



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation Statement

Volume 4: Consultation 'focus' events

Troy Planning + Design

March 2026



Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan, Consultation Statement

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Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code

Summary report of consultation 'focus' events



June 2025



**Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code
CONSULTATION FOCUS EVENTS
Summary Report
June 2025**

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1. Introduction

A series of focussed consultation events were undertaken in June 2025 to seek feedback on emerging ideas within the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code, specifically:

- Improvements to community facilities in Hailsham, including the potential for a new ‘community hub’.
- Potential for part-pedestrianisation of the High Street.
- Opportunities to improve access alongside and across the A22 for pedestrians and cyclists, improving links to leisure, recreation and community facilities in and around Hailsham.

These had been identified through and in response to previous consultation events. The focussed consultation sought feedback on these to determine whether they were heading in the right direction (or not) and whether there were any specific suggestions that would help strengthen the ideas prior to wider consultation on the Plan and Design Code.

Three one-hour drop-in events were held in Hailsham in early June, comprising:

1. At the Station Youth Centre on Western Road, hosted by the Railway Club, on the morning of Wednesday 4th June
2. At Dippy Doodahs Café on the High Street over lunchtime on Wednesday 4th June
3. At Dippy Doodahs Café on the High Street during early evening on Wednesday 4th June

The events were advertised by the Town Council (see Figure 1 and Figure 2), with invites sent to various groups, organisations and others, and use made of social media (Figure 3) to encourage attendance. Around 60 people attended the events.

The events took the form of a general discussion. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan was introduced followed by an overview of the three main ideas, how they had been identified and what they comprise. Ideas were discussed with and amongst attendees, and each asked to complete a feedback form (Figure 4) setting out their thoughts.

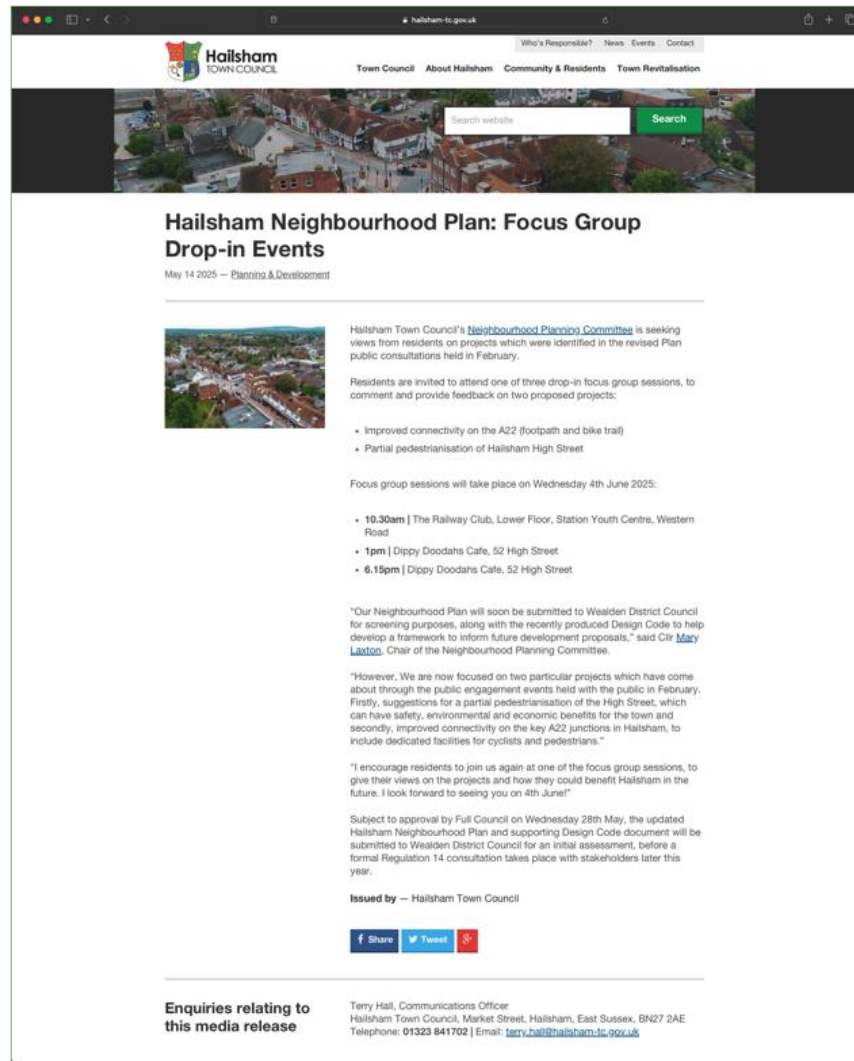


Figure 1: News item on Hailsham Town Council website



Figure 2: Advert prepared by Hailsham Town Council to publicise the events



Figure 3: Selection of social media posts advertising the consultation events




Hailsham
TOWN COUNCIL

Feedback form

Thank you for attending this session today. Please use this form to provide any ideas or comments you have and which can be used to inform the Hailsham Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code.

Please hand in before you leave today or, alternatively, return to the Town Council by Monday 8 June, 2025:

Hailsham Town Council, The Station Youth Centre (former Free Church Building), Western Road, Hailsham, BN27 3DG

Thank you!

Please add your comments, ideas and suggestions here

Which session did you attend?

Date: _____

Time: _____

What is your name? _____

If you would like to be kept informed of progress on the Neighbourhood Plan and Design Code, please provide your email address: _____

How old are you (please tick):

☐ Under 18
☐ 18-25
☐ 26-35
☐ 36-45
☐ 46-55
☐ 56-65
☐ Over 65

Your privacy is very important to us and we endeavour to ensure any information is handled accordingly. Please see our Privacy Policy on the Town Council website:
<https://www.hailsham-tc.gov.uk>

Figure 4: Feedback form

2. Feedback

Introduction

This section of the summary report presents the feedback received during the events. It is broken down into three sub-sections, which cover the three main topics discussed. Each is preceded by an overview of the points made when introducing the ideas for discussion.



Figure 5: Selected photos of consultation events – faces anonymised for privacy purposes

Community facilities

This part of the discussion was set in the context of earlier consultation feedback which indicated a strong desire for new and improved community facilities across Hailsham, but that more information was needed on what specific improvements are sought. The idea of developing an integrated community hub in the town centre was also discussed, bringing various facilities together in one modern, multi-functional building, and what views on this might be.

The feedback reflects a strong desire for more accessible, inclusive and affordable community spaces in Hailsham that serve a wide range of local needs. Some suggested that more use could be made of existing facilities, including the Old Station building, or repurposing underutilised or vacant buildings for community uses (such as former banks).

The Charles Hunt Centre was identified as an opportunity for improvement, where refurbishment and provision of new amenities (such as kitchen space, toilets and accessibility) could enable it to act as a central hub for a variety of uses and activities (including relocated activities from elsewhere in Hailsham, bringing them into a more accessible central location and which would help support the town centre by increasing

footfall in the town). Suggestions for new community offerings include a hall with performance space, a community garden, a tool-sharing library, and more youth-oriented amenities.

Affordability was a recurring concern in the feedback, with several comments noting that high hire costs are forcing clubs to close.

There was also a call for more diverse and essential services, including a local accident and emergency facility, a medical centre, and a more visible police presence.

Overall, the feedback emphasises the need for multi-use, affordable, and well-equipped community spaces that can support everything from arts and culture to health services and social inclusion.

Part-pedestrianisation of the High Street

This part of the discussion was set in the context of earlier consultation feedback during which many people had suggested that the High Street should be pedestrianised, with wider aspirations including the need to improve the attractiveness and quality of the High Street, making it a safer and cleaner place, improving conditions for pedestrians and supporting businesses.

The idea of part pedestrianisation was introduced, closing the High Street to vehicles during business hours and delivering a public realm scheme with multi-functional spaces that can be

used for different purposes throughout the day, with new green infrastructure provided as part of this. The introductory comments noted that it would require bus routing, servicing and taxi arrangements to be reconfigured, and consideration given to wider traffic impacts.

The feedback reveals a mix of enthusiasm and concern. Many respondents support the idea of partial or full pedestrianisation, especially during specific hours (e.g.: 10-4, 9-4 or 10-2), citing benefits such as reduced traffic, lower pollution, increased safety, and a more pleasant, green, and accessible environment. Respondents suggested that opportunities should be taken to add areas of greenery along the High Street, new areas of seating and other sensory features to enhance the space. Respondents suggested that part pedestrianisation could help revitalise the town centre, attract more footfall and support local businesses, especially if accompanied by a greater variety of shops and activities.

Some concerns were also raised. Key issues include the impact on bus routes and accessibility, particularly for disabled and elderly individuals, as well as the potential for increased anti-social behaviour and traffic displacement. Some fear that pedestrianisation could worsen the decline of retail if not carefully managed. Others also raised practical considerations around deliveries, shop maintenance, and the need for clearer street design to ensure safety when vehicles are allowed.

Overall, while the concept is broadly welcomed, successful implementation would require thoughtful planning, inclusive design, and ongoing consultation with stakeholders.

Improving access across/alongside the A22

This part of the discussion was set in the context of earlier consultation feedback which identified a need to improve the provision of and access to green space, promoting ‘active travel’, and supporting safe access for all ages and genders. It introduced the idea of the ‘Hailsham Country Line’: a walking and cycling route alongside the A22 linking various leisure, recreation and community facilities; where new facilities might be accommodated (e.g.: a BMX track or similar); and where new and improved crossings of the A22 would improve access to leisure facilities west of Hailsham (potentially making use of existing underpasses or providing new crossings).

The feedback on the A22 connectivity proposals is largely positive, with strong support for improving pedestrian and cycling access across and along the A22.

Many respondents were enthusiastic about reopening the existing tunnel under the A22, viewing it as a practical and cost-effective way to enhance connectivity. Making good use of existing infrastructure, such as clearing and reusing existing overgrown paths, is seen as a good idea. Others suggest that a bridge - or even multiple bridges - between key points like the

Cophall and Boship roundabouts would be more beneficial, especially given concerns about flooding and safety in tunnels.

The idea of a bike trail alongside the A22 was also particularly well-received, with several respondents highlighting its value for families and children. Equally, improved access to the Country Park is also seen as a major benefit.

However, a few respondents question the overall value of investing in footpath and bike trail improvements, suggesting that funds might be better spent on more direct crossing solutions.

Overall, the feedback reflects a strong desire for safer, more accessible, and family-friendly infrastructure, with a preference for practical and well-maintained solutions.

Other comments

Discussions at the consultation events strayed beyond the three main points outlined above and covered a variety of other concerns.

The feedback forms highlight a range of broader community concerns beyond the High Street, with a strong emphasis on infrastructure, transport, and public amenities. Some expressed frustration over the lack of supporting infrastructure that matched the pace of new housing developments, and others stressed the importance of

providing good bus services, particularly for older members of the community and those living on the outskirts of Hailsham.

Road safety and accessibility were also key themes raised, with feedback identifying a need for more drop kerbs, repairs to potholes, and provision of better-placed pedestrian crossings.

Other suggestions reflect a desire for a more welcoming and sustainable town environment. These include installing lighting along the Cuckoo Trail for safety, the need for community gardens and planting of more productive trees (such as fruit trees).

Concerns were expressed about anti-social behaviour and poor enforcement of parking rules, especially pavement parking.

It was also suggested that greenery could be integrated within existing car parks, additional spaces provided for disabled parking, and interpretation boards provided to support inclusion, assisting wayfinding for the elderly and those with disabilities.

3. Summary

The consultation events showed broad support for the main ideas discussed, albeit that some concern was expressed in response to these.

Based upon the feedback the following priorities have been identified:

A centrally located, inclusive community hub should be provided in Hailsham.

- **Why:** There is strong support for making better use of or repurposing existing buildings (e.g.: Charles Hunt Centre, the Old Station Building) into a multi-use community hub.
- **What to include:** Healthcare, affordable space for hire, youth and elderly services, performance and arts space, community kitchen, and accessible toilets.
- **Impact:** This would support social inclusion, revitalise underused spaces, and help meet diverse community needs.

A well-designed and considered partial pedestrianisation High Street scheme should be implemented.

- **Why:** There is broad support for pedestrianisation, but concerns about accessibility and impact on bus routes, parking and businesses.
- **What to do:** Partial pedestrianisation could be trialled in the first instance and then implemented during core hours (e.g.: 10–4) subject to consideration of the impacts and benefits of such a scheme.
- **Impact:** This could help create a safer, greener and more attractive town centre.

Connectivity across the A22 should be improved

- **Why:** There is good support for safer crossings and better access for cyclists and pedestrians.
- **What to do:** Reopen and maintain tunnels, and routes to these, and, if viable, explore delivery of new bridges across the A22.
- **Impact:** This would help connect communities with leisure and recreation facilities, support active travel, and improve safety.

Green infrastructure and public spaces should be enhanced

- **Why:** Respondents noted a need for more greenery, seating, and safe walking/cycling routes.
- **What to do:** Plant more trees and provide new public art; improve access to the Country Park; and maintain paths and trails (e.g.: Cuckoo Trail).
- **Impact:** This would contribute to wellbeing, encourage active travel, and enhances the town's visual appeal.

Public transport needs to be improved.

- **Why:** Respondents noted that many residents rely on buses, especially older people, but services are seen as inadequate.
- **What to do:** Enhance bus routes, timetables and waiting facilities, simplify the routing of the community bus services, and provide improved access to bus stops, including new pedestrian crossings.
- **Impact:** This would support increased mobility, reduce isolation, and improve access to the town centre and community facilities.

An artist's illustration visualising ideas for part pedestrianisation of the High Street is shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: An artist's illustration of a public realm improvement scheme involving the part pedestrianisation of the High Street, showing the introduction of new green infrastructure and use of materials that help define different spaces along the street to allow different use throughout the day, including areas of seating which could be utilised for parking outside the hours of pedestrianisation, and use of tactile or similar materials alongside the carriageway to help distinguish the area to be used for vehicular traffic when open to through-movement. The inset image shows the High Street as it is today.



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