

Ninfield Neighbourhood Development Plan

Results of Survey Questionnaire – March-April 2021

This Parish-wide survey was carried out in March and April 2021 with a paper copy of the questionnaire for every adult on the electoral roll distributed to households. Residents were encouraged to complete the on-line version (Survey Monkey) where possible to ease the subsequent data analysis workload. In all 347 responses were received. The responses to the questions set were as follows:

Q.1 Where in Ninfield Parish do you live? (342 responses):

- 85% Ninfield village
- 8% Lunsford Cross
- 3% Russell's Green
- 4% other

Q.2 Please indicate your age (345):

- 50% over 65
- 35% 45-64
- 13% 25-44
- 2% 18-24

Q.3 How long have you lived in Ninfield Parish? (304)

- 24.4% (74) 1-5 years
- 23.4% (71) 6-10 years
- 15.4% (47) 11-20 years
- 24.0% (73) 21-40 years
- 8.9% (27) 41-60 years
- 3.9% (12) over 60 years

Q.4 Do you own or rent your home? (343)

- 90% own
- 5% rent
- 5% neither

Q.5 How many bedrooms are there? (328)

- 0.9% (3) one bedroom
- 20.1% (66) two bedrooms
- 40.0% (131) three bedrooms
- 25.6% (84) four bedrooms
- 13.4% (44) five or six bedrooms

Q.6 Who lives in your household? (343 replies, not mutually exclusive):

- 69% with one other adult
- 20% 2 or more other adults
- 18% with children under 18 (7% with one child, 9% two children, 2% three children)
- 10% live alone
- 2% single parent

Q.7 What is your work-related status? (346 responses, not mutually exclusive):

- 52% retired
- 28% employed
- 18% self-employed
- 4% part-time worker
- 1% student
- 3% other

Q.8 How far do you travel in your daily life? (337 responses):

For Work (204):

- 36% under 1 mile
- 31% 6-20 miles
- 18% 1-5 miles

- 17% over 20 miles

For School (119);

- 66% under 1 mile
- 25% 1-5 miles
- 8% 6-20 miles
- 3% over 20 miles

For Shopping (310):

- 58% 1-5 miles
- 50% 6-20 miles
- 5% under 1 mile
- 5% over 20 miles

For Leisure (258):

- 53% 6-20 miles
- 42% 1-5 miles
- 14% over 20 miles
- 14% under 1 mile

For Sport (186):

- 42% 1-5 miles
- 31% under 1 mile
- 30% 6-20 miles
- 9% over 20 miles

For Entertainment (223):

- 60% 6-20 miles
- 30% 1-5 miles
- 22% over 20 miles
- 14% less than 1 mile

Q.9 How do you mainly travel to work? (195):

- 67% by car
- 19% work from home
- 6% walk
- 6% by train
- 2% by bus
- 1% cycle

Q.10 What changes would make it easier to get to work? (254, not mutually exclusive):

- 28% Improved pavements/footpaths
- 23% More frequent buses
- 19% Dedicated cyclepaths
- 16% Better network of paths
- 9% More bus destinations
- 6% Express buses
- Other comments include better maintained roads, earlier and later buses and additional bus stops

Q.11 Do your children attend Ninfield Primary School?

- Ninfield Primary School (30)
-

Q.12 Do your children travel outside the Parish for primary school?

- Catsfield Primary School (4)
- Crowhurst Primary School (2)
- Gildredge House School, Eastbourne (1)

Q.13 If your children attend secondary school, please tell us which one(s)

- Claverham Community College, Battle (27)

- Battle Abbey School (4)
- Bexhill College (2)
- Judd Grammar School, Tonbridge (3)

There are single responses each for Tonbridge Grammar School for Girls, Eastbourne College and Heathfield Community College.

Q.14 What mode of transport do you use for different activities? (340):-

For Shopping (336):

- 99% car
- 15% walk
- 6% bus/public transport
- 2% cycle; 1% motorcycle

For Leisure (287):

- 92% car
- 29% walk
- 6% bus/public transport
- 5% cycle; 2% motorcycle

For Sport (194):

- 92% car
- 29% walk
- 6% bus/public transport
- 5% cycle; 2% motorcycle

For Entertainment (273):

- 99% car
- 11% walk
- 6% bus/public transport
- 2% cycle; <1% motorcycle

For Secondary School (47):

- 51% car
- 49% bus/public transport

For Primary School (52):

- 50% walk
- 46% car
- <1% bus/public transport

For College (30):

- 70% car
- 30% bus/public transport

Q.15 What do you like about living in Ninfield Parish? (tick up to 3) (347):

- 89% countryside
- 72% village atmosphere
- 66% green spaces
- 54% sense of community
- 23% close to family and friends
- 11% accessibility
- 8% close to work
- 7% other reasons including tranquillity, views, dark night skies, spacious gardens.

Q.16 What could be improved and how? (198)

Numerous comments submitted, the most common ones being:

- effective action to safeguard rural environment of village and village atmosphere.
- less new housing so that it mainly meets local needs, not District targets.
- effective measures to reduce traffic speeds both in and outside village.
- make provision for cycling.
- better road and footway maintenance including surfacing and hedge cutting.

- improved footpaths both in village and to access countryside.
- improvements to recreational facilities and meeting places.

Other comments include expand bus services including in evenings and Sundays, provide cheaper small homes for younger people in parish, more bungalows for elderly residents in parish to downsize, more variety of shops, improved doctors surgery, better maintenance of village generally (in past it won best kept village competition), more tree planting, community orchard, provide car parking for school and recreation ground to alleviate parking congestion in Church Lane area, provide cycle and footway links to Sidley/ Bexhill, make bridleway provision.

Q.17 How would you like Ninfield Parish described in 20 years time? (tick up to 3)
(346):

- 79% rural
- 67% safe
- 63% friendly
- 38% tranquil
- 37% traditional
- 25% unchanged
- 20% affordable
- 11% prosperous
- 5% vibrant
- 4% other (those mentioned including progressive and welcoming especially to younger generation; promoting rural community values; and a village not an urban sprawl)

Q.18 Within the past 5 years has anyone in your household had to move away or stay living with you due to lack of alternative housing in Ninfield parish? (342):-

- 93% NO (318)
- 7% YES (24)

Q.19 If you answered YES to Q.18, please tick the reasons that apply (not mutually exclusive):-

- 29 available housing too expensive
- 9 available housing too large
- 6 transport issues
- 2 lack of sheltered/supported housing
- 1 lack of local work

Q.20 What sort of new housing do you want to see built in Ninfield? (tick all that apply)
(333):-

- 44% starter homes
- 40% smaller homes (1 or 2 bedroom)
- 38% family homes
- 31% elderly adapted homes
- 30% bungalows
- 19% disability adapted homes
- 18% homes for rent
- 18% no more homes
- 12% residential care
- 11% shared ownership
- 5% flats
- 2% park homes

Q.21 If new housing takes place what style do you prefer? (tick all that apply) (336 responses):-

- 70% traditional style
- 60% eco/sustainable
- 34% bungalows
- 32% detached
- 31% semi-detached
- 14% one-off design
- 10% terraced
- 4% large executive
- 13% various other responses including in keeping in size and design; affordable; good mixture; community self-build

Q.22 Do you have any concerns about further development in Ninfield Parish? (tick all that apply) (349):

- 90% loss of countryside
- 89% increased traffic
- 84% loss of village identity
- 82% impact on GP surgery
- 72% loss of farmland
- 69% impact on views
- 69% parking problems
- 68% unsafe for pedestrians
- 66% lack of school places
- 61% clash with existing character
- 8% other reasons
- 2% not worried

Q.23 Where do you think any new development should be sited in Ninfield in the next 15 years? (tick all that apply) (336 responses):-

- 58% on brownfield sites
- 54% only within the development boundary
- 21% by conversion of farmbuildings
- 13% by increasing the density of existing built areas
- 1.5% on greenfield sites

Q.24 What size of housing developments do you think would be most appropriate in Ninfield Parish? (tick all that apply) (342):-

- 55% Less than 10 dwellings
- 50% Individual houses
- 27% No additional dwellings
- 15% Medium estates (10-30 dwellings)
- 1% Large estates (over 30 dwellings)

Q.25 Are there any sites you think are suitable for new housing development in Ninfield Parish? (315):

- 73% NO (230)
- 24% YES (76) - with the following sites mentioned:
 - Crouch Field, Bexhill Road (16)
 - Gladwish scrubland, Catsfield Road (15)
 - Surplus land at Reservoir/Water Tower site, High Street (11)
 - Ingrams Farm, Bexhill Road (9)
 - Carwash/ 5 Oak Business site, Bexhill Road (5)
 - Land rear of Manchester Road (3)
 - Telephone Exchange, Manchester Road (3)
 - Kings Arms, The Green (3)
 - Thorne Oast, Ninfield Road or other ex-farmbuildings for conversion (3)

Petrol Station, Bexhill Road (2)
 Land rear of 5 Oak site (east) of Bexhill Road (2)
 Single responses for Lunsford Cross (Potmans Lane or Ninfield Road);
 Skinners Sheds, Ninfield Road; Land adjoining Church Path; Lower Standard Hill.

Q.26 Are there any areas of land you think should be protected from development? (317):

- 8% NO (25)
- 90% YES (284) (if yes, where are they?) The areas mentioned for protection are:
 All farmland, woods and countryside in the parish (82)
 Land adjoining Church Path and to east, west and north of Church Wood (78)
 Land rear of Manchester Road (35)
 All land surrounding the village (32)
 Church Wood (27)
 Crouch/ 20 acre Field, Bexhill Road (14)
 Recreation Ground (12)
 Others mentioned are Combe Woods; land at Moons Hill/ Marlpits Lane; rear of The Green; adjoining Catsfield Road; Potmans Lane; Hooe Road; and Ingrams Farm

Q.27 There is increasing pressure on burial space at the cemetery, is this important to you? (334):

- 72% NO (242)
- 27% YES (89) - if yes, suggest new site:
 - Church Fields (47)

Q.28 How important is it that new development, including extensions, are sympathetic to the following? (tick all that apply) (344):

Very Important or Important:

- 93% the scale of surrounding buildings
- 93% the character and positioning of surrounding buildings
- 91% the open space character of the Parish and its High Weald setting
- 88% the design of surrounding buildings
- 87% sustainable design eg. solar power, water harvesting, well insulated
- 82% the materials of surrounding buildings

Q.29 Would you like to see any land used for purposes other than housing? (320):

- 51% NO (164)
- 46% YES (148) if yes, what for? The following are mentioned:
 Natural land for wildlife, tree planting, etc (30)
 Farming (22)
 Community food growing, allotments, orchard, etc (18)
 Recreational open space (20) and sports facilities (12); play park (10)
 Employment such as small business units (13)
 Small shops (7) such as butchers, bakers, greengrocers, café
 New multi-purpose public hall (6)
 New or enlarged primary school with adequate car parking (5)
 New or enlarged GP surgery and pharmacy with adequate car parking (5)
 Renewable energy generation using solar or wind power (5)
 Residential care home (2)

Q.30 Should new businesses be encouraged in Ninfield Parish? (336):

- 42% Yes
- 38% Don't mind
- 20% No

Q.31 What new sort of business do you want to see? (65)

- Small shops such as butchers, bakers, hairdressers, farmshop (49)
- Small workshop or office type businesses appropriate to a rural area (45)
- Café/ tearoom (17)
- Arts and crafts (8)
- Childcare (4)
- Small supermarket with car park (3)
- Health and fitness (3)
- Others mentioned include dentist; and residential home

Q32. Are there any non-residential sites in the Parish that you want to see protected from development? (318):

- 86% GP surgery
- 78% Public house
- 57% Working Mens Club
- 48% Garage
- 26% Car wash
- 6% Village shop/PO
- 5% Recreation Ground
- 3% Memorial Hall

Others mentioned are Reading Room; primary school; churches; churchyard; and allotments.

Q.33 Do you run a business in Ninfield Parish? (339):

- 87% NO
- 13% YES (45) - the main ones being farming (5); health/ fitness (5); gardening (3); various professions including consultancies; teaching and childcare; property management and repairs; small-scale crafts; online or IT-related businesses; etc

Q.34 How could the operation of your business be improved? (21)

The following were mostly mentioned:

- Improved internet and mobile phone services (4)
- Improved parking and less traffic on roads (4)
- Small shop unit or store/workshop available to rent (4)

Q.35 Do any of the following traffic issues affect you directly? (tick all that apply) (347):

Major problem:

- 73% traffic speed
- 58% traffic volumes
- 44% traffic noise

Q.36 Are you concerned with any other road safety issues? Please indicate location and problem (232)

Speeding traffic mainly on A269 but also on B roads and side lanes (67)

Manchester Road inadequate to cope with expected traffic from new housing estate, most of it lacking a footway (28)

Zebra crossing on A269 by Blacksmiths Inn is dangerously close to bend (24)

Church Lane lacks a footway and is inadequate for amount of school traffic (23)

Poor maintenance of roads and footways, with potholes and overgrown hedges (23)

Lack of footways on main roads outside village (17) and inadequate footway widths in village including on A269 (6)

HGVs too large for narrow roads, including main roads as well as lanes (12)

Parking on footways and verges, notably at Stocks Meadow and by GP Surgery (11)

Hooe Road B2095 is dangerous and particularly unsuitable for diversion of traffic when accidents occur on A259 or A269 (7)

Lack of crossings on A269 for pedestrians such as at Lunsford Cross (2); by Memorial Hall (1); Lower Street (1); and by Recreation Ground (1)

Lack of street lighting (3)

Q.37 Which of the following measures do you think might improve road safety? (tick all that apply) (330):

- 67% traffic calming
- 55% speed indicators
- 52% more pavements
- 32% cycle ways
- 30% more signage
- 20% other measures suggested including speed cameras (5%); reduce speed

limits including to 20mph on some roads (4%); widen footways (1.5%); speed humps (1.5%) and police enforcement (1.5%)

Q.38 Is car parking a problem for you? (342):

- 84% NO

- 16% YES main reasons cited being inconsiderate or congested on-street parking including on footways and verges (13); parking congestion in Church Lane/ Downsview caused by parents with schoolchildren or using recreation ground (12); limited or no parking space on their property (10) and insufficient availability of on-street parking; and insufficient space in GP surgery car park (3) and at village shop/PO (3).

Q.39 Much of the land in the Parish is graded for agricultural use and is subject to pressure for change. Do you wish there to be policies that control its development? (339):

- Conversion of agricultural buildings to housing 74% Yes
- Different use of the land eg. stables, tourism 59% Yes
- Different use of farmbuildings eg. small businesses 53% Yes
- Diversification to specialised agricultural use 51% Yes

Q.40 How important to you are the following features of the landscape? (345):

- Woodland 99% very important
- Trees in the landscape 98% very important
- Public footpaths 94% very important
- Hedgerows 93% very important
- Watercourses 87% very important

Q.41 Are there specific areas of land that you especially value as Local Green Space for their intrinsic beauty, tranquillity, views, wildlife, historic significance or recreational benefit? (321):

- 13% NO
- 83% YES - if yes, which areas (263):
 - Church Wood 48%
 - Church Fields 30%
 - Recreation Ground 28%
 - Moons Hill/Marlpits Lane/Coombe Lane 28%
 - Combe Wood 12%
 - All surrounding countryside 12%
 - Crouch Field 5%
 - Moor Hall Drive fields 5%
 - Sprays/Hurst Woods Circular path 4%

Q.42 How often do you (or you children) use the following facilities in Ninfield? (tick all that apply, including those temporarily closed) (347):

Once a week or more:

- 68% Village store
- 67% public footpaths
- 41% Recreation Ground
- 39% Church Wood
- 31% Combe Wood
- 18% Garage
- 17% Halls (Memorial, Methodist, Reading Room)
- 16% Playground
- 16% Garage convenience store
- 13% Blacksmiths Inn
- 11% GP surgery
- 10% Churches
- 8% Working Mens Club
- 4% Bowls Club
- 4% Sparkes Pavilion
- 3% King Arms
- 2% Five Oak Country Store
- 2% Car Wash

Q.43 Do you support the use of sustainable energy on either a domestic or large-scale basis in Ninfield Parish? (tick any that apply) (325):

- Rainwater harvesting 78% support for domestic; 30% for large scale
- Solar power 70% for domestic; 20% for large scale
- Air or Ground source heatpumps 65% for domestic; 17% large scale
- Battery storage 47% for domestic; 18% large scale
- Biomass schemes 36% for domestic; 18% large scale
- Wind turbines 33% for domestic; 18% large scale

Q.44 Is reliable broadband access and fast speed important to you? (339):

- 89% Yes
- 11% No

Q.45 Is local mobile phone signal a problem for you? (334):

- 60% No
- 40% Yes

Q.46 Which other utilities do you use and do you experience problems with any? (341):

- Electricity 99% (4% with problem)
- Mains water supply 98% (3% with problem)
- Mains drainage 87% (4% with problem)
- Oil 55% (1% with problem)
- Bottled gas or tank 21% (9% with problem)
- Mains gas 6% (19% with problem)

Q.47 Do you think there is a need for more allotments in Ninfield Parish? (292):

- 50% NO
- 47% YES with the following sites mentioned:
 - Adjoining Church Path (22)
 - Rear of Manchester Road (5)
 - Crouch Field (20 acre Field), Bexhill Road (3)

Q.48 Do you belong to any clubs or societies in the village? (indicate which ones):

- YES (119) the main ones being:
 - Working Mens Club (36)
 - Horticulture Group (27)
 - History Group (25)
 - Keep Fit, yoga, etc (18)
 - Village Society (16)
 - Bowls Club (11)
 - Art Society (10)
 - Book Exchange/café (10)
 - Scouts (9)
 - Dancing (9)
 - Flower Group (8)
 - Carnival Association (7)
 - Bonfire Society (6)

Q.49 Is there a need for additional clubs or societies and if so tell us what you would like to see

- YES (60) the main suggestions being:
 - Youth club with activities for teenagers (16)
 - Sports club with range of sports for all ages (14)
 - Social/ Community hub for all including those with disabilities (4)
 - Arts and Crafts venue (4)
 - Womens Institute (3)

Others mentioned include drama, choir, wine, cookery, photography, repair shop, community patrol group.

Q.50 Any other comments about Neighbourhood Plan? (82)

The majority of these comments relate not so much to the NNDP but to the need for an up-to-date sustainable Local Plan for Wealden District which pays sufficient regard to the views of people at the local level and the need to protect the character of its rural villages and their settings. They mostly cite misguided planning by WDC resulting in overdevelopment of Ninfield with large and unsuitable housing estates, over-ruling local considerations on the basis of District housing targets aimed at regional housing needs. They refer to loss of rural character, loss of village identity and loss of cohesion as a community. Other comments relate mainly to transport and traffic-related issues including danger and nuisance. A need for housing and facilities for local younger people is mentioned by a smaller number.