

Planning Policies



are specific to the local context.

have said that one of the attractions was the appeal of living and working in a beautiful landscape setting. The landscape is already nationally protected through its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and so this

neighbourhood plan adds careful new layers of protection that

50

# **Policy LP1**

# Views Between Village & Countryside

DEVELOPERS SHOULD
DEMONSTRATE THAT THEIR
PROPOSALS WILL NOT HAVE
AN UNACCEPTABLE ADVERSE
VISUAL IMPACT ON THE
LANDSCAPE SETTING OF THE
VILLAGE OR VIEWS OF KEY
LANDMARKS.

Principal plan objectives supported

1 Character
5 Protection

# **Policy Justification**

8.2 There is a strong relationship between the built elements of Hawkhurst parish and its landscape setting. At various points in and around the village, there are clear lines of sight out to open countryside and back again from open countryside towards the village. These are typical High Weald landscape views.

8.3 This experience is enhanced through the elevated location of Highgate, sitting on a topographical ridge, running in an east-west direction. This locally distinctive context provides a sense of identity and a particular character to Hawkhurst.

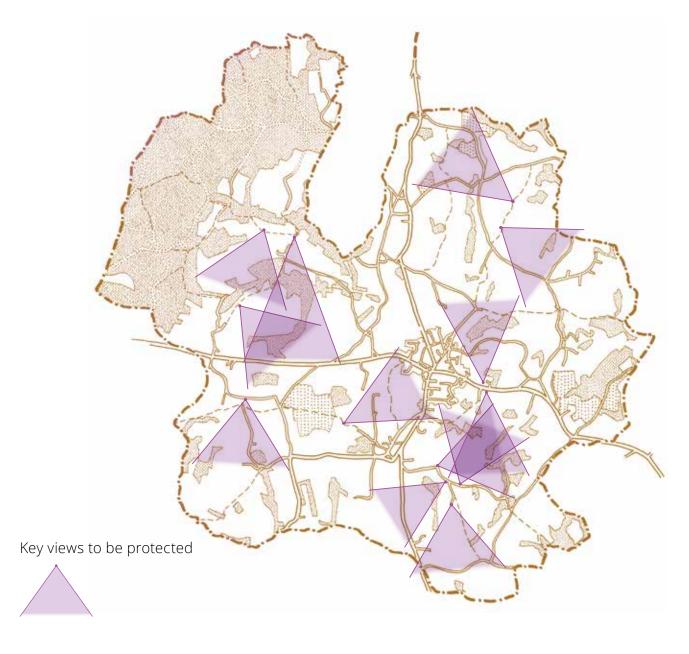
8.4 Planning applications will need to demonstrate how development proposals do not cause adverse visual impact on the landscape setting of the parish.



Looking north towards Highgate. A good example of the strong relationship between the surrounding landscape and the built elements of Hawkhurst parish.

# Summary plan of the principal views to be protected through Policy LP1

8.5 The diagram below was created during the community engagement phases of the neighbourhood plan process. It depicts the views that local people feel are most special and worthy of protection. This diagram was then used to help formulate Policy LPI (page 51) that requires developers to demonstrate that their proposals will not have an unacceptable adverse visual impact on the landscape setting of the village or views of key landmarks. Please note, the diagram below is indicative only and should not be considered detailed or accurate regarding the extent or scope of the individual views shown.



# **Policy LP2**

# **Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

THE MANAGEMENT,
CONSERVATION AND
ENHANCEMENT OF THE
HIGH WEALD AONB IS
ENCOURAGED MAKING
USE OF THE FOLLOWING
DOCUMENTS OR THEIR
REPLACEMENTS:

- 1) THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY ACT (CROW), 2000.
- 2) THE HIGH WEALD AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2014—2019.
- 3) LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT & CAPACITY STUDY (TWBC, 2009).

Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 5 Protection
- 7 Change

# Policy Justification

8.6 All of the parish lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) This is a very special landscape, one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. It is home to ancient woodland, wildlife and villages and its characterised by sweeping views and a series of interconnecting paths and tracks where residents and visitors alike can get close to nature and enjoy peace and tranquillity.

8.7 The High Weald AONB Management Plan (3rd Edition) 2014 — 2019 is the single most important document for the AONB. It sets out long term objectives for conserving this nationally important landscape and the local authorities' ambitions for how the High Weald will be looked after for the next five years.

8.8 This management plan has been formally adopted by the relevant local authorities as their policy for the management of the AONB and how they carry out their functions in relation to it. It provides a means by which all public bodies can judge, and be judged, on their duty to have regard to conservation of the AONB, and it provides a guide for residents, businesses and visitors on the actions they can take to help safeguard this special area.

8.9 This neighbourhood plan aims to support the local agriculture and forestry industries. This includes facilities needed such as agriculture buildings and yard space. To support the local wood fuel industry, new residential development should include a working chimney except where it can be demonstrated it is not feasible or practical on smaller properties.

# **Policy LP3**

# **Designated Green Spaces**

THE AREAS SHOWN ON THE MAPS ON PAGE 55 ARE **DESIGNATED AS LOCAL** GREEN SPACE. PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THESE AREAS WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED WHERE IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE ARE VERY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES (SUCH AS ESSENTIAL UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE) THAT **JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR** THE DEVELOPMENT AND THERE ARE NO SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE SITES.

Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 5 Protection
- 7 Change

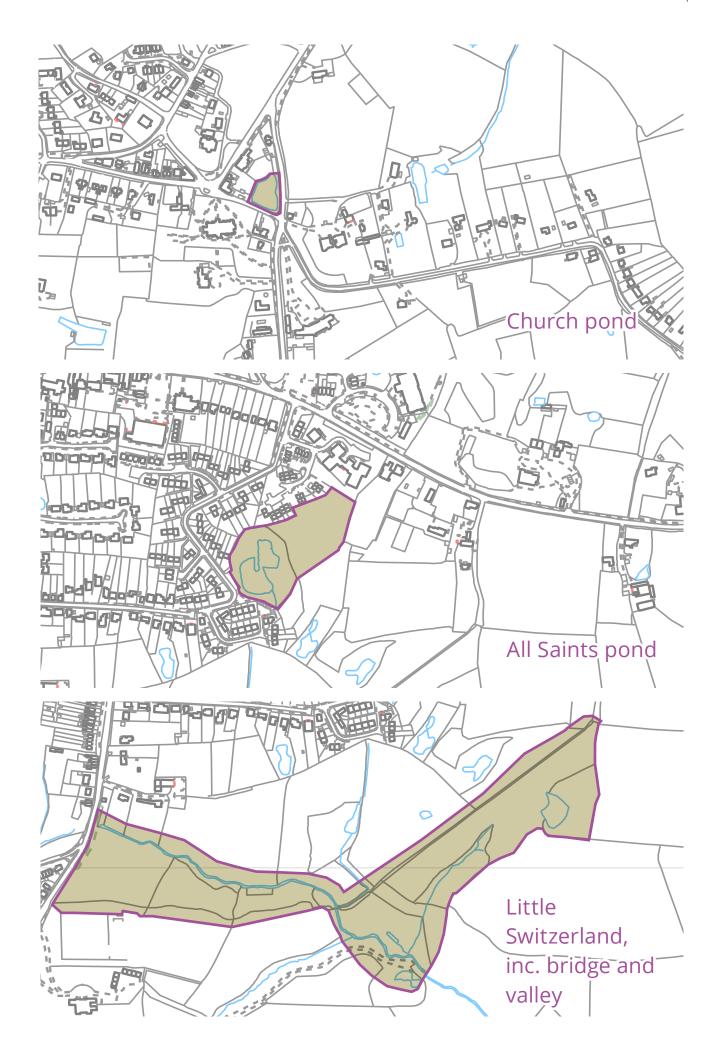
# Policy Justification

8.10 Good planning and design requires an integration of the landscape features with the built form. A local green network of landscape infrastructure has been identified across the parish to be protected and enhanced. This will not only continue to provide the village with its rural character and identity but will also provide recreational opportunities for residents and support biodiversity. Blue infrastructure, in the form of ponds, lakes and watercourses will also be integrated into this network.

8.11 Areas of green space have been identified as part of this network. These will be designated as "Local Green Spaces" in the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

8.12 The neighbourhood plan has identified on three maps (page 55) the green areas suitable for this special protection. The designation of these local green spaces is consistent with local planning for sustainable development.

8.13 The consultation work to date has shown that the Moor enjoys significant areas of green open space while Highgate appears to lack small, accessible green space for enjoyment by the public. This means that any development sites in and around Highgate will need to provide sufficient green space to help redress this balance. Opportunities for pocket parks, street trees and enhanced landscape planting must be explored and offered as part of all development proposals across the village.





9.1 A principal concern for residents, as expressed through the consultation work, was the issue of access and movement with particular regard to the negative impact traffic congestion has at the Highgate crossroads. This policy theme has therefore been developed with this specific issue in mind but has been widened to create a balanced mix of initiatives that will make moving around Hawkhurst parish a more pleasant, efficient and sustainable experience.

# **Highgate Hill Junction**

1) IMPROVEMENTS TO
THE HIGHGATE HILL A229
— A268 CROSSROADS
WILL BE SOUGHT TO
EASE TRAFFIC FLOW AND
IMPROVE CONDITIONS
FOR PEDESTRIANS AND
CYCLISTS AND TO ENHANCE
THE CHARACTER AND
ENVIRONMENT OF THE
VILLAGE CENTRE

# **Policy Justification**

9.2 The crossroads marks a historic location within the parish and provides a distinct identity to Highgate and Hawkhurst as a whole. The attractive Colonnade, the Royal Oak pub — with its set back location, framing the war memorial and the trees — together with numerous other heritage buildings all combine to provide an attractive village scene.

9.3 However, the levels of traffic currently using the crossroads, especially HGVs, combined with the relative narrowness of the carriageway can lead to congestion and tailbacks at any time. Improvements are therefore sought at the crossroads area to help ease traffic flows, improve air quality and reduce the frequency and severity of tailbacks.

9.4 These improvements could involve the removal of the traffic lights to be replaced by a circulatory system or unmarked crossroads. A roundabout concept design was developed, but it has been demonstrated that this is not an option to be taken forward. Any improvements may also allow for the widening and/or realignment of the footpaths and footways, a better setting for the war memorial monument, additional tree-planting and a general removal of street signage and clutter to create a simple but unified space that creates a new civic heart at the centre of the village. The crossroads is about more than just moving cars across and through the village; it marks an historic place and is part of the rural fabric of Hawkhurst.

9.5 This special character will need to be maintained and enhanced through the design interventions. A careful and considerate design must help deliver a better village scene, an enhanced sense of place and create more sustainable travel patterns.

9.6 The concept design (see Appendix 03) is included in this version of the neighbourhood plan as illustrative material only and in support of Policy AM1. It has been demonstrated that the concept design is not an option to be taken forward.



# Improve the Pedestrian Environment

- 1) IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS & FOOTWAYS THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE TO ENSURE THEY ARE SAFE, CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE WILL BE SUPPORTED.
- 2) FOOTPATH WIDENING AND RESURFACING WHERE NECESSARY WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

Principal plan objectives supported

1 Character 7 Change
3 Choice 8 Infrastructure
4 Efficiency
5 Protection

# Policy Justification

9.7 The network of the existing footpaths and footways throughout Hawkhurst does not always allow for safe and convenient access.

9.8 In many places, they are too narrow to be used comfortably. There is also a need to address the perceived threat to pedestrian safety that results from narrow pavements, the passage of HGVs and the associated issue of air pollution.

9.9 To encourage more people to walk, the existing and future footpaths around the village need to be generous, well-surfaced, safe and well-connected. In the centre of the village, particularly around the crossroads, many existing footpaths could be widened to make walking more comfortable. The dominance of vehicle movement is further emphasised by narrow footpaths that do not allow convenient access around the village and these need to be widened, where appropriate, to give greater priority to pedestrians.

9.10 With space for long-stay car parking limited within the historic part of the village, especially around the Colonnade, the Royal Oak and the library, an increase in the numbers of people walking for short trips rather than using the car would go some way to ease the pressure on car parking.

# **Countryside Access**

- 1) IMPROVED ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE IMMEDIATELY SURROUNDING THE BUILT PARTS OF THE PARISH WILL BE SUPPORTED.
- 2) INITIATIVES SUCH AS
  BETTER SIGNAGE, MAPPING
  RESOURCES AND BETTER
  MAINTAINED SURFACES AND
  GATES ON FOOTPATHS WILL
  BE ENCOURAGED.



# Policy Justification

9.11 In the event that development occurs on the edges of the village, the interface between the countryside and new development needs to be designed in ways that will provide a sense of enclosure to the village and prevent unchecked sprawl. New housing clusters also need to be of the right scale and in the right location, should not obstruct valued rural views and not be large anonymous housing estates.

9.12 Any new village edges must also encourage public access to the countryside beyond the village. A new north — south green link may be able to connect to the disused Hop Pickers railway line in the future and other links out from the parish may connect with nearby national trials, such as the Sussex Border Path. A task group is currently exploring these possibilities.

9.13 Many residents value living close to some of the most attractive countryside in England but easy access can be frustrated through blocked footpaths or private ownerships. Therefore, the introduction of new access routes around the new edges of Hawkhurst as part of new developments will be one way to ensure new village edges have a sense of permanence and will reassure village residents that growth will not continue ever outwards.

9.14 The new footpath map is already on public display and individual route cards are being prepared. Work has started on improving the network.

# Walking & Cycling Strategies

1) THE CREATION OF A SERIES OF ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET ROUTES THAT ARE SAFE, CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE FOR CYCLING AND WALKING WILL BE SUPPORTED.

2) THE CREATION OF
A SHARED NETWORK
SUITABLE FOR SAFE CYCLING
AND WALKING WILL BE
ENCOURAGED BETWEEN
THE MAIN AREAS OF
COMMERCIAL AND SOCIAL
ACTIVITY IN HAWKHURST
AND RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

# **Policy Justification**

9.15 The creation of streets that are safe for cycling and walking will encourage healthy active lifestyles for all ages. In certain areas, segregated or dedicated cycling infrastructure may be required, for example, at key junctions. These measures should help raise the level of utility cycling (e.g. riding to work, the shops or to school). Good quality cycle infrastructure will give cyclists the space they need to ride safely on the roads and keep pavement space for pedestrians.

9.16 Facilities intended to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists must be built to high standards and draw upon best practice.

9.17 Meanwhile, Hawkhurst is surrounded by attractive open green space and areas. The creation of off-street recreational routes will enhance existing access and connections between the built-up parts of the village and the green spaces beyond. These routes need to be convenient, accessible and enjoyable. Often called "green routes", they should be primarily for safe and easy walking, linking up the main parts of the village. Such off-road routes through the countryside can often be safely and successfully shared between walkers and cyclists. Regular access to green open space has a significant positive impact upon an individual's mental health and access to the countryside setting of Hawkhurst parish can be promoted through the delivery of wellconnected accessible routes.

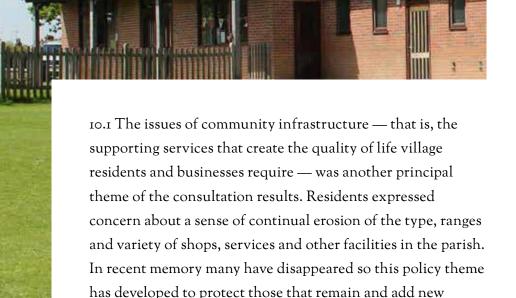
9.18 New housing needs to consider the storage and parking of a number of bicycles in a household and consider the growing market for "e-bikes" (electric motor-assisted bicycles) that may make cycling in a hilly setting, such as Hawkhurst, more attractive, to more people, more often. The cycle parking standards for residential areas are set out in Kent County Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking Standards.







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services to meet identified demand.

10.2 With regard to sports provision, the parish currently has two areas dedicated to sports provision, at Heartenoak and at The Moor. The process of engagement used to develop the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan highlighted the need for enhanced sports and recreational facilities in the parish and the site at The Moor, in the southern part of the parish, was deemed most appropriate for further investment.

# **Sports Provision**

1) EXISTING SPORTS
FACILITIES AT THE MOOR
WILL BE MAINTAINED,
ENHANCED AND EXPANDED
TO ENSURE THIS REMAINS
THE PARISH'S PRIMARY
CENTRE FOR SPORTS AND
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

2) THE CREATION OF AN IMPROVED, EXTENDED SPORTS PAVILION, TOGETHER WITH UPGRADED AREAS OF SPORTS PITCHES, WILL BE SUPPORTED, SUBJECT TO MEETING THE DESIGN CRITERIA SET IN POLICY HD4



Preferred location for new sports provision.

# Policy Justification

10.3 The site at The Moor has the capacity to accommodate new sports facilities for current and future parish populations with access to wide, open sports pitches. The sports facilities here currently include two football pitches and a tennis court. The football pitches are wellused but both in need of improved drainage. The tennis court is noticeably under-used due to the existence of a local private tennis club. The current sports pavilion has inadequate changing facilites for visiting teams, referees, male/female separation and safeguarding of children. Replacement of the tennis court with a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is planned to provide for a greater variety of sports. A sports strategy is to be developed by Hawkhurst Parish Council.

Io.4 Through the planning obligations linked to future development in the parish, an appropriate level of funding will be directed towards the sports and recreation facilities to ensure it will meet the needs of a growing parish. These funds may be matched with grants from national agencies, sports federations, national governing bodies and fund-raising from the parish council and other partners. Investment in facilities at The Moor must be complementary to investment in a new community hall, to be located within the village heart.



# **New Community Hall**

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING COMMUNITY HALL WITH A LARGER, IMPROVED FACILITY WILL BE SUPPORTED.

# Policy Justification

10.5 Hawkhurst currently has no community hall suitable for use by the wider population of the parish. The Copt Hall has provided sterling service over recent years but is now considered too small for many events, is hampered by a lack of suitable parking and is not suitable for further investment.

10.6 The majority feeling amongst residents through the consultation to date was that a location for a new community hall needed to be found in or around the Highgate area of the parish with sufficient parking a priority.

10.7 An area of search in this location will try to ensure that the hall is within walking distance of the existing heart of the village, allowing further linked trips between existing community facilities. A community facility will form a key component of the cluster of facilities that comprise the village heart and a site in this location would allow relatively easy access by the wider community.

10.8 The preferred location was All Saints Church. However, this is no longer an option due to planning permission for conversion to 5 dwellings being granted.

10.9 Investment in a new centrally-sited community hall must be complementary to sports-led investment at the Moor.

### **New Medical Centre**

THE REPLACEMENT OF THE EXISTING GP PRACTICES
WITH A SINGLE, LARGER
PRACTICE WITH ADDITIONAL
MEDICAL FACILITIES AND
SUPPORT FACILITIES (OR
HEALTH CENTRE) WILL BE
SUPPORTED.

Principal plan objectives supported

8 Infrastructure

- 2 Coordination
  - Loordination
- 4 Efficiency
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change

# Policy Justification

Io.Io The process of engagement used to develop the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan highlighted a strong desire to retain medical and health provision within the parish. While the precise location for health services in the future was less clear, there was an express wish they remain within Hawkhurst to avoid the need for residents to travel outside the parish area to access such services.

10.11 The medical provision in Hawkhurst parish currently comprises two GP practice sites and a small cottage hospital. All provide an excellent service and are valued and appreciated by the community.

10.12 The two existing GP practices wish to combine into a single, larger practice with additional facilities.

10.13 The majority feeling amongst residents through the consultation to date was that an accessible, consolidated location for health care is now required. Access to the GP practice rooms is becoming increasingly difficult for an ageing population due to the heritage nature of the buildings (e.g. steps up to the front doors, small consulting rooms etc).

10.14 A project has been initiated by the GPs to locate and build a new health centre within the parish. Hawkhurst Parish Council is monitoring this initiative to ensure that parishioners needs continue to be met.

# Protection of Community Services and Employment Land

1) EXISTING EMPLOYMENT, RETAIL AND ANCILLARY FACILITIES IN THE PARISH WILL BE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED DURING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PERIOD.

2) CHANGES OF USE IN
THE PRIMARY SHOPPING
AREA WILL BE RESISTED IN
SUPPORT OF POLICY CR12 OF
THE LOCAL PLAN 2006 (OR
ITS REPLACEMENT).

# **Policy Justification**

10.15 The existing range of shops and services in and around the Highgate crossroads needs to have a safe, secure and sustainable future. This healthy mix of services is a key part of the charm and appeal of living in Hawkhurst.

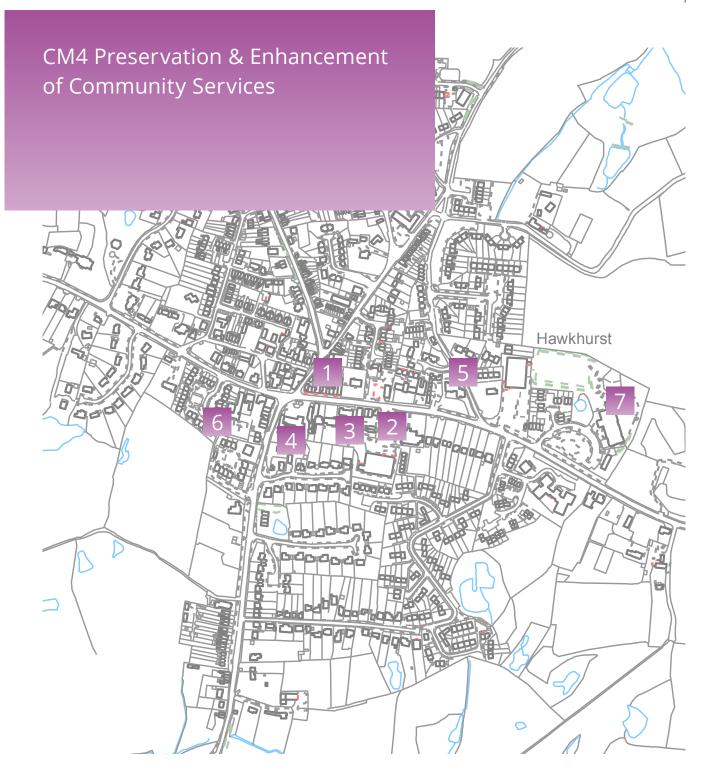
10.16 The existing range of shops and services in Highgate are to be protected and enhanced. As the historic heart of the village, this area has been identified by residents as an important commercial area both now and into the future. The neighbourhood plan supports continued investment in local retail and associated services in this location.

10.17 As this area is well-connected to existing residential areas, it must provide high quality and convenient shops and services to a local catchment as well as to a wider catchment from further afield who will require car parking.

10.18 The key community assets to be safeguarded are shown on the map on page 67.

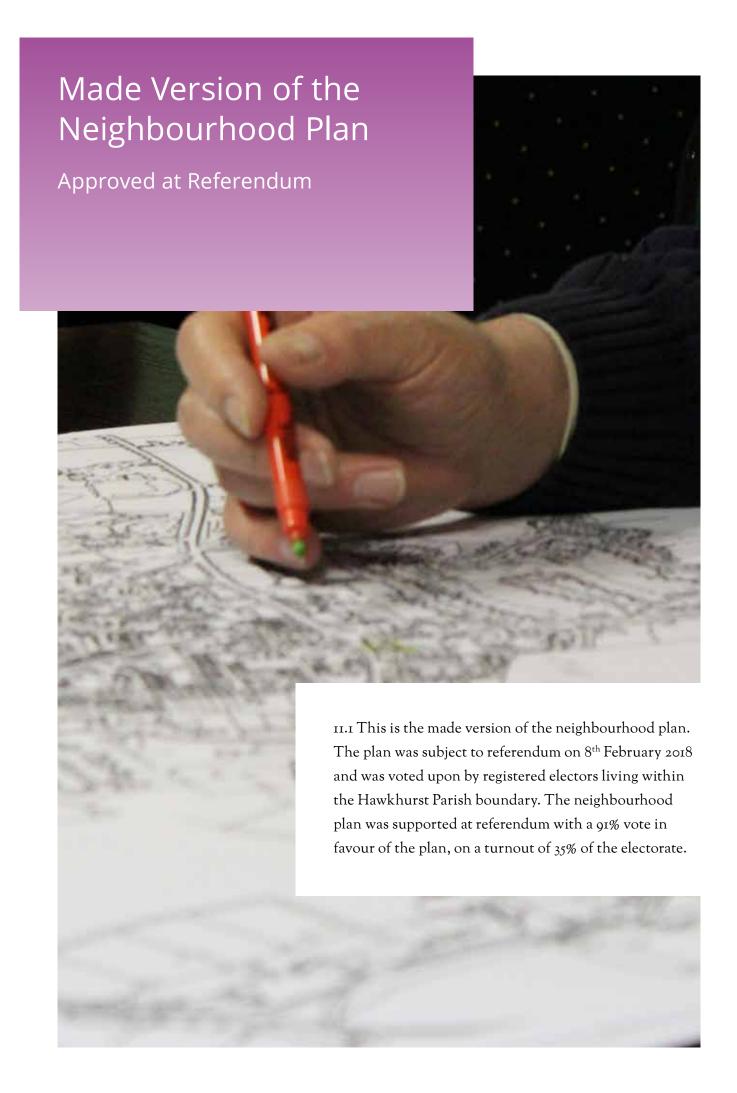
10.19 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has identified Gills Green as an employment hub and there is support in the village for reasonable expansion. Therefore, the development of an employment hub at Gills Green, building on the strength and success of existing businesses in that part of the parish, will be encouraged.





The following community assets are safeguarded by Policy CM4

1 The Colonnade; 2 The Library; 3 The Kino Cinema (Victoria Hall); 4 The Royal Oak Hotel; 5 The Queens Inn; 6 Royal British Legion Club; 7 Hawkhurst Church of England Primary School.



# Further information

II.2 Hawkhurst Parish Council contact for further information:

Richard Griffiths, Clerk to the Parish Council, The Office At The Moor, The Moor, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 4NT.

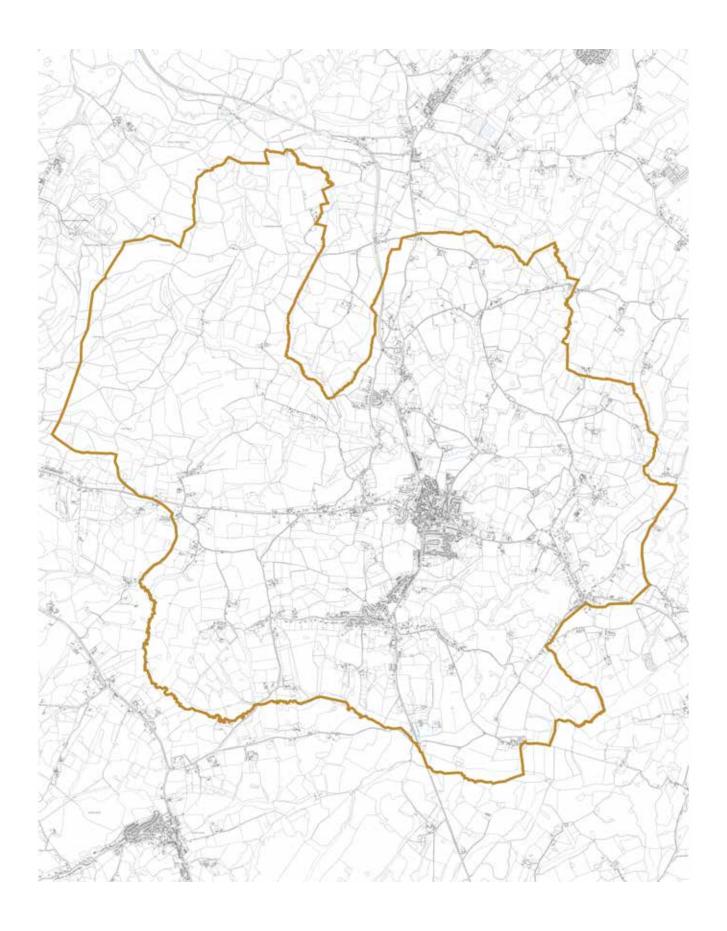
- --- 01580 752058
- hawkhurstpc@btinternet.com
- https://hawkhurst-pc.gov.uk

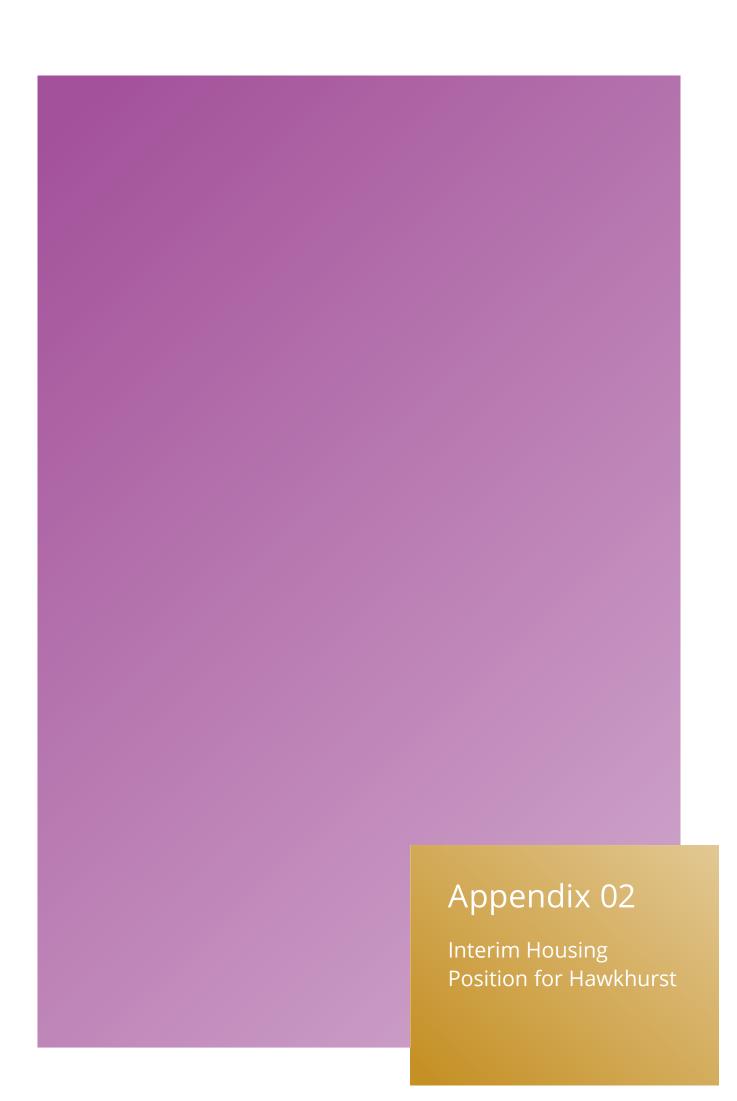
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council contact for further information:

Planning Policy, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TNI 1RS.

- **—** 01892 554056
- planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
- www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk

# Appendix 01 Boundary for the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan





# Interim Housing Position

The following sites in Hawkhurst have been granted planning permission since March 2019:

Brook House, Cranbrook Road 25 dwellings 1 dwelling Tubslake Oast, Water Lane 28 dwellings Land to the east of Heartenoak 1 dwelling Weald Society for the Disabled, Ockley Road 9 dwellings Land north of Santer House, Red Oak 1 dwelling The Hexagon, Oakfield 5 dwellings All Saints Church, Rye Road 1 dwelling St Bridget's, Rye Road The White House 43 dwellings St Cuthberts Lodge, Stream Lane 1 dwelling Copt Hall, Copthall Avenue 3 dwellings



