

Alfriston

(Inset Map No. 2)

Introduction

19.1.1 Alfriston is a picturesque and historic Downland village situated in the Cuckmere Valley, three miles north-east of Seaford. As well as the more specialist shops catering mainly for tourists, the village is served by a range of other services which also meet the needs of local residents. The village has a thriving tourism economy but remains essentially residential in character. The current population is estimated at 700 persons.

19.1.2 The Council aims to secure a proper balance between the quality of life for the local community, the needs of visitors and the tourist industry, and the conservation of the historic character and appearance of the village.

Environment

19.1.3 Alfriston is set in a landscape of very high quality, lying within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Views east from the village are dominated by Windover Hill, while to the south the water meadows of the Cuckmere River comprise part of the Seaford to Beachy Head Site of Special Scientific Interest.

19.1.4 The historic core of Alfriston is located on the banks of the River Cuckmere, where the Parish Church overlooks a large village green known as The Tye. Within this area the Council propose to promote environmental improvements, including further tree planting. A significant number of listed buildings, mainly dating from the 17th and 18th Centuries, are grouped along the High Street, West Street and North Street, and the special architectural and historic character of this part of the village has been recognised by its designation as a Conservation Area. From here, more recent development extends westwards onto the edge of the Downs, comprising mainly two-storey detached houses.

Development Boundary

19.1.5 In order to protect the rural character and the outstanding landscape setting of Alfriston, it is important to resist further outward encroachment of development into the surrounding open countryside. The edge to development is clearly defined on the northern, western and south-western sides of the village by the rear curtilages of properties on North Road, The Broadway and Kings Ride. In some cases, the full depth is excluded in order to prevent undesirable backland development or outward expansion of the built form beyond the existing pattern

of settlement. Scattered dwellings beyond are excluded from the development boundary since they are located well outside the built-up confines of the village and further development would be detrimental to their more rural character and setting.

19.1.6 At the north-eastern edge of Alfriston, the development boundary includes the residential properties off West Street and Sloe Lane but excludes Sloe Cottage since it is considered that further development in this area would detract from the rural character of the northern approach to the village. The White Lodge Hotel is also excluded from the boundary in view of its open, exposed setting on rising ground at the edge of the village, where further intensification of development would be intrusive in views both within and across the Cuckmere Valley.

19.1.7 Further south, The Tye and adjacent open spaces are excluded from the development boundary in recognition of their important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of St Andrew's Church. The development boundary accordingly follows the rear curtilages of properties fronting the High Street. Further south, Dean's Place Hotel and the surrounding woodlands are excluded to conserve the attractive approach on this rural fringe of the village.

Housing

19.1.8 Housebuilding within the development boundary for the village may be appropriate, subject to satisfying normal planning requirements. The diverse, often low density character of development in the village provides limited opportunities for new housing development on undeveloped sites, by infilling, by the redevelopment of existing sites, and by the conversion of buildings to residential use.

Tourism

19.1.9 Alfriston attracts large numbers of visitors, particularly during the summer months, due to its historic character, attractive countryside setting, the location of a number of popular tourist attractions within the village and its proximity to other well-known tourist attractions and resorts. Tourism now makes an important contribution to the local economy in terms of providing employment and generating income, and helps to support both local services and the conservation of historic buildings. However, the growing number of visitors has also led to problems of overcrowding, particularly in the High Street, and traffic congestion around the centre of the village during peak holiday periods. Also, the large numbers

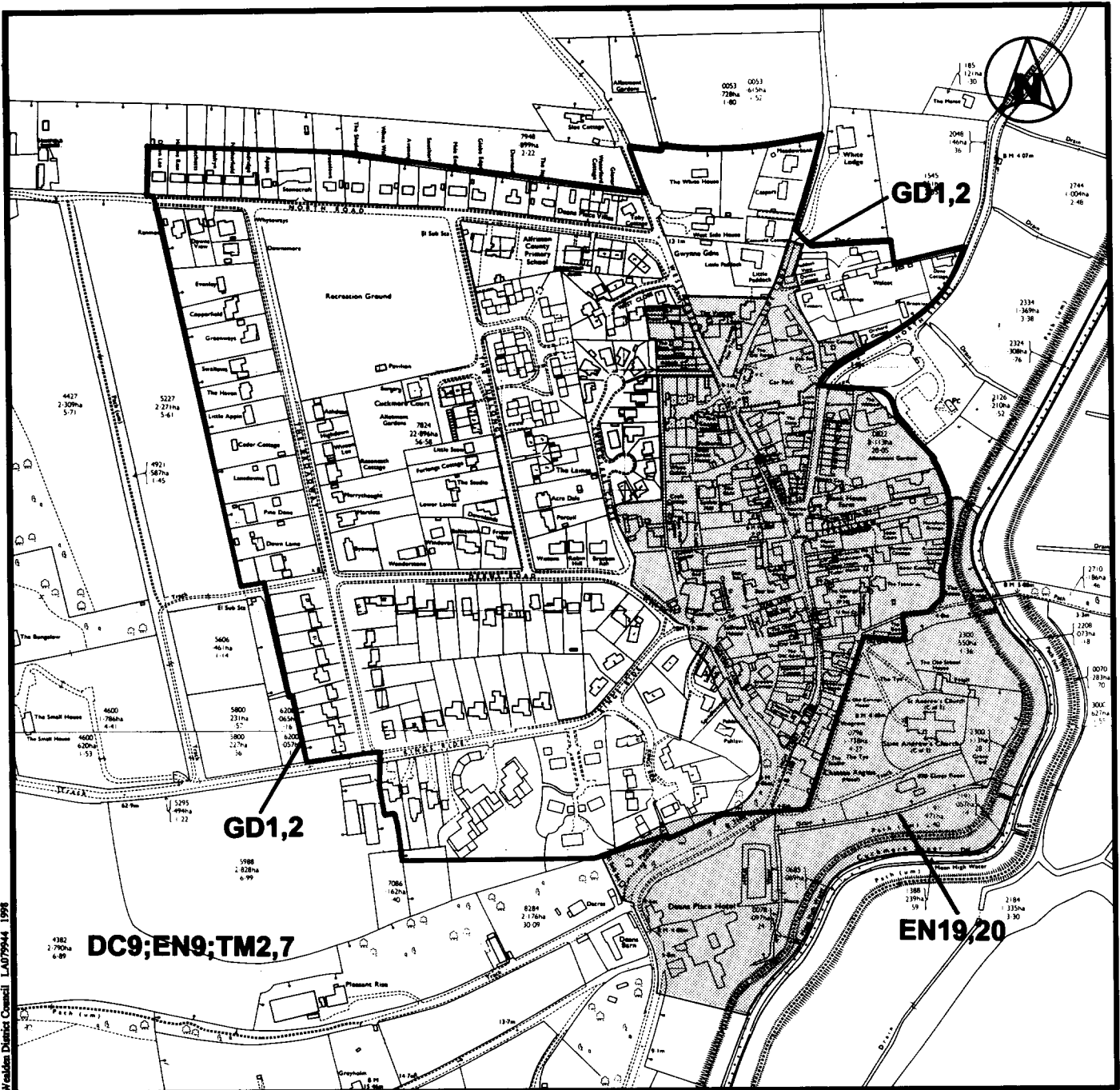
of seasonal visitors does occasionally tend to overwhelm the resident community.

19.1.10 Alfriston is approached by a C Class road. Through the village this is inadequate for the level and type of traffic it now carries and the resultant congestion at peak times causes disruption to local residents, a hazard to pedestrians and cyclists, and damage to walls and verges. Coach access is a particular problem in the centre of the village where the narrow, winding streets are unsuitable for very large vehicles.

19.1.11 Unfortunately there are no simple solutions for dealing with the impact of this traffic, since environmental considerations preclude the possibility of bypassing the village or widening the existing road, and its closure to through traffic is not considered to be a feasible option. Other traffic management measures have been examined previously, but not implemented either for operational or environmental reasons; however, the provision of a further car park in the village continues to remain under review.

19.1.12 The increasing number of visitors to Alfriston has inevitably led to pressure for new developments and there is concern locally about the effect on the character of the village. Visitors are primarily attracted to Alfriston by its historic and architectural quality rather than the commercial facilities available and there is no real evidence that such facilities, by themselves, attract more visitors or contribute towards congestion in the village. Further tourist-related developments will be assessed against other policies in the Plan. In this context, they would normally be small-scale and contained within the existing commercial core of the village.

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KEY

- Inset Map boundary
- Development boundary
- Conservation Area



Proposals Map

The whole of this Inset Map is within the Sussex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Plan wide policies are listed on the main Proposals Map.

