historic village settlement patterns typical of the High Weald, preferably on Brownfield sites (90%+ from the Reg 14 Feedback Survey (FS)).

3.12. The Wadhurst Design Code forms an integral part of the WNP to which developers will be required to adhere. Moreover, developers should demonstrate how their applications conform with the High Weald Housing Design Guide and Wealden Design Guide; ideally, their respective checklists should be incorporated into the applicant's proposal, in order to provide a clear overview of how the guidance has informed proposals.

3.13. The Parish has distinct settlement communities, which are separated by green fields/green gaps and retain their own local distinctiveness. The strong locally distinctive character and separation of these settlements will be encouraged so as to conserve and enhance each individual settlement community and avoid a deterioration into urban sprawl. To retain the distinctive individual settlement character, the green gaps between settlement communities should be retained to avoid coalescence and keep the historic communities' layouts. Ribbon development encroachment into the HWAONB countryside must be avoided as ribbon development today is the coalescence of tomorrow. Historically this has been a key factor in setting the development boundaries.

4. Focus Group 2: Getting Around

4.1. The Parish geography and history has led to a relatively inaccessible set of seven main settlement communities and four smaller hamlet communities (Figure 4.1), since they are scattered and widely distributed along two main ridge lines. The Parish is far from being an ideal ‘10-minute (walk) town’ - because the main hub and services are located in Wadhurst Village and in Durgates/Sparrows Green, and its main transport link is located some 2.2km (1.4 miles) away from Wadhurst Village centre. Thus, the Parish can be best described as being ‘car dependent’.

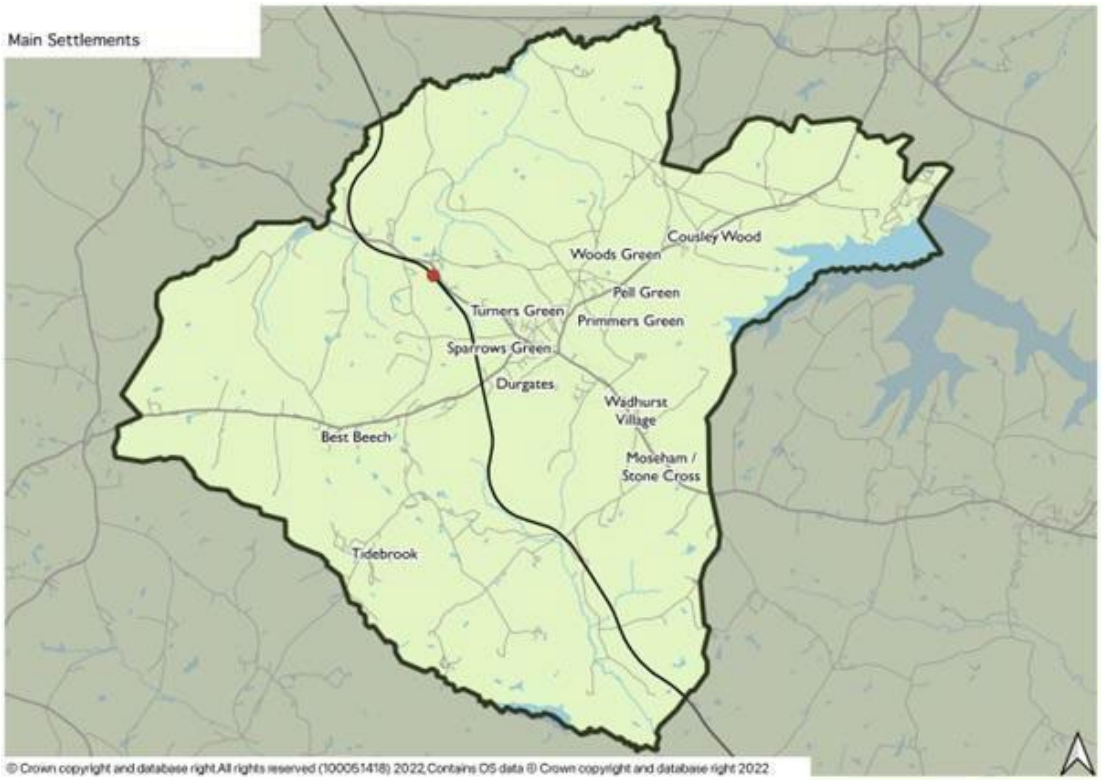


Figure 4.1: Map of Parish showing the main settlements

Status of Current Road, Pavement, Footpath and Cycle Lane Infrastructure:

4.2. A key aim of the WNP is to improve the infrastructure facilities and services within the Parish, which includes the roads infrastructure. Whilst many Highways matters fall outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan policies go some way to address matters, but WPC have and will be raising these matters with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and National Highways to look for ways to resolve the problems/constraints. If unresolved, these issues will be a determining factor on location of any new development.

4.3. The withdrawn Wealden Local Plan, 2019, rightly recognised the problems of the infrastructure facilities and the distance between Wadhurst Village and the main settlements of Durgates and Sparrows Green:

"Wadhurst has a good provision of services and facilities. There are a number of ongoing concerns in relation to congestion and parking in the High Street. One of the main issues is that the main residential area of Durgates and Sparrows Green is located around 1.6km from Wadhurst High Street and its associated services and facilities. This results in local residents driving to or through Wadhurst centre which is often congested due to parking on the High Street. There are also concerns in relation to the number and use of car parking spaces. There is no easy solution to the issues in the village centre due to existing urban form.".

Wadhurst High Street (B2099)

4.4. A major issue for the Parish currently is the success and viability of the High Street. Severe, frequent and increasing traffic congestion and lack of parking is threatening its future.

4.5. From the Household Survey (HS) and Regulation 14 Feedback Survey (FS) respondent results, the High Street is:

"severely traffic congested (81% of respondents in HS) and often gridlocked, which is adversely impacting the quality of life of parishioners (77% FS) and has a lack of parking (69% FS) - improved parking is required (85% HS)"

4.6. This traffic congestion/parking problem is discouraging people from coming into the High Street more frequently and therefore is damaging the economic viability of the shops.

4.7. Uplands Academy with 1000 pupil capacity, should under ESCC guidelines and Upland's own 2020 School Travel Plan be providing 93-101 parking spaces. It has provided only 53-60% of that (further information about car parking in the Parish is included in Appendix A of this report) contributing considerably to the lack of available parking in the village.

4.8. Recent major housing developments (both within the Parish and beyond), increased on-line deliveries, HGV traffic, and the new Jempsons Supermarket parking access have significantly increased traffic congestion in the High Street.

4.9. Developments to the south of Wadhurst village, such as Waters Reach, create more traffic issues, as there is a greater need to travel north (and of course back again to get home) in order to access facilities. Driving from the south heading north, accesses:

1. The High Street
2. Lamberhurst & the A21 leading to the M25 and London
3. Tunbridge Wells
4. Three Supermarkets
5. The doctors surgery
6. The train station
7. The petrol station
8. Two schools
9. B2100

4.10. Thus creating more congestion through the High Street traffic 'hot spots'.

4.11. Fire, Police and Ambulance services are struggling to get through the High Street for emergencies due to the traffic congestion and parking issues. The short video link below 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.

(see Wadhurst Parish Council website)

4.12. Wadhurst is also a victim of road blockages **outside** the Parish. When satellite navigation systems recognise delays at the Flimwell traffic lights, or the A21 London to Hastings road gets blocked by traffic accidents, A21 traffic is consequently diverted through the Parish causing up to 6-hour Parish-wide traffic gridlocks. The last time accidents closed the A21 was on 13th December 2021 and previously on 27th October 2021. Accident data can be found on https://www.crashmap.co.uk/:

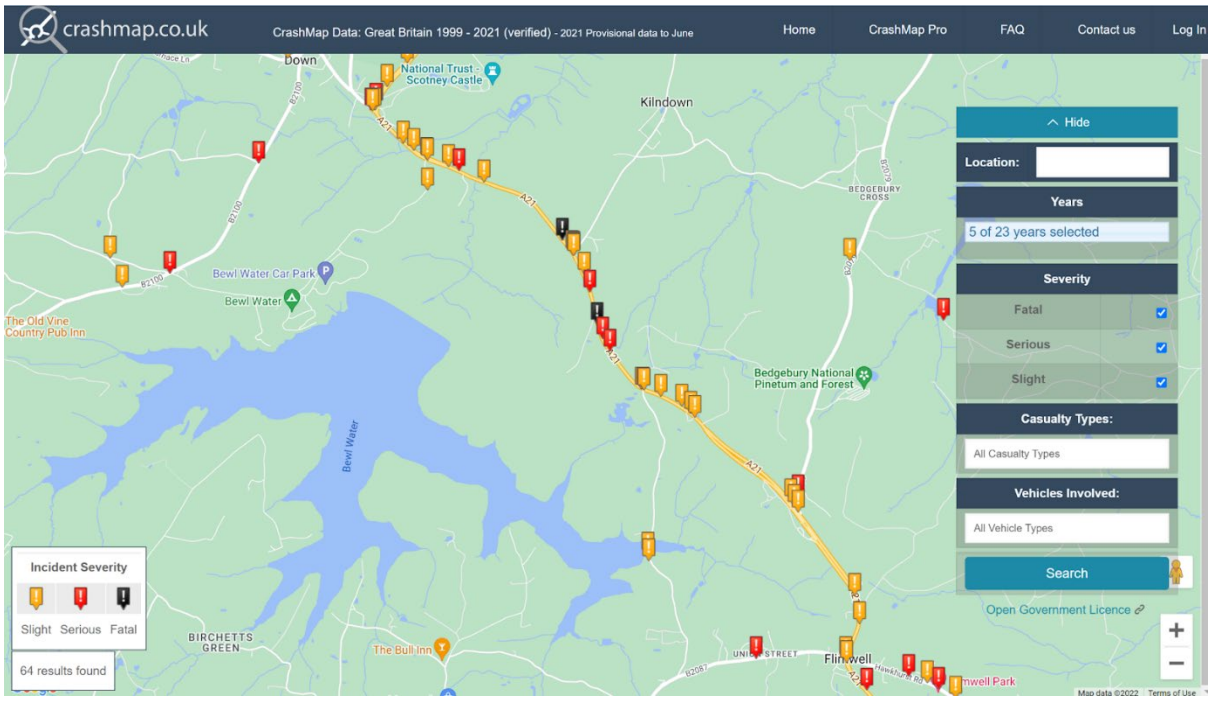


Figure 4.1: Map showing A21 accidents: accidents blocking the A21 lead to congestion in Wadhurst. (Source: Crash Map data UK- 5 years to June 2021)

4.13. Further evidence of congestion includes:

- Wadhurst Parish Council Black Cat (Traffic Monitoring System) Traffic Survey for High Street centre, 2022:

Wadhurst High Street Centre Traffic Survey From Thu 12th May - Wed 18th May 2022
Site Location : High Street (B2099), Wadhurst, lamp post 15 outside Jackie Martel's shop

		Southbound Lane to Ticehurst		Northbound Lane to Frant	
		Total Vehicles	85%ile Speed	Total Vehicles	85%ile Speed
Mon	16-May	3196	25	3107	25
Tues	17-May	3143	25	3272	25
Wed	18-May	3481	24	3442	25
Thur	12-May	3458	25	3383	25
Fri	13-May	3328	25	3457	25
Sat	14-May	2655	26	2828	27
Sun	05-May	1916	28	1883	28
Week Total		21177		21372	

Conclusions:
Started c. 10.00 on Wed 11/05/22 and finished recording c. 10.00 on Thu 19/05/22 - Cat pointing south (towards Ticehurst)

Road always constrained to one lane by parked cars on both sides of the High Street road.

Speeds/Vehicle types:
30mph limit in the High Street
Generally under the speed limit in both directions by 5-10 mph. A few speed infringements by 5mph early morning / late evening.
Vehicle size: Mixed but predominently cars (<2.8m) and vans (<5.2m) but some HGV's (>5.2 and >11.5m) throughout the day

Image showing the narrow High Street

- Wadhurst Parish Council Black Cat (Traffic Monitoring System) Traffic Survey for Lower High Street 2022:

Lower High Street Traffic Survey From Saturday 21st May to Friday 27th May 2022
Site Location : Lower High Street (B2099), Wadhurst, lamp post 03 outside the Rydon Waters Reach Estate
Black Cat pointing North West

		South East Bound (Channel 1) to Ticehurst			North West Bound (Channel 2) to Frant		
		Total Vehicles	Mean Average	85%ile Speed	Total Vehicles	Mean Average	85%ile Speed
Mon	23/05/2022	2668	34	40	2756	31	37
Tues	24/05/2022	2925	34	40	3030	31	35
Wed	25/05/2022	3022	34	41	3061	31	37
Thur	26/05/2022	3083	34	41	3257	31	38
Fri	27/05/2022	3310	34	40	3260	31	37
Sat	21/05/2022	2533	35	42	2544	32	38
Sun	22/05/2022	1802	36	43	1803	32	39
	Week Total	19343			19711		

Conclusions:
Started c. 09.00 on Fri 20/05/22 and finished recording c. 10.00 on Sat 28/05/22

Speeds: Generally over the speed limit in both directions by 5-10 mph.
Northwest bound recorded 672 vehicles averaged over 35-60mph and Southeast bound recorded 1,256 vehicles averaged over 35-60mph in the week
The Southeast bound speed excess is probably caused by the frustration of the traffic congestion in the High Street centre.
The Northeast bound speed excess is mollified by the single lane restriction as you enter Lower High Street past Stone Cross Road
Vehicle size: Predominently cars (<2.8m) and vans (<5.2m)

No comparison to the Rydon Traffic Report (2014) but ESCC Highways Consultee Report 10/12/14 for the Rydon Waters Reach Development:
'Noted vehicle speeds taken over a period of a week indicate that the speeds generally exceed the speed limit, the 85th percentile figures reaching 39 mph northbound and 42 mph southbound.
I take note that the parking conditions in the village centre will be alleviated through the recent approval of an on-site car park at Uplands college (ref WD3210CC)'. However, this has yet to be implemented.
A village highway proposal has been on the ESCC identified schemes, 'Wadhurst High Street Pedestrian improvements' to assist in providing an enhanced environment for safety and visual quality'. However, this has yet to be implemented.
Also, mention is made within the transport statement that the existing village gateway is ineffective in highlighting the 30 mph limit.

Image showing the monitoring system

4.14. These surveys show that over c.6,000 vehicles are traversing the High Street per weekday.

Potential solutions:

4.15. There are four remedial options to resolve High Street congestion, all of which have their drawbacks:

i. **Strategically and gradually over time, widen the High Street as opportunities arise** and if feasible. The Piccolo Café through to the Simply Indian Restaurant section would be a high priority to be widened to alleviate congestion and for pedestrian road safety. Such a strategy would take many years to implement and would require sites coming available.

(The Jempsons Supermarket development was a major missed opportunity to widen the High Street – instead the development narrowed the High Street and effectively introduced a new dangerous junction into the High Street).

ii. **Removal of <u>all</u> on-street parking places in the High Street**, but this would damage the economy of the shops and still not allow easy passage for HGVs through the High Street because of the overall road width restrictions. Traffic speeds would then increase and threaten pedestrian safety – this is <u>not</u> recommended. An assessment into the tactical reduction in some on-street parking spaces at the narrowest points in the High Street would be supported.

iii. **Prohibit HGVs access through the High Street or restrict them to night-time access only**. While this would solve much of the problem and is highly recommended, it is unlikely to be enforceable, and may have an unwelcome effect on retail businesses. Out of hours delivery is likely to increase retailers' costs with a likely knock-on effect on prices charged in the High Street.

iv. **Tactically, cease continued build-up of traffic (and associated increasing traffic congestion) by limiting further major housing development,** until a traffic congestion amelioration or mitigation plan is implemented by ESCC / WDC.

4.16. ESCC, as the Highways authority, have already recently confirmed that there are no High Street by-pass plans due to cost and topography.

4.17. ESCC Highways and WDC Planning Directors are recommended and have been invited to conduct an urgent review of Wadhurst High Street, to look for strategic and tactical traffic congestion alleviation, parking and road safety solutions. This should be done in collaboration with NPSG and WPC. Therefore, during the Plan period, additional near-by and off-street parking areas must be found for the High Street and other Parish narrow road areas (e.g. Durgates and Sparrows Green Road (B2100)) as a priority.

Mark Cross to Cousley Wood Road (B2100) and other routes

4.18. The B2100 running through the Parish is similarly congested at the junctions with the B2099 and particularly through Sparrows Green and Durgates.

4.19. There is only one formal Pedestrian Crossing, which is outside the Wadhurst Primary School. Therefore, the desire to introduce speed restrictions (probably because of driver frustrations having left the High Street congestion) was frequently mentioned in the HS / FS open comments sections.

Pavements and cycle connectivity

4.20. The lack of pavements, or narrow, unsafe, dimly lit, and poorly maintained pavements (often obstructed by parked cars) restricting the mobility of the disabled, the elderly and those with pushchairs around the Parish was the next highest "high or medium" priority for improving travel around the area. Improved pavements would be a great help, or some help (77% HS).

4.21. Better connectivity between different areas of the Parish and surrounding amenities is required (73% HS). For example, a 'cycle path from Wadhurst village to Bewl Water' and 'off-road connecting footpaths and cycle paths' were considered a "high or medium" priority (75% HS). However, the hilly topography of the Parish may restrict this.

4.22. The considerable distance to Wadhurst railway station (2.2km, 1.4 miles) from the High Street and the steep gradient hill of Station Road with a dark, single, narrow, unsafe and poorly maintained pavement, means more car journeys rather than walking/cycling. Safer access to the railway station (e.g. widening the single pavement and better lighting) was cited as one of the most important concerns, as was the lack of alternative transport options (there is an infrequent bus service) to using the car. There is no formal taxi rank at the station.

4.23. The Parish does not have any cycle lanes due to the narrow and traffic congested rural roads and ancient droveways.

Future Development Site Considerations - Key Sustainability Principles

4.24. Any future development in the Parish must be 'sustainable' (NPPF para 8.) and not exacerbate the traffic congestion issues mentioned above. Potential themes to consider are:

Sustainable Travel

4.25. In particular, the *sustainability* of any development site needs to be within easy walking distance to basic day-to-day services (rail station, shops, secondary and primary schools etc).

4.26. The Manual for Streets (MfS) 2007 (para 4.4.1) says: "*Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes' (up to about 800m) walking distance of residential areas which parishioners may access comfortably on foot. However, this is*

not an upper limit and walking offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips, particularly those under 2 km".

Car dependency

4.27. Any development in the Parish should thus discourage car dependency, given evidence that its main roads are congested. It is essential to have clear linkages between new development sites and local amenities, so that future parishioners can either use public transport facilities or take advantage of walking and any cycling routes. MfS para 4.4.2 states:

"*Creating linkages between new housing and local facilities, community infrastructure, the public transport network and established walking and cycling routes are fundamental to achieving more sustainable patterns of movement and to reducing people's reliance on the car*".

Walking / Cycling experience

4.28. The Parish has narrow roads and narrow pavements (if at all). The roads do not have the breadth capability for cycle lanes. The pavements are car encroached, lack kerbs, are poorly maintained and poorly lit. Therefore, it is rare for parishioners to use cycles or walk far (not even taking into account the inclement weather and hills).

4.29. It is one thing to have pavements and roads that, in theory, have space for cycle lanes. It is quite another to assume that residents will use these facilities – either to walk or cycle to local amenities. The MfS (para 6.3.1) states that "*the propensity to walk is influenced not only by distance but also by the quality of the walking (or cycling) experienc*e".

4.30. Wealden District Council's Climate Emergency Plan states in its priority areas and action plans that *"a transformation in the transport sector must take place, reducing vehicle use/ mileage through behavioural change".* One of the key factors determining *perceptions* of road safety is the speed at which cars and lorries use the roads. The MfS (para 6.3.19) says: '*Streets with high traffic speeds can make pedestrians feel unsafe. Designers should seek to control vehicle speeds to below 20 mph in residential areas so that pedestrian's activity is not displaced*'

The evidence

Car dependence

4.31. The Parish settlements are not very accessible. Figure 4.2 shows distances and expected times to walk or cycle from the rail station and Jempsons to other parts of the Parish[1] [2] Distances have been measured using Google Maps.

[1] For robustness, distances and journey times have been measured from Wadhurst Village (Jempsons) and the railway station to various Parish destinations and calculated in accordance with the average walking speed as suggested by the Ramblers (1.11m/s equivalent to 4km/h) and average cycling speed as per 'Road Bike' (4m/s or 14.4km/h) respectively.

[2] Developers refer to the Institute for Highways and Transportation (IHT), *Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot*, 2000. They assume an average walking speed of approx. 1.4 m/s, equivalent to a very brisk 5.04 km/h. However, with an ageing population (21% of the population of the Parish were over the age of 65 according to the 2011 census, likely to be higher when the 2021 census results are released), a more realistic walking speed is 4km/hr, as suggested by the Ramblers. Parents with small children in tow are more likely to walk at Ramblers rather than IHT speeds.

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 4.2: Distances from the Station and Wadhurst Village to parts of the Parish

These times do not take account of the steep hills, or the quality of the walking experience.

4.32. Figure 4.2 demonstrates clearly how car dependent the Parish is. For nine destinations from the station, all are estimated to take longer than 10 minutes to walk. Moreover, seven of them are further than 2km (1.2 miles) away. For example, commuters setting out from the Waters Reach Estate, Lower High Street, are realistically likely to use their cars to get to the station, or else face a 43-minute walk – not an attractive prospect if the weather is against the intrepid commuter. Moreover, those living in the western part of the Parish, along the B2100 at Best Beech, face similarly long journeys – again requiring the use of cars. The same is true for those living at the extremes of the Parish, whether in Tidebrook, Woods Green and Cousley Wood – all of which are generally completely unsustainable for walking/cycling to all services and access to the railway station.

4.33. It is one thing to supply plentiful parking space at the station for car-dependent commuters. It is another for the stream of commuters to access the station by driving through congested streets to get there. There are several traffic 'hot' points (Figure 4.3) that impact upon the quality of the *driving* experience.

4.34. Figure 4.3 shows that any journey going through the Parish will encounter at least one of these traffic congestion 'Hot Spots' of Wadhurst High Street (B2099), at both B2099/B2100 junctions

and Sparrows Green Road. Even a car journey from the centre towards Mark Cross has to cope with a highly variable road surface, with obstacles in the form of HGV traffic and a very poor road surface.

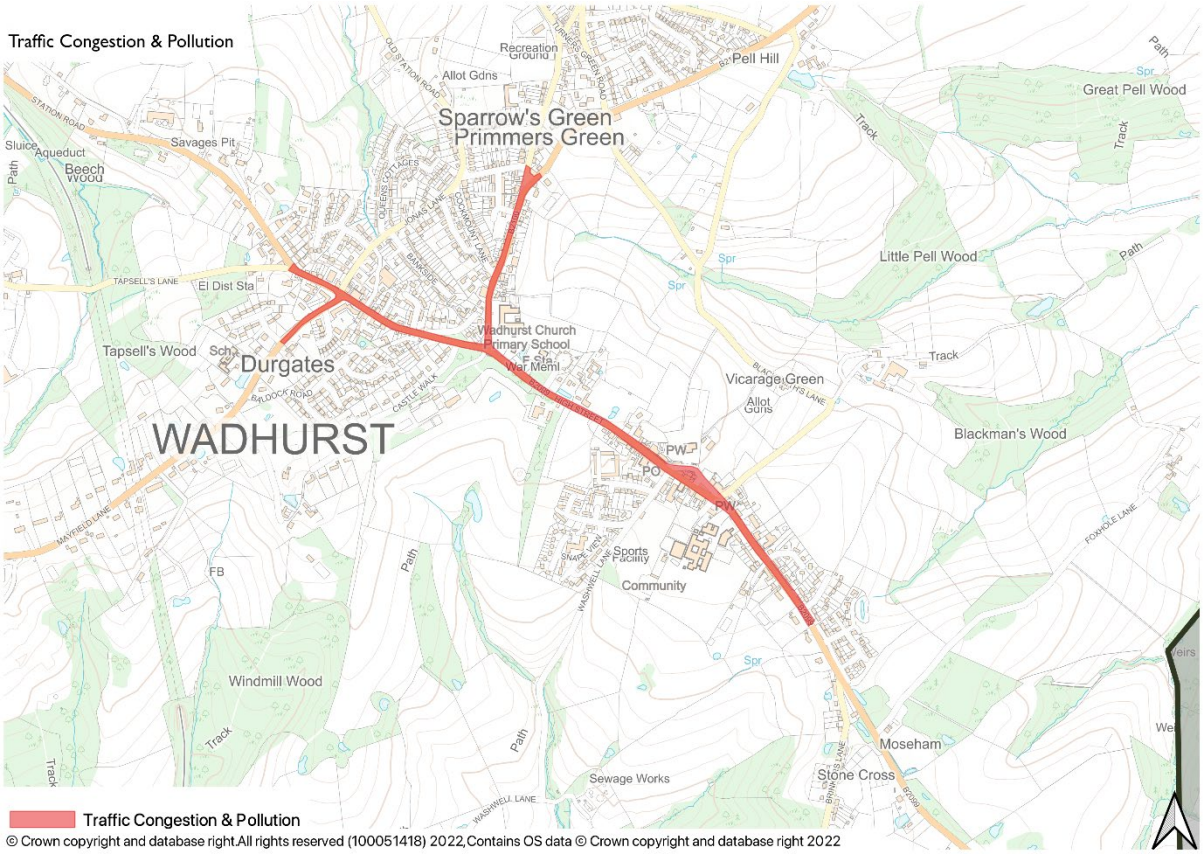


Figure 4.3: Traffic congestions and hotspots

Quality of the walking experience

4.35. The following issues impact on the quality of the walking experience:

4.36. **Obstacles**: The walking experience around the Parish is variable, ranging from acceptable to dangerous. There are a range of potential hazards that pedestrians have to navigate including:

- Vehicles parked on the pavement, forcing them 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. the images below, which show the High Street and Sparrows Green.

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

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

4.37. **Traffic speeds**: In addition to encountering obstacles, when walking along hazardous roads, another gauge of a poor 'walking experience' is high traffic speeds, as mentioned in the MfS. Average speeds along two of the key roads running through the Parish[3], using the WPC Black Cat surveys, were all in excess of the 20mph 'hurdle rate' described in MfS as being a discouragement for pedestrians. The speed limits vary from 30mph to 40mph (by Marling House), but the reality is that these roads feel unsafe to walk along.

[3] Roads surveyed comprise: Station Road near Marling House (Site Location Number: WPC 312) and Lower High Street (lamp post 03 outside the Rydon Waters Reach Estate)

4.38. Figure 4.3 shows average speeds along these roads, using the WPC Black Cat surveys. Shown are average speeds, together with the 85th percentile speeds to show variation along each road. Also shown are the relevant speed limits for each road as well as the 20 mph recommended speed from the MfS.

4.39. The mean speeds recorded are below the speed limit for the Marling House site, but not the speed limit for the Lower High Street site. This probably reflects the release of pent-up frustration once the motorist has escaped the High Street bottleneck. The 85th percentile readings are both above the speed limits.

4.40. However, in both cases, average speeds are in excess of the 20mph recommended in the MfS. The communities around Marling House and Lower High Street have enough housing density to suggest that there will be residents who could be encouraged to walk either to Wadhurst village centre or to the station. Coping with these average speeds on narrow pavements is not conducive to a good walking experience and is likely to encourage car dependency.

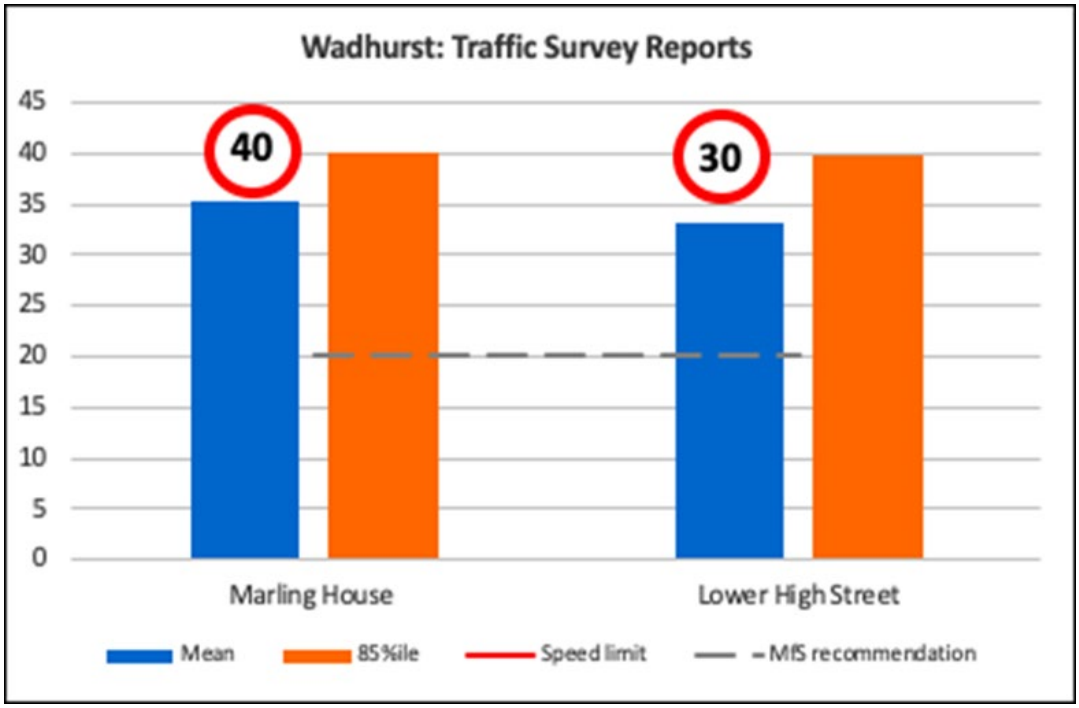


*Figure 4.3: Average speeds in mph (*Source: WPC Black Cat surveys Note: National speed limits shown above average speeds)

4.41. However, as shown above walking/cycling is not the answer without substantial infrastructure development of roads, pavements, cycle lanes, alternative pathways (even if feasible).

4.42. **Public transport:** Public transport offers only limited options to help parishioners in getting around. There are six bus routes through the Parish, the 224, 254, 256, 258, 354 and U3 routes.

4.43. Service frequency is a challenge:

- 224: Wadhurst (adjacent to Snape View) to Crowborough (via Best Beech, Mark Cross, Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook) operates three times a day in each direction on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, leaving Wadhurst at 10.03, 12.06 and 13.36
- 254: Hastings to Tunbridge Wells via Wadhurst (via Ticehurst, Wallcrouch, Shovers Green, Uplands, War Memorial, Sparrows Green, Station, and Frant) operates 12 times a day in each direction from Monday to Friday.
- 256: Wadhurst (the Greyhound) to St Johns (via Sparrows Green, Cousley Wood, Lamberhurst, Hook Green, Bells Yew Green, Frant) operates five times a day in each direction from Monday to Friday.
- 258: Bells Yew Green to Uplands (via Hook Green, Lamberhurst, Cousley Wood and Sparrows Green) operates once a day in each direction from Monday to Friday, leaving Wadhurst at 15.32 and Bells Yew Green at 07.45.
- 354: Wadhurst to Ticehurst (via Mayfield Lane, War Memorial, Post Office, Greyhound, Stonegate Road and Wallcrouch) operates twice a day in one direction from Monday to Friday leaving Wadhurst Station at 18.55 and 19.25 and once a day from Ticehurst at 07.05.
- U3: 001 (via Hurst Green and Etchingham) operates twice per day (once in each direction) from Monday to Friday, leaving Wadhurst at 07.59 and Burwash at 15.50.

4.44. Although there are infrequent bus services along the B2099/B2100 roads, bus stops are spread out e.g. there is no bus stop between the Railway station and Durgates.

Conclusion

4.45. The Parish geography and history currently make it an inaccessible set of communities. The Parish is far from being an ideal '10-minute (walk) town' - because its main facilities and services are located in Wadhurst Village and in Durgates/Sparrows Green.

4.46. The quality of the walking experience throughout the Parish is at best variable and in some cases downright dangerous, with obstacles on pavements (if they exist) and in other instances high traffic speeds. These factors act to discourage walking and lead to increased car dependency. Wadhurst's geography, its road and pavement infrastructure and traffic speeds combine to ensure that the Parish can only genuinely be described as 'car dependent'.

5. Focus Group 3: Local Economy

5.1. Maintaining the High Street variety of shops and facilities is perceived as vital. With both banks having closed recently, as well as several retail shops, shoppers have now less reason to visit the deteriorating High Street, which must compete with online and out-of-town shopping alternatives. Over 35% of 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.

5.2. The recent closure of the Wadhurst refuse/recycling facility was seen as a great loss to the local community and businesses. Evidence from the Household Survey shows that steps need to be taken to encourage more start-up businesses based in the Parish.

5.3. The HS contained a series of questions aimed at small businesses, home-based workers or those that would like to. The Survey received responses from 682 people in this category, indicating that there are a sizable number of small and home-based businesses.

5.4. The most significant finding from this group was that 86% of respondents would like improved Broadband services. 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 online Broadband services will be even more important now with increased home working.

5.5. There are pockets of retail facilities in the Parish, but the primary retail area is in the Wadhurst High Street (see Figure 5.1):

- **Wadhurst High Street:** Jempsons Supermarket, One Stop General Store, 3xHairdressers, 4x Estate Agents, Pharmacy, 2xPublic Houses, Coffee shops, Greengrocer, Butchers, Clothes shop, 2xDelicatessen, Travel Agency, 2xFlorist, 2xIndian restaurants, Dentist, Sports Injuries Physiotherapy, 2xCharity shop, Stationers, Health shop, Book shop, Dry Cleaners, Insurance/Accounting services, 2xWine Store, Pet Store, Metal working.

- **Durgates:** Petrol Station, Beautician, General store, Dentist, Herbalist, Hairdresser, Estate Agent, mixed industrial estate (including Nikwax – a major employer in the Parish).

- **Sparrows Green:** Cooperative Supermarket, Barbers, Fish & Chip/Chinese shop, Veterinary, Car showroom/Garage, Printing company, School Uniform shop.

- **Cousley Wood:** Public House/Restaurant and Car Showroom/Garage.

- **Woods Green, Turners Green, Pell Green, Primmers Green, Stone Cross/Moseham, Tidebrook and Best Beech** do not have any local retail services.

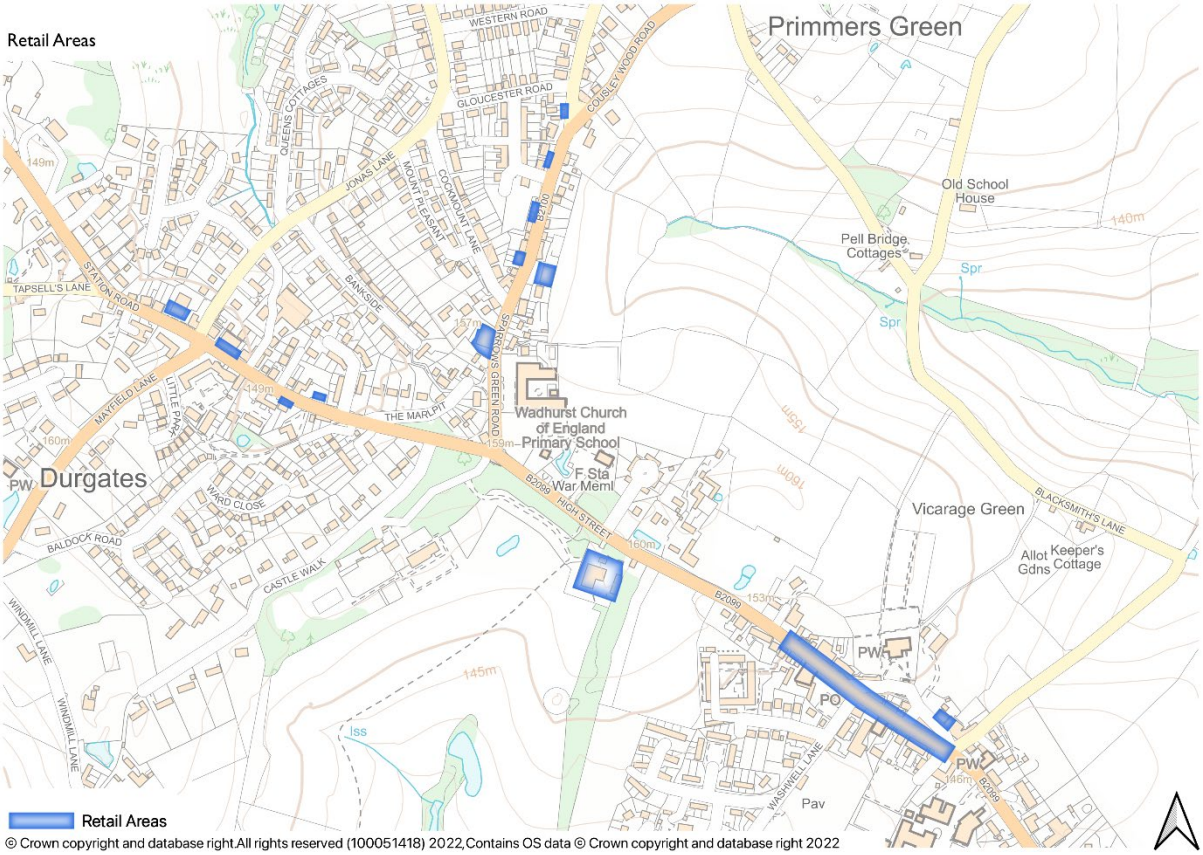


Figure 5.1: Main retail areas in Wadhurst

6. Focus Group 4: Environment

6.1. The HS, Focus Groups and the Regulation 14 Feedback Survey highlighted the importance of protecting the High Weald AONB natural environment and to maintain and enhance biodiversity and wildlife corridors. The communities want to protect local recreation grounds, Local Green Spaces and Green Gaps and amenity spaces.

6.2. Sparrow Green Recreation Ground offers an amenity space in the Parish as does the Commemoration Hall Field. However neither of these are conducive to general walking and, in particular, do not allow for dog walking and are devoid of park benches, flower beds, trees, ponds and ornamental trees that would be expected to be found in a public park. Beyond this, there is a general lack of open amenity space within the Parish, particularly for those seeking to access it on foot. Walkers and dog walkers within the main population areas, feel that there is nowhere to walk except muddy footpaths and dangerous narrow pavement-less roads. Surrounding private farmland is for livestock and is highly protected.

6.3. The Wealden Open Space Study 2022 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.

6.4. Therefore, new amenity spaces should be sought, which are more local to the main population areas. Residents have expressed support for the 40ha area from Primmers field (GG5) to the Church Footpath as a location for such a 'wild park' amenity space with views to Bewl Water. This site is, however, privately owned and is currently being promoted for housing development by the landowner. As an alternative, WPC are considering supporting the possible provision of an open amenity Park or commemorative green space to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, to be called the Jubilee Green.

6.5. Light pollution is an important issue for the community. The Parish has some of the darkest skies in the Southeast, which are both an amenity for parishioners and a potential tourist attraction. A commitment to Dark Skies received widespread support.

6.6. There is great concern about air quality in the narrow and constrained High Street. There is too much polluting traffic congestion due to HGVs, on-line deliveries, commuting, construction, farm vehicles (tractors) and the school runs. WDC (Shared Services) have therefore been repeatedly requested by WPC to install air pollution monitors (diffusers) in the High Street and these were finally installed in January 2022 with results expected in early 2023.

6.7. Advice from the Environment Agency: *"The Medway and Rother catchment areas both flow through the Wadhurst Parish".* Therefore, particular concern is that developments requiring SUDS sewage systems do not pollute these waterways. This is especially important since many

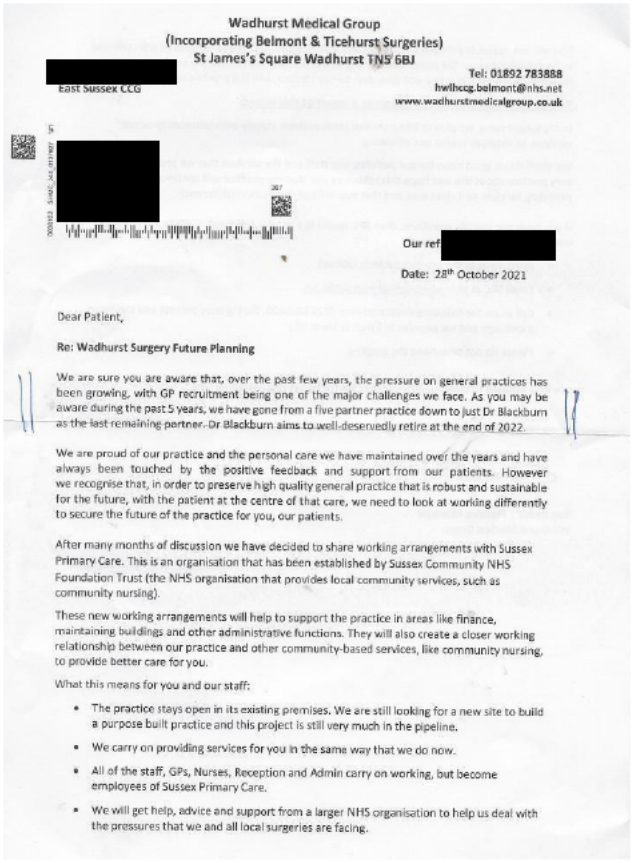
of the potential development HWAONB/Greenfield sites are not on the main sewage system and are on sloping Wealden clay, which does not allow water infiltration, leading to subsidence.

7. Focus Group 5: Wellbeing and Leisure

7.1. Aspects of infrastructure (particularly the capacity of the Doctor's Surgery and Nursery School) and traffic/road/pavement considerations are seen as inadequate to support further major development.

7.2. **Health Care:** The only local NHS GP Practice (Belmont Surgery) in the Parish is situated in a small former residential building just off St James' Square in the High Street. It does not have its own patient car park and there is extremely limited on-street parking in the immediate area.

7.3. The Belmont Surgery GP Practice, the only one in the Parish, has 8,900 registered patients (Ref: Care Quality Commission (CQC), June 2019 inspection report). This compares with a Parish population of 5000. Despite good CQC ratings, the practice is perceived as being short-staffed. It has had difficulty in recruiting doctors for some years and the waiting time for a face to face, non-urgent GP appointment is three weeks.



Wadhurst Medical Group
(Incorporating Belmont & Ticehurst Surgeries)
St James's Square Wadhurst TN5 6BJ

[redacted]
East Sussex CCG

Tel: 01892 783888
hwlhccg.belmont@nhs.net
www.wadhurstmedicalgroup.co.uk

[redacted]

Our ref [redacted]

Date: 28th October 2021

Dear Patient,

Re: Wadhurst Surgery Future Planning

We are sure you are aware that, over the past few years, the pressure on general practices has been growing, with GP recruitment being one of the major challenges we face. As you may be aware during the past 5 years, we have gone from a five partner practice down to just Dr Blackburn as the last remaining partner. Dr Blackburn aims to well-deservedly retire at the end of 2022.

We are proud of our practice and the personal care we have maintained over the years and have always been touched by the positive feedback and support from our patients. However we recognise that, in order to preserve high quality general practice that is robust and sustainable for the future, with the patient at the centre of that care, we need to look at working differently to secure the future of the practice for you, our patients.

After many months of discussion we have decided to share working arrangements with Sussex Primary Care. This is an organisation that has been established by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (the NHS organisation that provides local community services, such as community nursing).

These new working arrangements will help to support the practice in areas like finance, maintaining buildings and other administrative functions. They will also create a closer working relationship between our practice and other community-based services, like community nursing, to provide better care for you.

What this means for you and our staff:

- The practice stays open in its existing premises. We are still looking for a new site to build a purpose built practice and this project is still very much in the pipeline.
- We carry on providing services for you in the same way that we do now.
- All of the staff, GPs, Nurses, Reception and Admin carry on working, but become employees of Sussex Primary Care.
- We will get help, advice and support from a larger NHS organisation to help us deal with the pressures that we and all local surgeries are facing.

7.4. The Parish has a high proportion of older parishioners, who tend to have greater and more diverse health needs.

7.5. A new Health Centre location is being sought but potential large sites (required by the Clinical Commissioning Group) are limited.

7.6. **Recreation Space:** There are only two public recreation grounds in the Parish:

- Sparrows Green: used for Football with a Tennis Club, Community Pavilion and children's playground.

- Commemoration Field: used for Football and Cricket with an adjoining Bowls Club.

7.7. However, neither of these are conducive to general walking and, in particular, do not allow dog walking and are devoid of park benches, flowers beds, trees, ponds, ornamental trees that would be expected to be found in a public park.

7.8. There is one popular walk used by the schools and local residents called “the Welly Walk, footpath 27a from Lower High Street across Stone Cross Farm field. This leads into other footpaths, Birchetts Wood and Snape. There are other valued footpaths in the Parish.

7.9. The redundant Wadhurst College School Playing Grounds site in Mayfield Lane has been considered by the Focus Group to be saved as a Local Green Space and to be rejuvenated with sports or recreational facilities, or left as a public open amenity space.

7.10. As noted previously, there is an undersupply of accessible amenity green space (including children’s play space and youth play space) in the Parish. The provision and protection of green spaces/green gaps in and around the Parish - whether for informal leisure pursuits, play and recreation, for visual appeal and a sense of wellbeing or for organised sport - was highly valued and prioritised by all age groups in the HS.

7.11. There is strong support for establishing a Village Green/pocket park or as mentioned above, a larger formal public amenity (wild) park. It was felt important that new developments should include shared public green space and soft landscaping.

7.12. The only publicly accessible natural open green space in the Parish is at Bewl Water, on the edge of the Parish. Natural England recommends at least 2 ha. of Accessible Natural Green Space no more than 300 metres (5 minute’s walk) from homes and at least one accessible 20 ha. site within two Kilometres of homes.

7.13. The Plan surveys were clear that activities for young people are a high priority in the Parish and currently are inadequate. However, the main groups of people not well provided for are: women, particularly young women and girls; people on low incomes, who cannot afford club fees or equipment; those without cars, who cannot access facilities outside the Parish; and people with mobility impairments.

7.14. It is clear from the HS and the Uplands Student Survey that the top amenity requested is for a new public swimming pool. The much-loved former open-air pool at Uplands, which was open to all parishioners, was closed several years ago due to ageing pumps and lack of trained volunteer lifeguards. However, the need is still there.

7.15. Also, a priority is to maintain and enhance the Library, to ensure that it continues to appeal to all age ranges and provides internet access for those parishioners who are unable to use the internet at home.

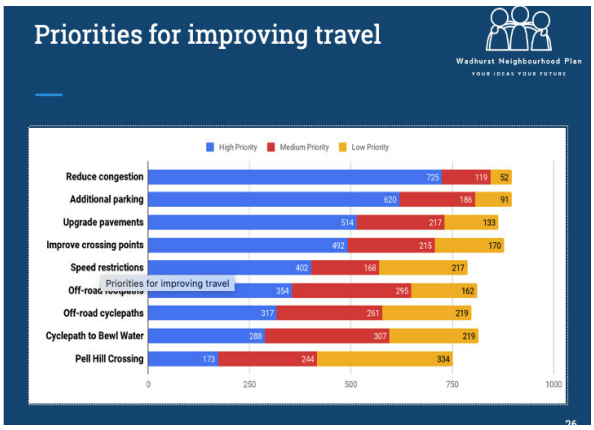
7.16. The recent closure of St. Georges Hall in Sparrows Green has directly impacted on women's leisure facilities. It had in the past been the venue for: Mother/Toddler Group; Pilates classes; Zumba classes; W.I. Gardening meetings; Trefoil Guild, to name but a few. Most of these small groups have now disbanded. Some have relocated to other premises but are finding the other halls too expensive.

7.17. The Methodist Hall in Lower High Street has also been recently turned into residential apartments.

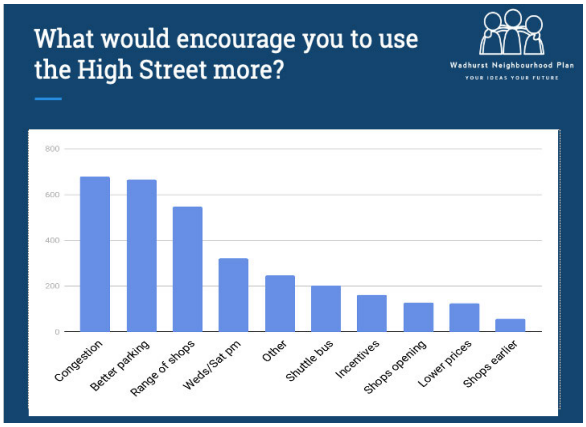
Appendix A: Car parking in and for Wadhurst

It has been acknowledged since at least **1998**'s Wadhurst Conservation Area designation report that *"parking and the associated congestion it can cause is a significant issue for concern within the Conservation Area."* Also that *"the volume of traffic through the village as well as parking are undoubtedly the two main issues."*

Unfortunately, the issues remain the same 24 years later. The Household Survey revealed that additional parking was the second most popular priority for improving travel (voted for by residents with 620 classing it as a high priority and 186 as a medium priority). This was second only to congestion as a resident concern.



Additional parking was also the second most popular response when asked what would encourage more use of the High Street shops (just under 700 votes).



Wadhurst Village does not have enough car parking spaces. It has two off-street car parks; Washwell Lane (17 long-stay bays and 2 disabled bays) and The Greyhound Car park (30 short-stay bays, 52 long-stay bays and 4 short-stay disabled bays).

The number of parking spaces at Uplands Community College has fallen recently; from 68 spaces (including 3 disabled spaces) in 2013 to 56 spaces (including 3 disabled spaces) in 2020.

Source: Uplands Community College's School Travel Plan 2013:
https://apps.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/applications/register/documents/datawright%20saved%20documents/scannedinfo/planning/wd-3210-cc/school%20travel%20plan%20february%202013.pdf

Uplands does not have enough car parking spaces according to ESCC guidelines (93/94 spaces required) and Upland's own 2020 School Travel Plan (101 spaces required).

This equates to a parking shortfall of between 37-45 spaces for Upland's (depending on calculation method).

Given that Wadhurst village has only 99 off-street car park spaces (Washwell Lane and Greyhound Car Parks), the circa 40 space shortfall in the school's parking facilities effectively equates to 40-50% % of Wadhurst village's total off-street car park spaces

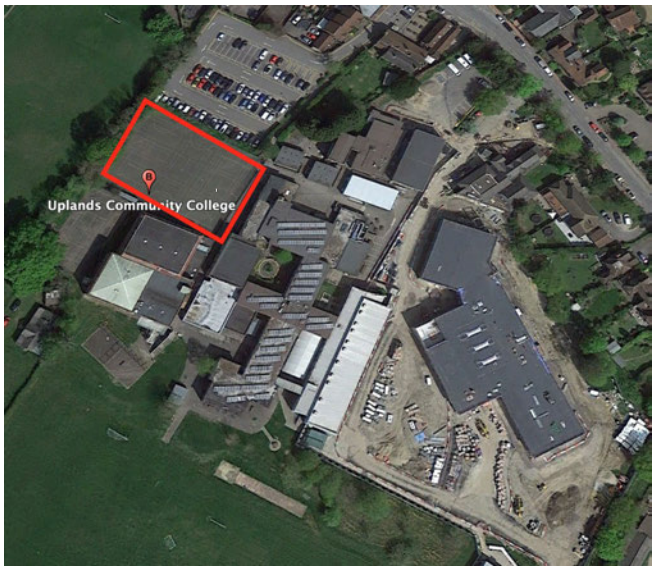
The 2013 Uplands School travel plan notes "*Staff and visitors to the college do use the public car park in the village next to the 'Greyhound pub' but this causes problems and limited car park spaces for visitors who wish to use the amenities within the village."* and goes on to say " *There is a free public car park adjacent to the school ground, which many staff & students use as well as visitors to the Village, but this is often full. Consequently, a number of staff, students and visitors park on site on the grass verge, yellow lines and in the coach turning area as well as the public highway"*

Parking is extremely stretched with obstructive parking everyday along the Lower High Street and full car parks turning away potential High Street users. In addition, visitors searching for parking are a significant contributor to congestion on the High Street at peak times.

A great opportunity to improve village parking was missed with the recent rebuilding of the school. This has been compounded by the fact that the new school has been built on the old tennis courts which were often used for overflow parking (though not counted in the official parking spaces). This means, in reality, that the reduction in spaces is far greater. See Image below – usage of tennis courts as parking in previous years.

Satellite images of overflow parking on old tennis court outlined in red

The Parish Council has offered to contribute £80,000 towards the cost of expanding the Greyhound car park into the old Multi-Use-Games-Area (MUGA), located between the Greyhound car park and Upland's Gym, and providing replacement sports facilities elsewhere within the school (as required by Sports England). This extra parking would alleviate the pressure on Wadhurst village public car parks and bring the school up to the required East Sussex parking guideline minimums. However, to date, ESCC, Wealden and Uplands have not put forward any funds towards this project.



Potential Greyhound car park expansion area outlined in red (old MUGA)

Recommendation

That in order to alleviate the parking shortfall at Uplands Community College and the pressure it exerts upon the public car parks and congestion in the High Street, that ESCC, Wealden and Uplands Community College engage as soon as possible and commit funds to finalise this project.

References

https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/media/1762/parking_guidance_non_residential.pdf

Upland's 2020 School travel plan:

8. *"The layout of parking spaces* to the front of the new school building and in the vicinity of the new MUGA will be rearranged, however the current number of parking spaces will remain and the school will continue to operate with 53 parking spaces, three disable spaces, three minibus spaces and bus parking area. "

"Suggestions for realistic changes to site / village that would improve journey to/from school

- *More parking spaces on school site and within the village "*

Upland's 2013 School travel plan:

"The college has 65 car parking spaces and 3 disabled parking bays. There is a free public car park adjacent to the school ground, which many staff & students use as well as visitors to the Village, but

this is often full.Consequently a number of staff, students and visitors park on site on the grass verge, yellow lines and in the coach turning area as well as the public highway"

"Cars are often parked outside the college and partially on the public footpaths of the high street either dropping off or waiting to collect students to and from college. As mentioned previously, Staff and visitors to the college do use the public car park in the village next to the 'Geryhound pub' but this causes problems and limited car park spaces for visitors who wish to use the amenities within the village."

"Parking is also a significant difficulty for any major event held during the college day and can cause further inconvenience to local residents. Additional on site parking is needed to prevent congestion on the local roads and one of the college playgrounds is required to be used which means vehicles are accessing the site during times when there is possibly student movement between lessons."

OBJECTIVES & TARGETS from 2013 school travel plan

To improve the safety of, and accessibility to, the college site during the day for all pedestrians and the disabled	● *Explore the possibility of reducing the speed limit on the public road outside the College main entrance to 20 mph.* ● *To explore the possibility of an additional car park to ease congestion on the roads and village* ● *To explore the possibility of a further pedestrian entrance adjacent to the main entrance suitable for disabled access* ● *To explore the possibility of installing a speed camera or other Speed Awareness Device on the road through Wadhurst* ● *Explore options for making school coach collection and drop-off arrangements safer and smoother*

https://apps.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/planning/applications/register/documents/datawright%20saved%20documents/scannedinfo/planning/wd-3210-cc/school%20travel%20plan%20february%202013.pdf

School capacity of 100 pupils (https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/Establishments/Establishment/Details/114591)

Appendix B: Extract from the Wealden District Council 1998 Adopted Local PLan

Development Boundary

19.37.6 The development boundary has been defined to take full account of the sensitive ridge-top setting of the village within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the diverse character of existing development, in particular the separate identities of

Durgates and the High Street area. It seeks to prevent an outward encroachment of new development into the surrounding countryside, ribbon development along the main roads and an intensification of development in a number of fringe areas which would be detrimental to their more rural character. In a particular case, this could lead to the coalescence of Durgates with the historic High Street area.

19.37.7 Balaclava Lane forms a clear northern boundary to development in Turners Green, beyond which any new development would erode the open countryside separating the village from the small rural hamlets of Woods Green, Osmers Hill and Pell Green.

The development boundary follows Cousley Wood Road and the rear of properties along its eastern side, excluding further land to the south-east to prevent encroachment into open countryside. The primary school's playground and playing fields have not been included in view of their more open aspect, which makes an important contribution to the gap between Durgates and the High Street.

19.37.8 Land south of Castle Walk comprises a number of large properties set in extensive curtilages and an expansive area of woodland around Wadhurst Castle which together contribute to a more rural character. Similarly, the area of land around Windmill House, east of Windmill Lane, has considerable mature tree cover and is parkland in its nature. To maintain their character, these areas are excluded from the development boundary.

19.37.9 Development extending out of the village along Mayfield Lane is principally frontage in its form, despite properties being set back in their curtilages. The development boundary reflects this, but excludes the full extent of curtilage in most cases in order to prevent inappropriate backland development or an extension of ribbon development.

19.37.10 The development boundary excludes areas of open countryside and woodland to the west along Tapsells Lane as any new development would be intrusive and detrimental to the rural character. Along Station Road there are a number of large detached properties set in extensive grounds which have been excluded from the development boundary to protect their more loose-knit rural character. However, due to the well enclosed nature of the land, small scale residential development has taken place at Great Durgates within the curtilage of the existing house. This clearly marks the end of new development and beyond which further new development will be very strongly resisted.

19.37.11 Along the north-western edge of Durgates and Sparrows Green, the development boundary excludes open undulating countryside to the north of Jonas Drive and Queens Cottages together with open land to the north of Western Road in order to prevent outward encroachment and intrusion on the landscape. A number of large properties along Old Station Road have been excluded in view of their more rural character. Along South View Road the development boundary seeks to prevent development encroaching onto the

recreation ground, and excludes property at the junction with Balaclava Lane in view of its open and more rural character.

19.37.12 Along the southern part of the High Street and the Lower High Street, the development boundary closely follows existing properties to prevent peripheral expansion into surrounding countryside and rural fringe areas, particularly where intensification of new development would be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character. Towards Stone Cross, a number of large detached properties south of Lower High Street have been excluded from the development boundary in view of the spacious setting of the buildings, where new development would be detrimental to the more rural character. The development boundary excludes the full depth of the Uplands Community College campus in view of its countryside location.

19.37.13 It is important to maintain the existing separation of Durgates and Sparrows Green from Wadhurst, as the characters of these two settlements are distinctly different. Separate development boundaries have been drawn to prevent any intensification of the existing development north of the High Street or an encroachment of new development into the more rural area to the south around Wadhurst Castle, which would lead to coalescence of the settlements. Any proposals for development in this gap will be strongly resisted.