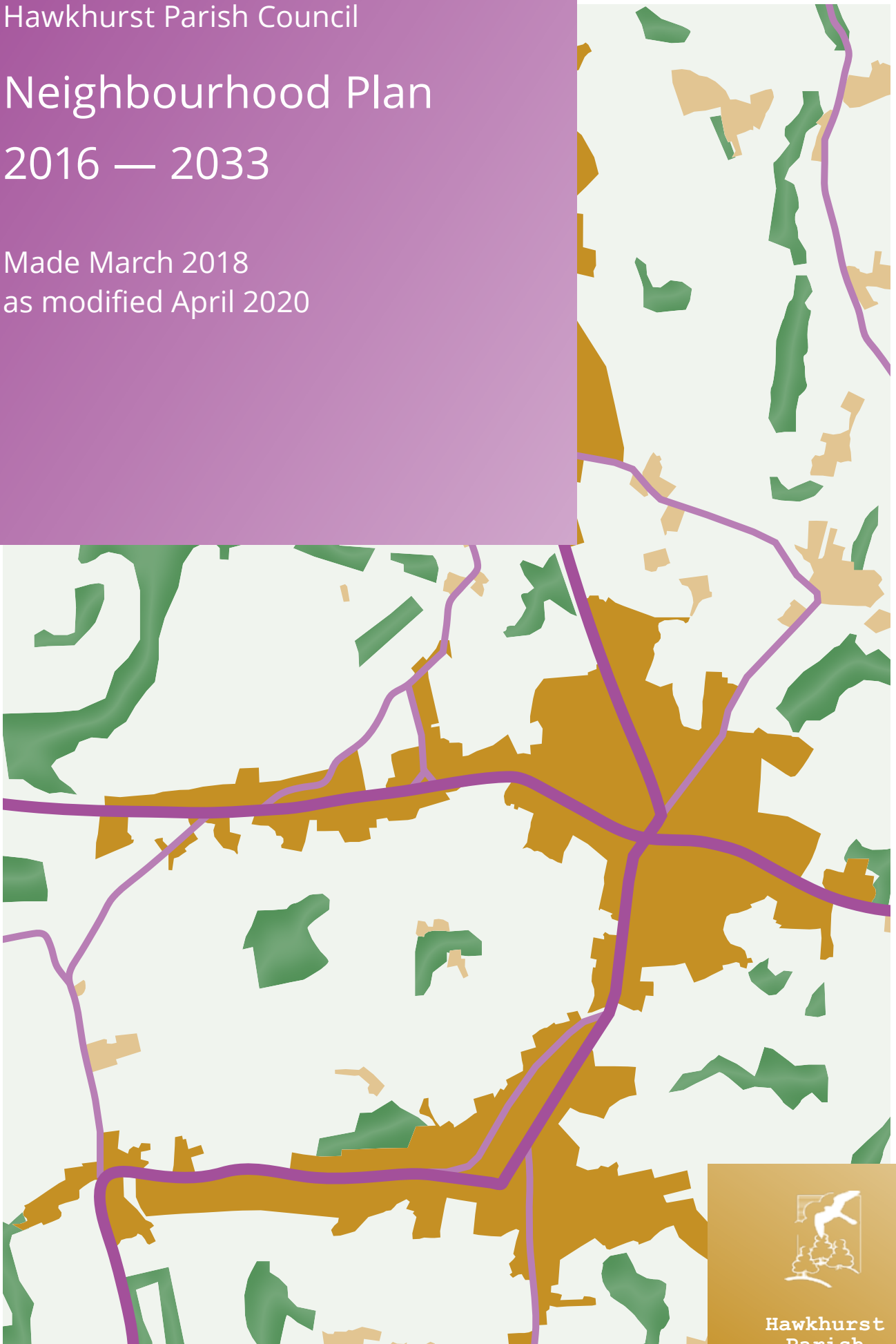


Hawkhurst Parish Council

# Neighbourhood Plan

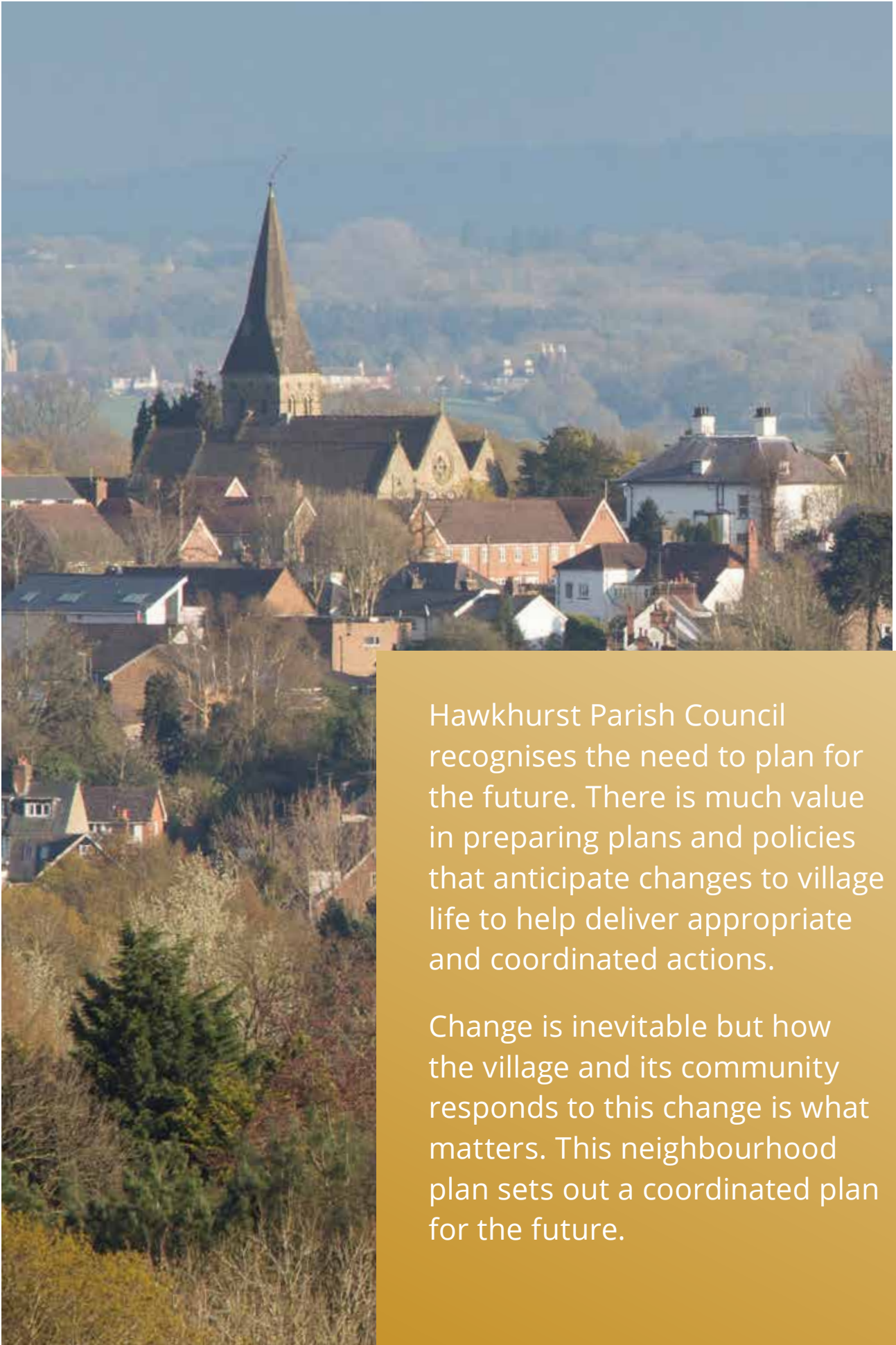
2016 — 2033

Made March 2018  
as modified April 2020



Hawkhurst  
Parish  
Council





Hawkhurst Parish Council recognises the need to plan for the future. There is much value in preparing plans and policies that anticipate changes to village life to help deliver appropriate and coordinated actions.

Change is inevitable but how the village and its community responds to this change is what matters. This neighbourhood plan sets out a coordinated plan for the future.



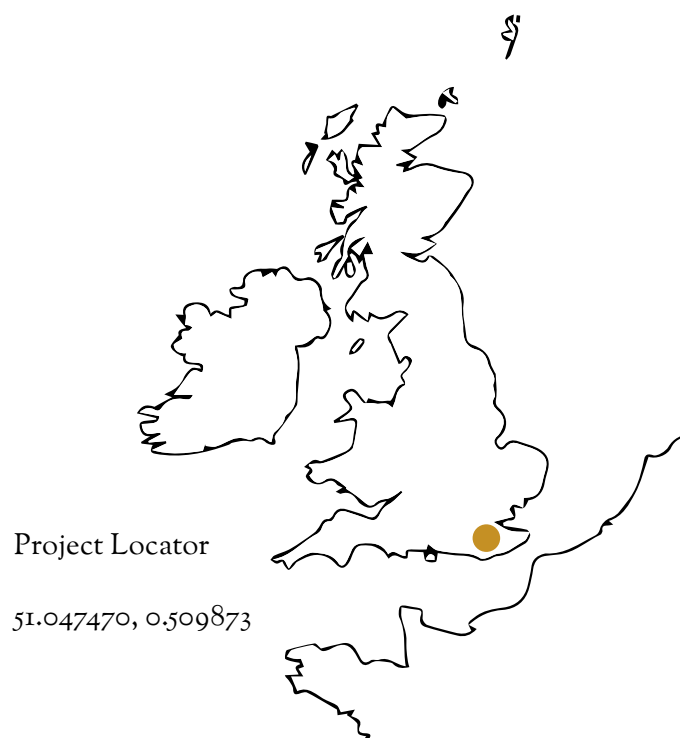
Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

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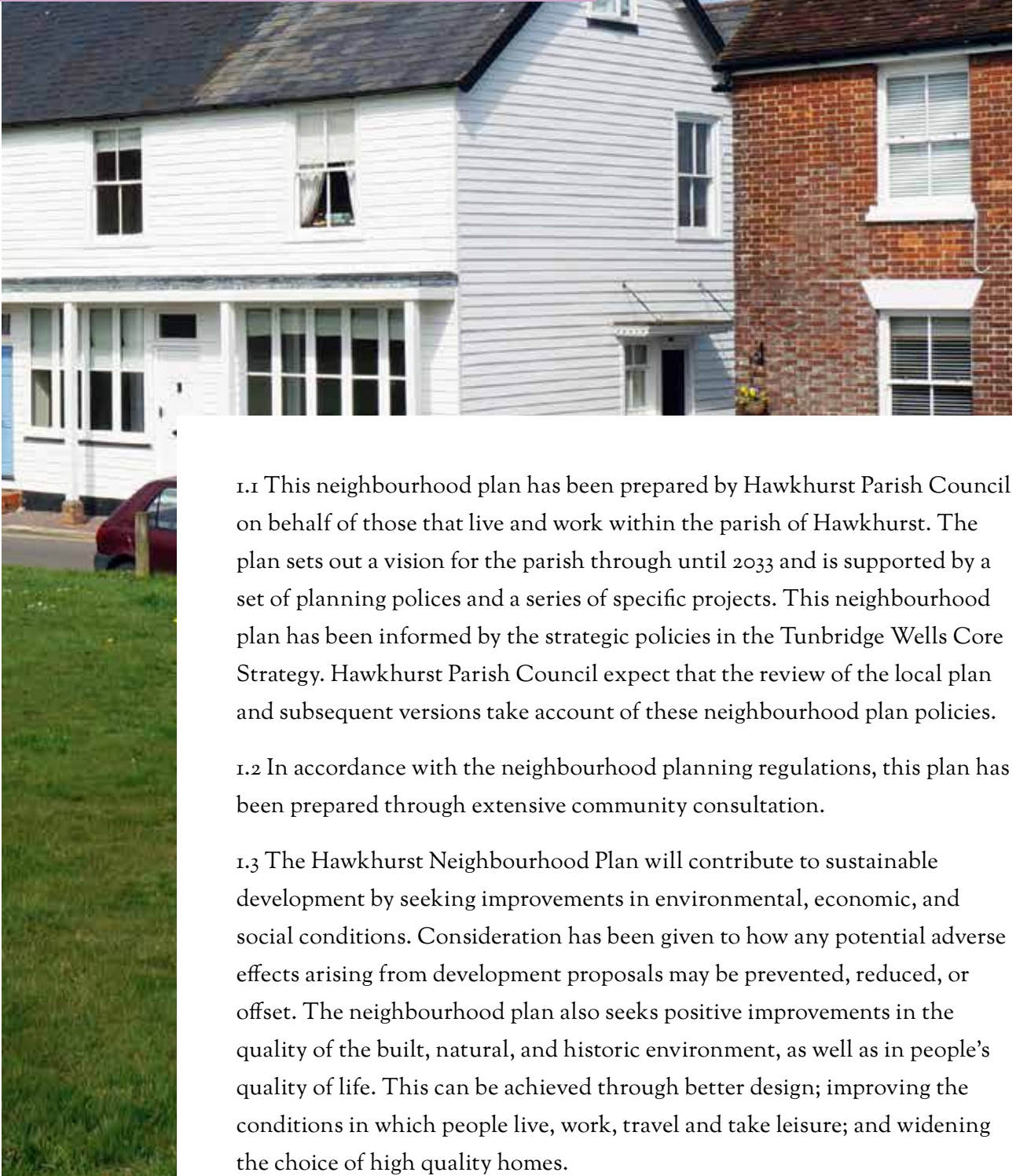


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# Background

How was the neighbourhood plan developed?



1.1 This neighbourhood plan has been prepared by Hawkhurst Parish Council on behalf of those that live and work within the parish of Hawkhurst. The plan sets out a vision for the parish through until 2033 and is supported by a set of planning polices and a series of specific projects. This neighbourhood plan has been informed by the strategic policies in the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy. Hawkhurst Parish Council expect that the review of the local plan and subsequent versions take account of these neighbourhood plan policies.

1.2 In accordance with the neighbourhood planning regulations, this plan has been prepared through extensive community consultation.

1.3 The Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to sustainable development by seeking improvements in environmental, economic, and social conditions. Consideration has been given to how any potential adverse effects arising from development proposals may be prevented, reduced, or offset. The neighbourhood plan also seeks positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural, and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life. This can be achieved through better design; improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and widening the choice of high quality homes.

## Neighbourhood planning

1.4 Neighbourhood planning is a community-led process introduced by Government to encourage local people to shape and influence development within the places where they live and work. They are produced by community forum groups or parish or town councils.

1.5 Neighbourhood plans are policy-based community-led plans which correspond to the statutory Local Plan. In this case, the Local Plan is prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

1.6 Neighbourhood plans can influence or allocate new housing; produce design policies for allocated sites or for general design policies; protect or identify new community facilities; and identify green spaces to be protected from any future development proposals and more.

1.7 The Government introduced the opportunity for local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Localism Act 2011 and through new regulations Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which sets out the requirements for Neighbourhood Plans.

1.8 In Hawkhurst, the preparation of the neighbourhood plan is being led by the Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee (NDPC) of Hawkhurst Parish Council. There has been an open dialogue with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to ensure these planning policies conform with national and local policy, as required by the neighbourhood plan regulations.

## Legal requirements

1.9 Neighbourhood plans must meet some legal requirements as specified by law: they must have appropriate regard to national policy; must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development; must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; must be compatible with human rights requirements and; must be compatible with EU obligations.

## Developing a shared vision

1.10 Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood (para. 29 of the National Planning Policy Framework).

1.11 Therefore, each stage of the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan process to date has sought to extend the amount of common ground between all sections of the community, narrowing down various options through a transparent and open process.

1.12 At all stages, the neighbourhood planning process has allowed room for dissent and minority views but the overall aim of the process has been to build a broad-based consensus to underpin the plan.

1.13 This process has allowed a set of objectives for the neighbourhood plan to be developed with a supporting vision statement and a series of planning policies. These were approved by referendum on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and voted upon by registered electors living within the Hawkhurst Parish boundary. The plan was supported at referendum with a 91% vote in favour on a turnout of 35% of the electorate.

## Preparation timetable

1.14 Work on the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan began in April 2014 when the designated boundary for the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan was approved by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The boundary of the plan area is shown on page 13 and in Appendix 01.

1.15 Since early 2015, the NDPC has been supported in its work by Feria Urbanism, a professional design and planning practice. The process began in early 2015 with site visits by the consultant team in January, February and April. These visits were followed by several key events to engage the community:

— Visioning Event held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2015 examined the critical issues in some detail;

— Three-Day Design Forum held on 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015. This was a design-led exercise that examined how change can be accommodated, designed and planned;

— Evening Meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 to inform local residents of the work so far, the contents of the Interim Report and to introduce the emerging policy themes.

— The publication of an Interim Report in July 2015 was a key milestone. This captured the consultation work to date, in particular the full results of the Visioning Event and the Three-Day Design Forum. The report also set out four emerging policy themes. Comments on these policy themes were sought through an online and offline questionnaire during the remainder of July and August.

— Poster Exhibition held on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015 to inform local residents of the responses made to the Interim Report via a questionnaire over the summer months.

— A further poster exhibition and a series of slideshow presentations on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015. This was used to explain a draft planning policy structure, a vision statement and a set of plan objectives. These aspects had been developed from the earlier consultation results.

— Through a further online and offline questionnaire in November and December, the views of the community and the local planning authority were sought on the draft work.

— All these community responses were used to formulate the pre-submission draft of the plan. This version of the plan was subject to its formal six week pre-submission consultation between 26<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

— A public exhibition and drop-in event was held in the parish on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to encourage participation in the pre-submission consultation process.

1.16 The comments received during the pre-submission period were used to inform the submission plan (July 2016). Following receipt of the first examination report (January 2017) a series of amendments were enabled to inform the made version of the plan.

1.17 The made version of the plan has been updated with minor modifications to reflect the changes in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and changes in circumstances within Hawkhurst.

1.18 Hawkhurst's NDP will be kept updated with minor amendments as necessary, with a detailed policy review once the new Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is further advanced.

# Hawkhurst Today

## The village, its origins, context and setting

### Strategic location

2.1 Situated on the west Kent and East Sussex border, Hawkhurst is an ancient Wealden village and one of the largest in Kent. It lies in the centre of the High Weald, a stretch of important landscape character that has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

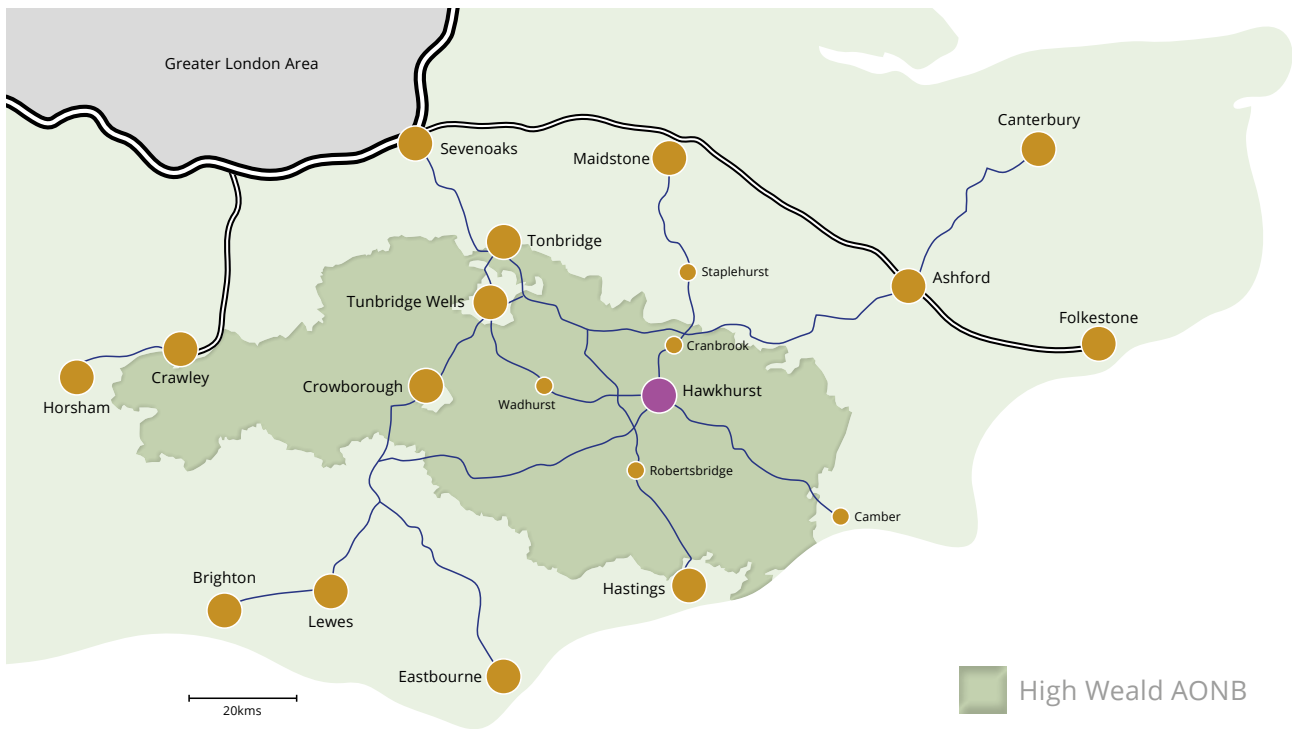
2.2 To the east of Hawkhurst parish lie the parishes of Sandhurst and Benenden; to the north Cranbrook parish and to the north west, Goudhurst parish. To the west and south west lie the parishes of Ticehurst, Etchingham, Salehurst and Bodiam, all outside Kent and within the county of East Sussex. The nearest large towns are Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge to the north, Ashford to the east and Hastings to the south.

### Historic origins

2.3 Hawkhurst takes its modern name from the ancient “Hauekherst” meaning the wooded hawk hill. The village is situated on three ridges running parallel from east to west and the individual settlements of Hawkhurst (now known as The Moor), Highgate, Gills Green, Four Throws, Sawyers Green and Philpotts Cross were established on well-drained ground.

2.4 Over time these settlements have grown together to become known under the wider name of Hawkhurst. The settlement of Highgate developed around a junction that linked the important drovers route between the important Cinque Port of Rye on the south coast and London with other local routes. Many settlements grew up around strategically important crossroads such as this and these historic settlement origins are still evident today at the Highgate crossroads, now a busy traffic junction. Human occupation has been evident since the middle Bronze Age.





*Hawkhurst regional context map*

## Hawkhurst today

2.5 The 2011 Census gives a population for Hawkhurst of 4,911, living in 1,997 households. Of a working age population aged 16 – 74, in Hawkhurst 72% were found to be economically active. The main area of public life and activity today is in and around Highgate. It is here where a range of shops and local services can be found including two small supermarkets, a series of independent shops, two pubs (that were formerly coaching inns), a digital cinema (located in Victoria Hall) and three cafes.

2.6 Many of these shops and services are located in the Colonnade, an historic row of weather-boarded canopied shops on the north eastern side of the crossroads. There is also All Saints Church, now sadly derelict. Designed by renowned architect George Gilbert-Scott, the church sits high on the Highgate ridge, its spire visible from some distance.



The main area of activity in and around Highgate, where a range of shops and local services can be found.



## Local landmarks

2.7 As well as the Colonnade and All Saints at Highgate, another significant local landmark is the church of St Laurence at The Moor that was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century on earlier foundations. The Moor itself is a village green, partly surrounded by weather-boarded houses, a former Victorian school and a pub. The parish council also has its office at The Moor. The overall composition is of a very attractive, typical Kentish village scene.

## Designated heritage assets

2.8 There are four designated Conservation areas in Hawkhurst parish — one at Sawyers Green, two in Highgate (Highgate and at All Saints Church) and one at The Moor. There are also over 200 Listed Buildings across the parish. The neighbourhood plan acknowledges and supports both the Conservation areas and the Listed Buildings but rather than duplicate this issue in the neighbourhood the plan it is considered that these issues are best given priority at local authority level.



A significant local landmark is the church of St Laurence at The Moor that was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Century on earlier foundations.

## AONB & rural structure

2.9 The parish structure comprises three distinct settlements, each wrapped in a distinctive Wealden landscape. Hawkhurst has evolved with single or small groups of houses in mixed yet complimentary styles. More recent additions of larger groups of properties are not considered to blend effectively with the existing built area. This structure is unpacked in a series of diagrams (pages 20 — 21) that demonstrate how the parish “works” and how it can be protected in the future.



Hawkhurst has evolved with single or small groups of houses in mixed yet complimentary styles.

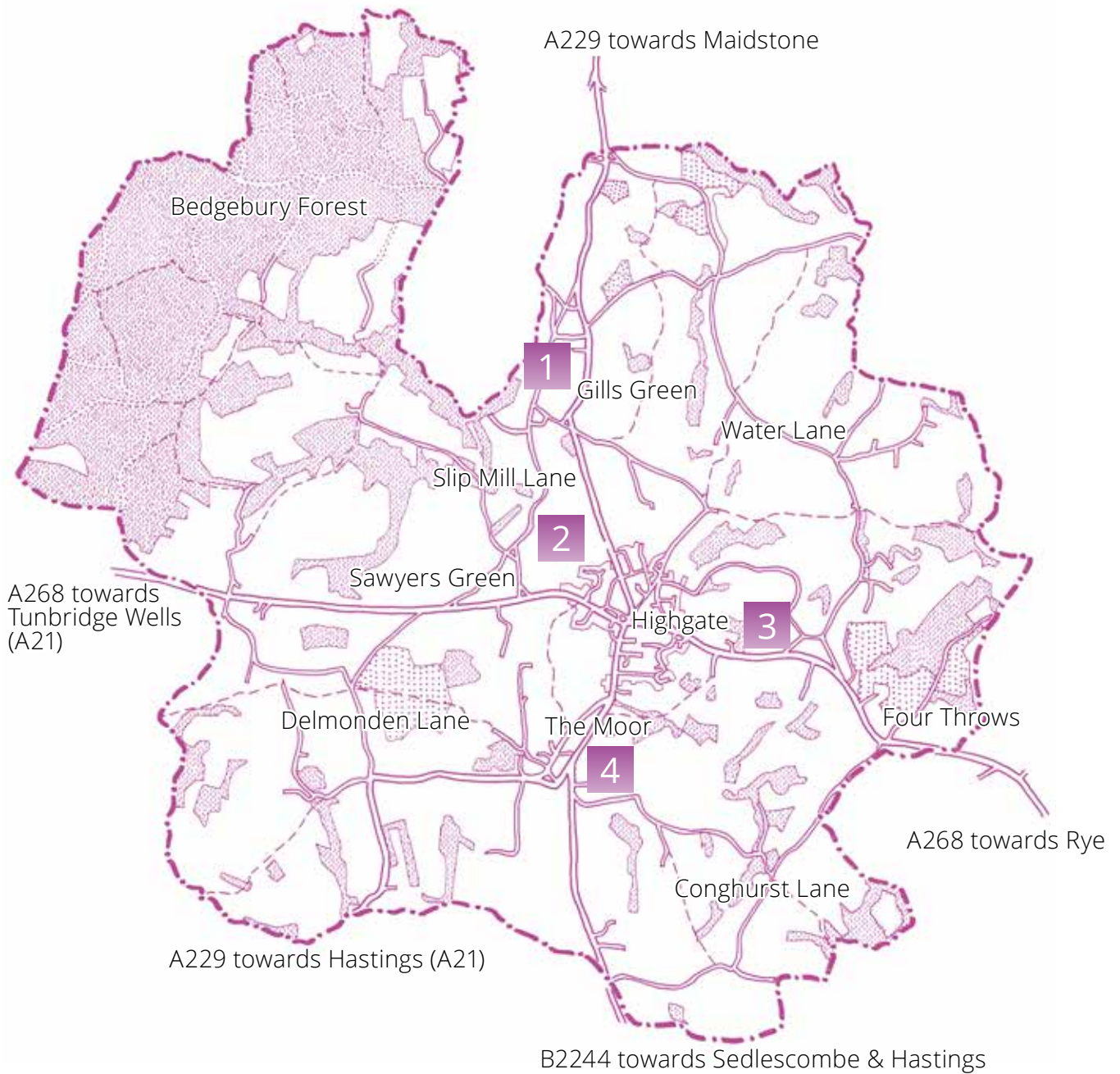
## Summary of the strategic planning context

2.10 The current adopted development plan for the Borough of Tunbridge Wells consists of the saved policies of the Local Plan 2006, the Core Strategy 2010 and the Site Allocations Local Plan 2016.

2.11 The Core Strategy sets the strategic planning context for the borough up to 2026 and provides the spatial vision, strategic objectives, distribution of development and the delivery strategy. This includes Core Policy 13: Development in Hawkhurst, which sets out the strategic policy context for Hawkhurst over the plan period. Specific allocations to meet the needs identified are set out within the Site Allocations Local Plan, which includes a number of sites allocated for development within the parish of Hawkhurst in line with the Core Strategy. The Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared within this adopted planning framework for the Borough.

2.12 The Borough Council is currently producing a new Local Plan, covering the period to 2033. This will become the new development plan for the borough and will replace the previous development plan documents as set out above. The new Local Plan will set out policies and plans to guide the future development of Tunbridge Wells Borough over the plan period and will identify the scale of development required during this period and the key locations to meet this need.

2.13 The Borough Council are at an early stage of Plan preparation. The new Local Plan will provide the framework for future development and for future neighbourhood plans produced in conformity with the strategic policies.



*Hawkhurst local context map*

- 1** Employment land at Gills Green business and industrial parks
- 2** Hawkhurst Golf Course
- 3** Hawkhurst Primary School
- 4** The Moor, Sports Pitches & Pavilion

 Neighbourhood Plan Boundary



# Landscape Context

The neighbourhood plan has regard for Hawkhurst's location within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its rural context.



## The High Weald AONB & neighbourhood planning

3.1 National planning policies are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Its focus is on sustainable development, the meaning of which is defined in paragraph 8 of the NPPF as simultaneously seeking economic, social and environmental gains. Paragraph 172 of the NPPF relates specifically to development in AONBs.

3.2 Paragraph 172 of the NPPF complements Section 85 of the CROW Act 2000 by expecting planning bodies, which includes those preparing Neighbourhood Plans, to not only have regard for the conservation and enhancement of AONBs, but to also give it great weight.

3.3 The use of the terms “landscape” and “scenic beauty” in paragraph 172 highlights the need to consider both the visual impacts on the scenic qualities of an AONB and the impacts on its intrinsic landscape character, which embraces aspects of landform, geology, flora and fauna, landscape features and historic settlement pattern, developed over centuries.

3.4 Also, the emphasis on sustainable development may be taken as encouraging plans to seek developments that offer benefits in terms of conserving or enhancing natural beauty. For example, a strong rural economy in which farm and woodland enterprises thrive enables the management necessary to conserve key landscape features.

## Understanding the AONB

3.5 In order to effectively conserve and enhance the AONB it is first necessary to know the location and extent of important features in the landscape. Once known, any potential impacts can be avoided or mitigated and may even be directed towards the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

3.6 The mapped character component data on pages 16 — 19 has been supplied by the High Weald AONB Unit to support the production of the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. These are the most important data sets in terms of the AONB designation as they represent those features that constitute the High Weald’s natural beauty. This data consist of:

— 1. Field & Heath data (i.e. historic field boundaries, heathland, and wildflower grassland).

— 2. Water systems data (i.e. watercourses, ponds, reservoirs and open water) and geology data (i.e. bedrock geology and sandstone outcrops).

— 3. Historic routeways data.

— 4. Woodland data (ancient semi-natural woodlands and plantations on ancient woodland site).

## Implications for development

3.7 The neighbourhood planning process has produced a set of four complementary maps, explaining how these character components, when combined with other issues, help inform the nature, scale and location of new development. These maps are on pages 20 — 21 and numbered 5, 6, 7 and 8.

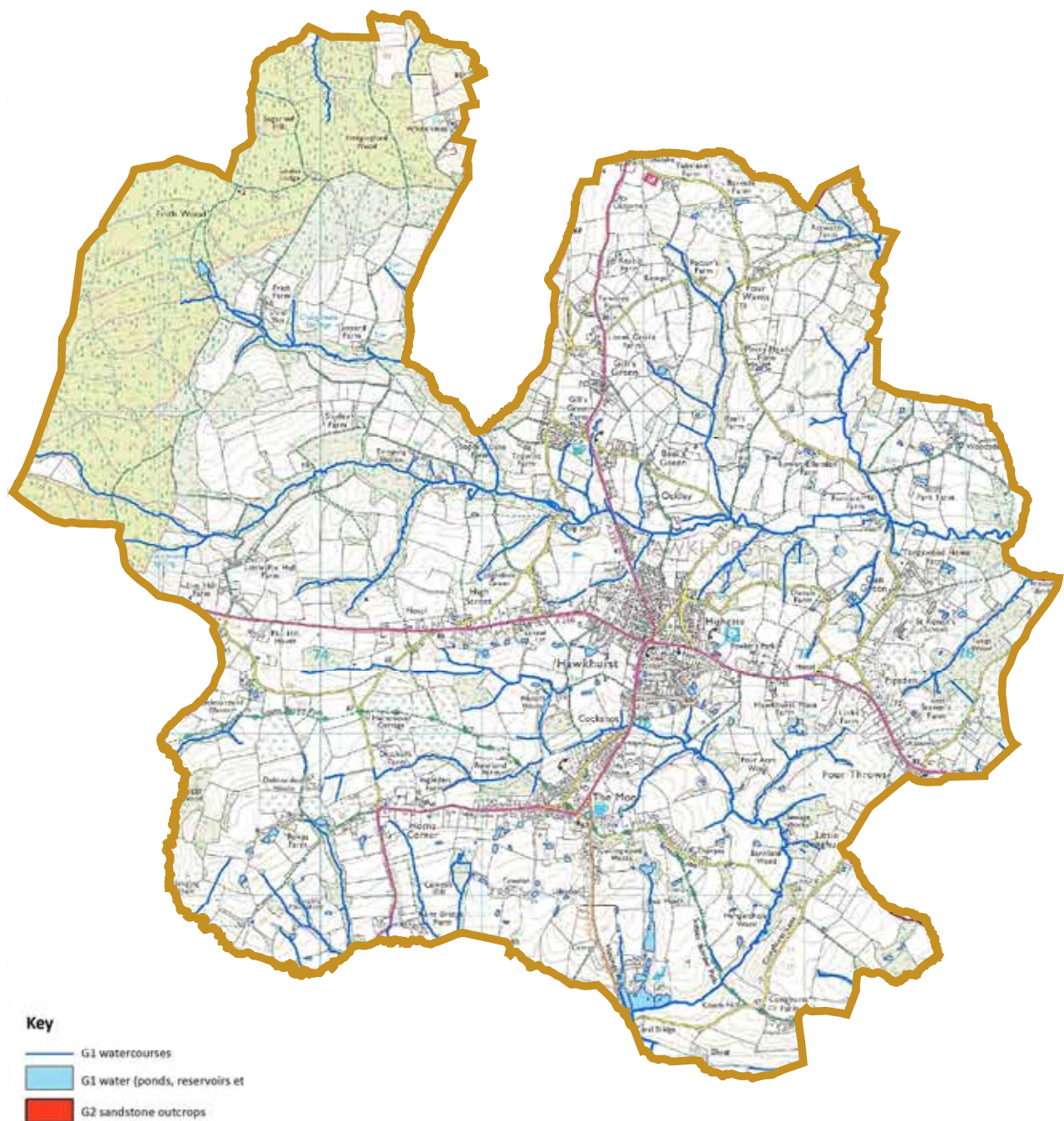






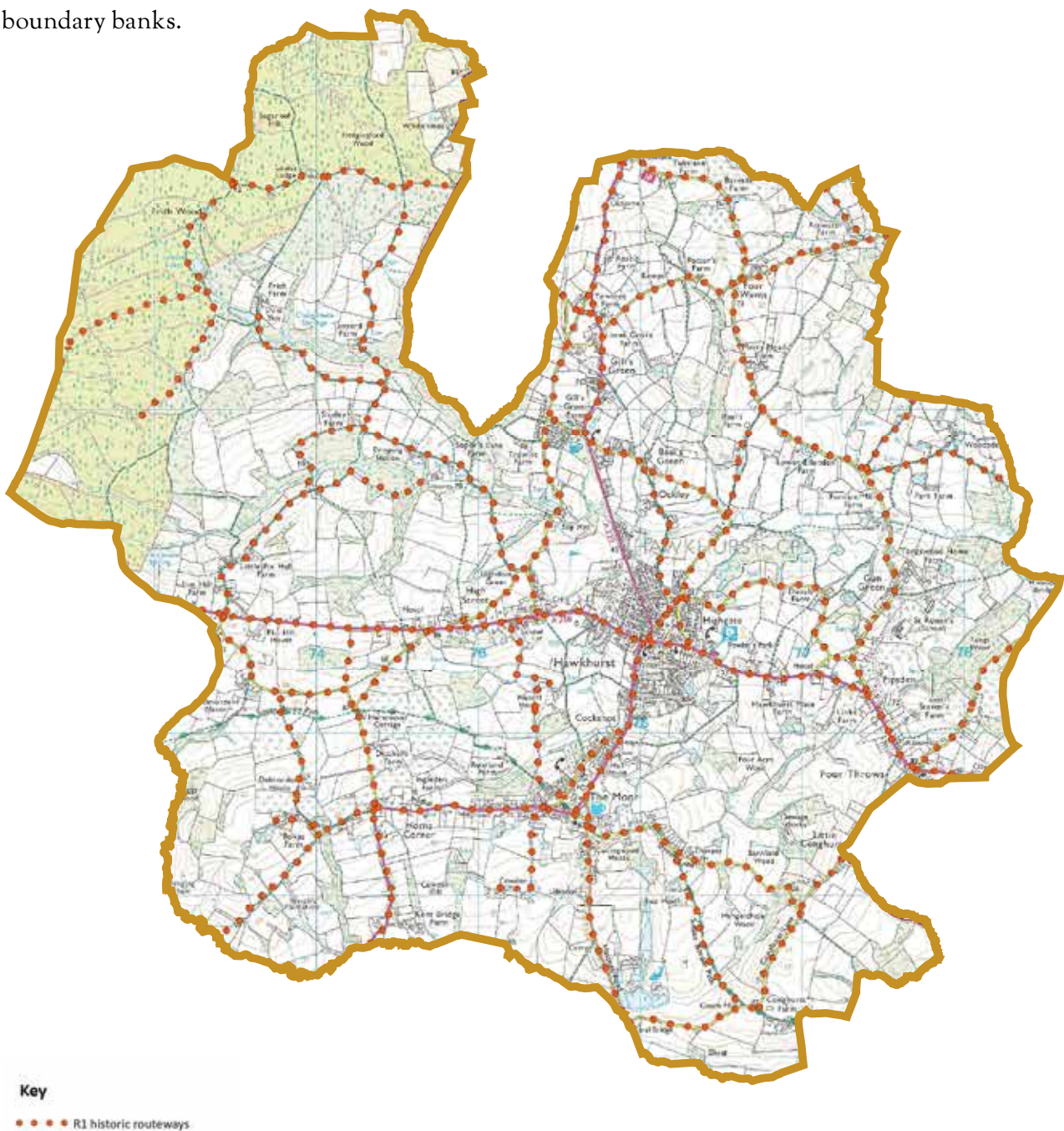
## 2. Geology

3.9 Deeply incised, ridged and faulted landforms of clays and sandstone characterise the geology of Hawkhurst parish. The ridges tend to run east-west and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers.



### 3. Routeways

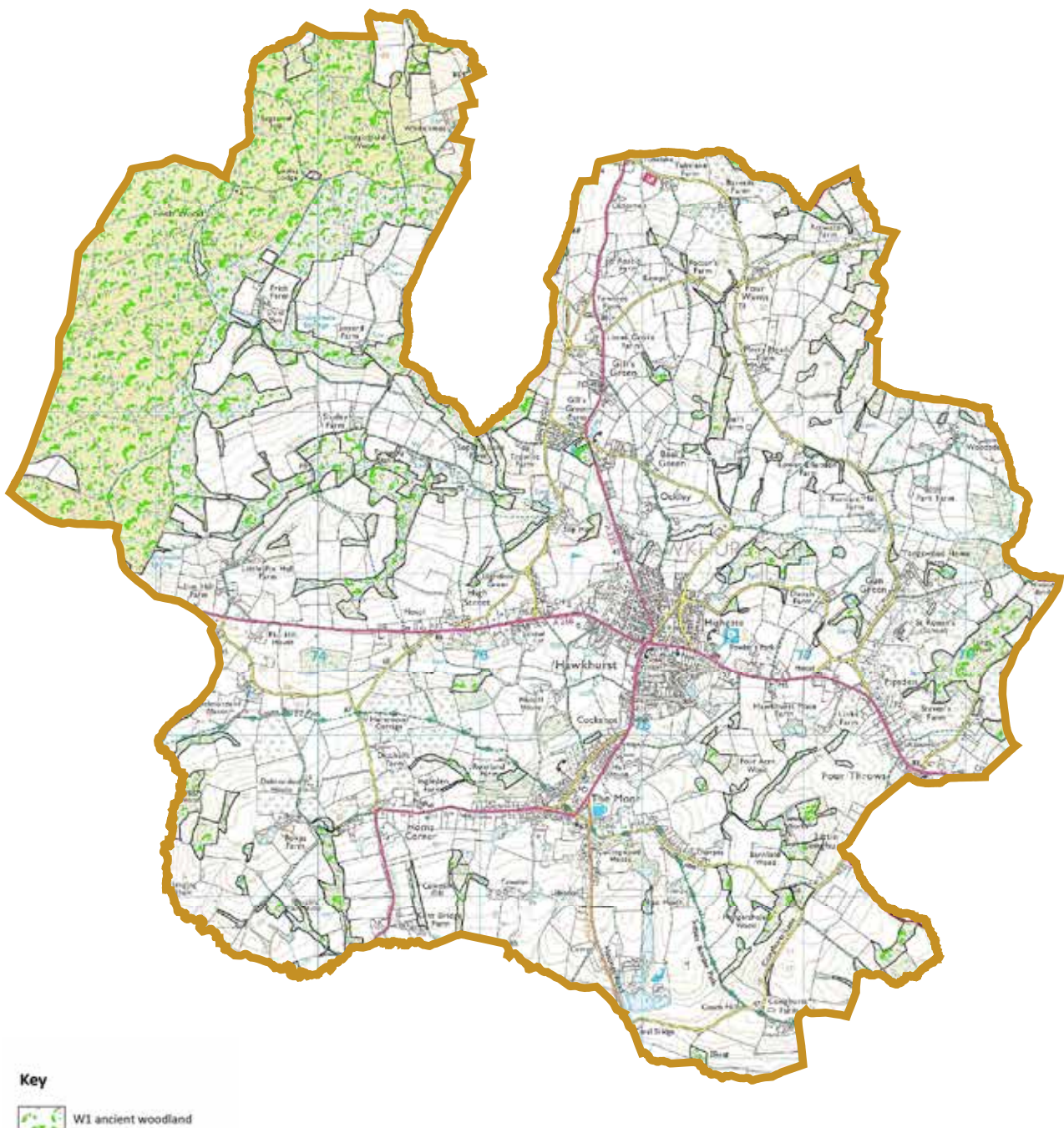
3.10 The network of lanes and roads in the parish is characterised by ancient routeways (now roads, tracks and paths) in the form of ridge-top roads and a dense system of radiating droveways. Ancient routeways are often narrow, deeply sunken, and edged with trees, hedges, wildflower-rich verges and boundary banks.



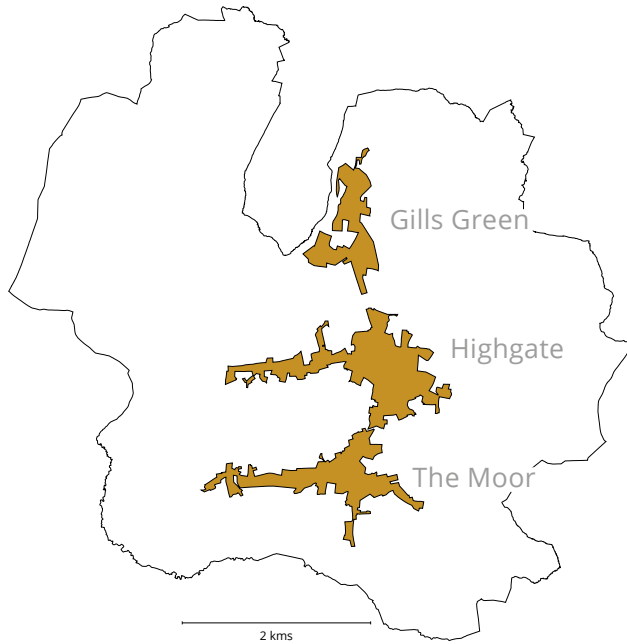


## 4. Woodland

3.11 The woodland patterns across Hawkhurst parish reflect the great extent of ancient woodland, gills and shaws in small holdings in the AONB, the value of which is inextricably linked to long-term management.

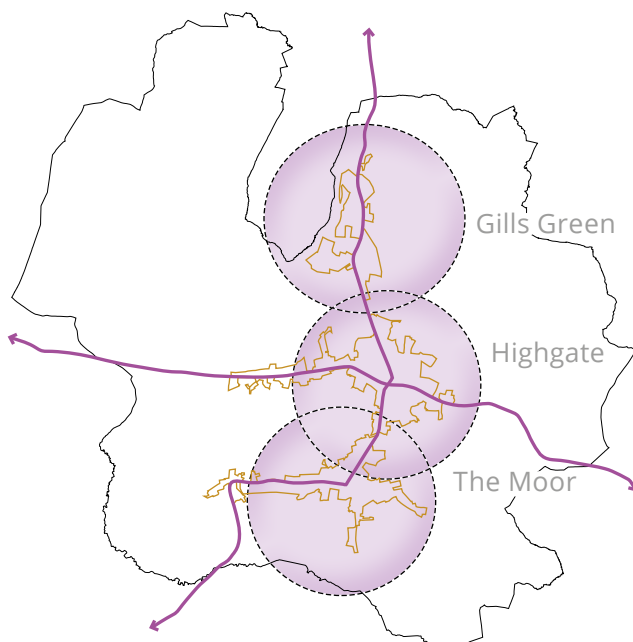


# Neighbourhood Plan Rural Structure



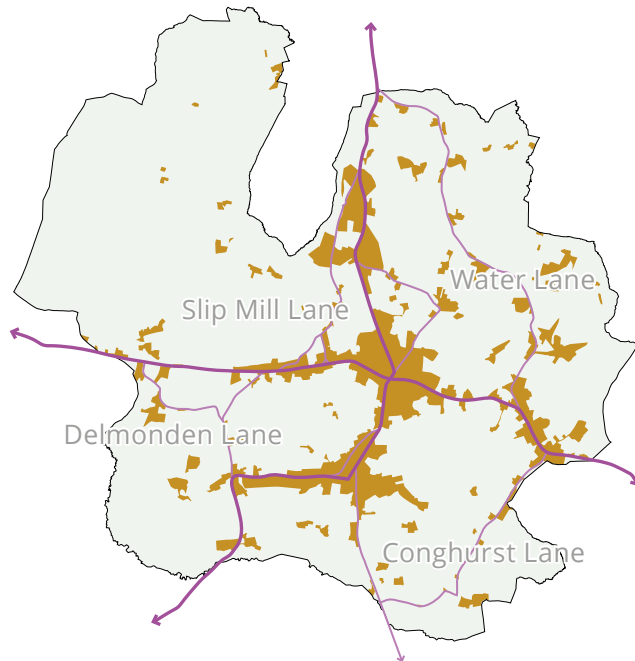
## 5. Settlement locations

3.12 The three distinct settlements of Gills Green, Highgate and The Moor form a north-south chain. Both Highgate and The Moor stretch east-west along the ridge lines while Gills Green occupies higher ground to the north. Development proposals need to demonstrate an understanding of the topography of the parish and an awareness of how long and medium distance views will be experienced.



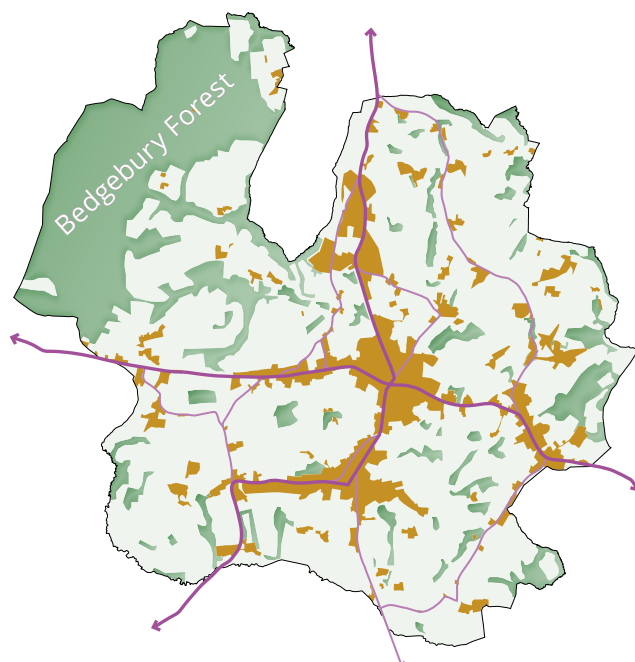
## 6. Accessibility

3.13 The purple discs depict areas 2km in diameter. These are local catchments for each individual settlement. While most of the commercial and community services have consolidated around Highgate, employment land can be found in Gills Green and leisure and recreational uses around The Moor. Development proposals should demonstrate how they relate to these catchments.



## 7. Outlying settlements

3.14 Shown in pale brown are the scattered outlying settlements, often groupings of just one or two dwellings. These small clusters are accessed via narrow country lanes and are characteristic of the parish but further proliferation is discouraged by this plan to avoid "urban sprawl" and placing further traffic pressure on the narrow lanes. All development proposals should be contiguous to or within the three main settlements.



## 8. Landscape setting

3.15 The heavily wooded landscape that surrounds the developed areas provides a distinctive setting for the parish. This wider landscape is designated as AONB, a national designation that affords protection from development. Bedgebury Forest offers a high quality recreational resource for the parish and access to areas such as these is supported by the plan.

## 9. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the parish

3.16 Robins Wood lies partially in Hawkhurst parish. The majority of the designation lies in the parish of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst. It has been designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since 1987 under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### *About Robins Wood*

3.17 Robins Wood is typical of the linear woodlands which have developed along deep stream valleys (ghylls) in the weald. The humid conditions prevailing in such places support a rich assemblage of ferns, mosses and liverworts including species which are rare in Kent.

3.18 The two main ghylls follow parallel lines of fracture (faults) in the underlying geological strata, and these fractures have brought contrasting beds of the Wealden series into contact along the stream bed, Wadhurst clays and the Ashdown sands. The valleys are likely to have retained a woodland cover since natural colonisation following the last ice age, and may thus be termed ancient woodland.

3.19 The woods consist mainly of mixed hornbeam, ash and hazel coppice below oak and occasional beech standards. In some areas, the coppice layer has been restocked with sweet chestnut, and here birch and aspen are also common. Guelder rose and midland hawthorn are present in the shrub layer, above a ground flora dominated by bluebells, bramble and dogs mercury. Other more locally-distributed species include wild daffodil, violet helleborine, imperforate St Johns wort, and early-purple orchid.

3.20 Over the streams alder, coppice becomes dominant, with willows frequent above a ground flora reflecting the wetter conditions. Opposite-leaved golden saxifrage, yellow archangel and many species of fern occur here including the rare hay-scented buckler fern.

3.21 The damp, mild microclimate is ideal for bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and a rich assemblage of species has been recorded. Several ponds add to the habitat diversity of the site.

### *Sources:*

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteDetail.aspx?SiteCode=S1001078&SiteName=wood&countyCode=24&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

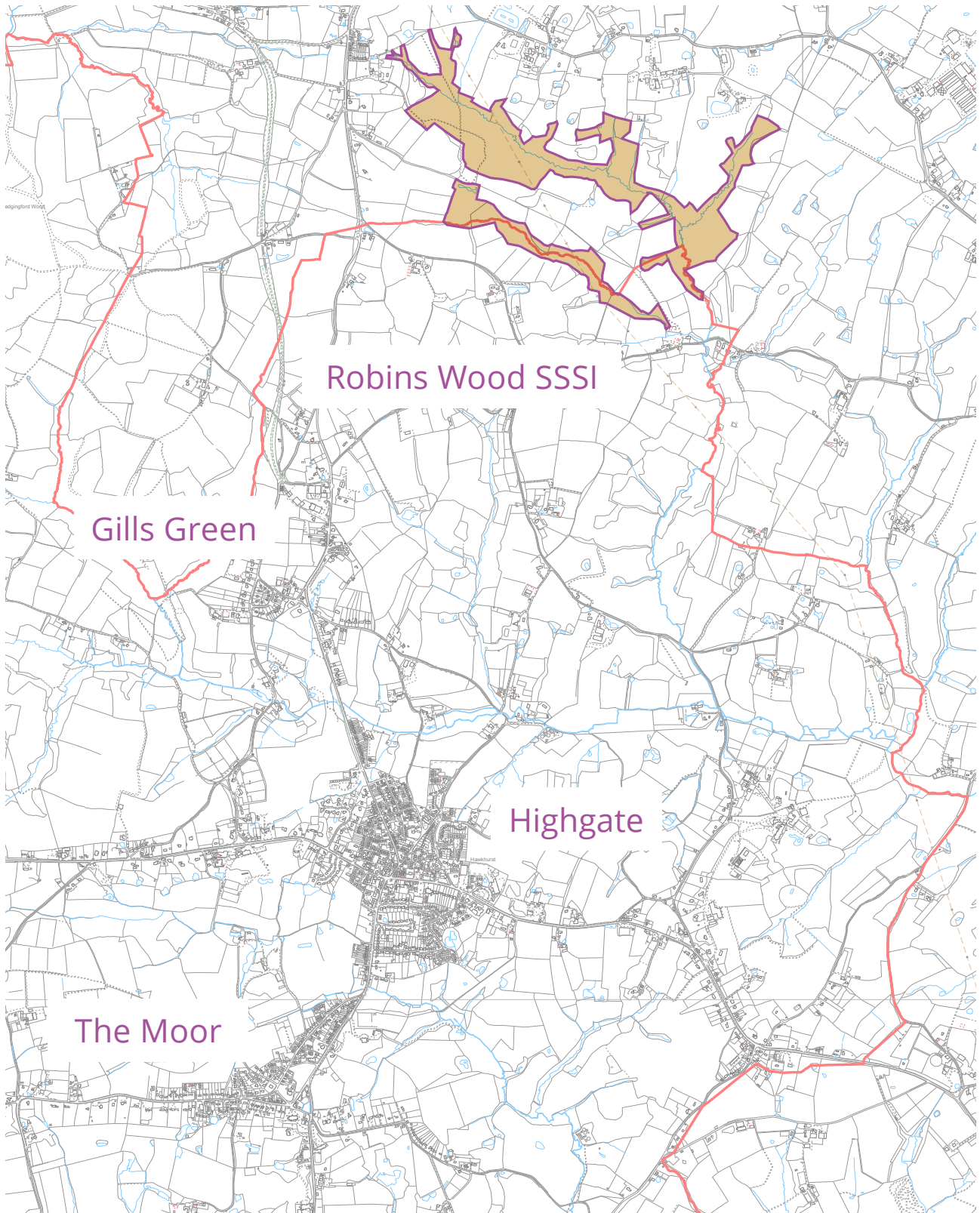
<https://necmsi.esdm.co.uk/PDFsForWeb/Citation/1001078.pdf>



# Robins Wood SSSI

— Parish boundary

■ Extent of SSSI



## 10. Spaces that contribute to local landscape character

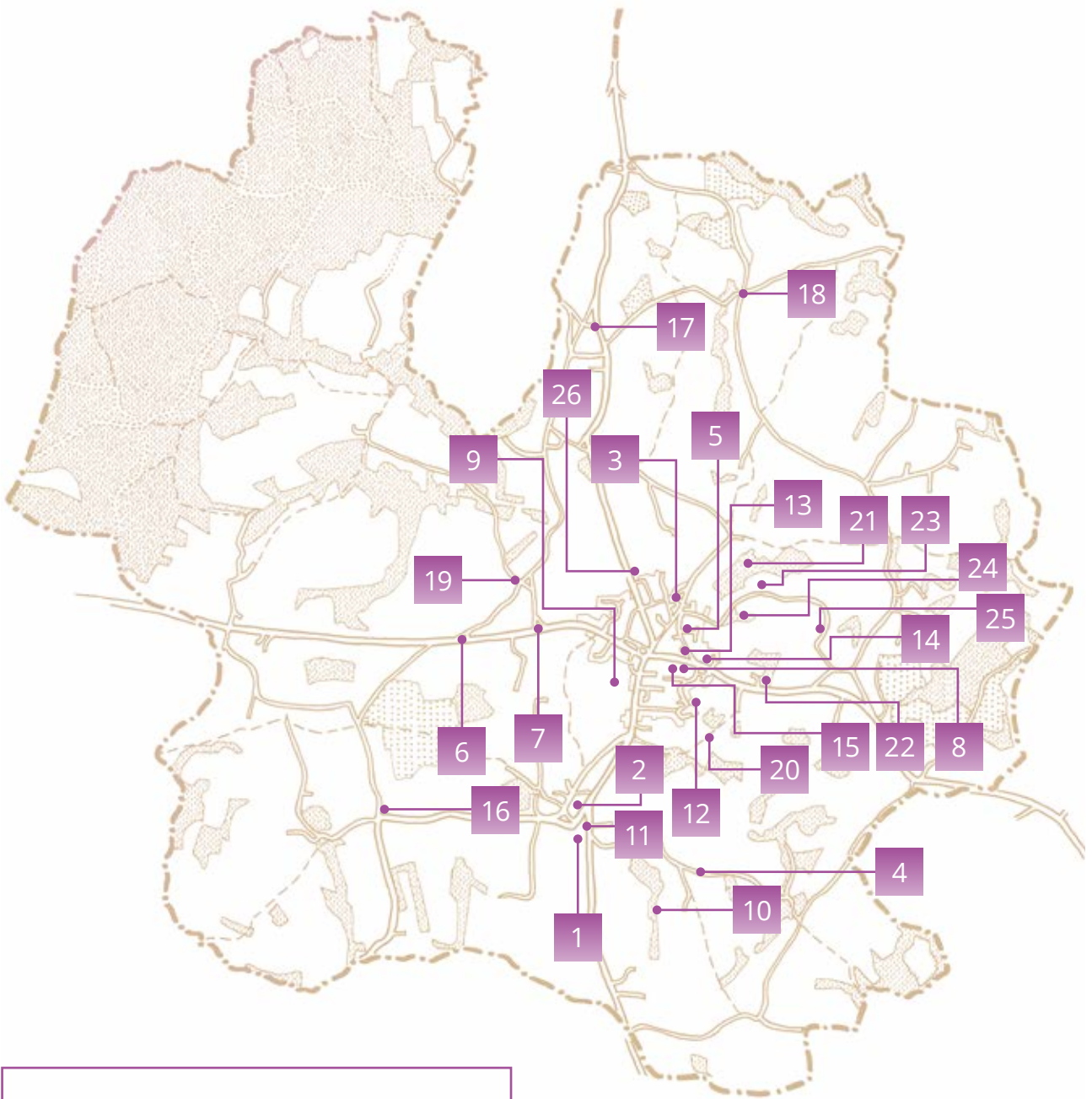
3.22 The green spaces listed below and shown on the map on page 25 have been identified as making a contribution to local landscape character. The characteristics of each space are described as being a combination of beauty, acting as a green edge to a particular development, having historic qualities, used for recreational purposes, offering a tranquil environment and/or acting as a wildlife habitat.

3.23 Development proposals should recognise the role these spaces play in informing the rural character of the parish and respect their context and setting.

3.24 It should be noted that sites 11, 12 and 20 are also designated as protected green spaces through Policy LP3 (pages 54 — 55).

- |    |                                     |       |    |  |       |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------|----|--|-------|
| 1  | St Laurence Church green verges     | B G H | 14 | Tesco landscaped edge                                    | G     |
| 2  | The Moor and verges                 | R     | 15 | Waitrose landscaped edge                                 | G     |
| 3  | The verge around Merton-Neale Close | R     | 16 | Horns Corner   | B G   |
| 4  | Stream Lane verges                  | H     | 17 | Gills Green inc. green bank and steps                    | H     |
| 5  | Queens Road opposite Park Cottages  | R     | 18 | The triangle at Four Wents (Potter Lane & Attwater Lane) | B H   |
| 6  | Sawyers Green                       | B G   | 19 | Lightfoot Green  | B H T |
| 7  | Philpotts Cross                     | B G   | 20 | Little Switzerland, inc. bridge and valley               | B W   |
| 8  | Frontage of All Saints Church       | G H   | 21 | White's Wood   | B H W |
| 9  | Circus Field                        | R     | 22 | Fowler's Wood  | B H W |
| 10 | Stream Lane nature reserve and pond | R T W | 23 | Fowler's Wood Wetland                                    | H W   |
| 11 | Church pond                         | T W   | 24 | Fowler's Park Wood                                       | B R W |
| 12 | All Saints pond                     | T W   | 25 | Duvall's Farm Woodland                                   | B H W |
| 13 | Dunks Alms Houses frontage          | G H T | 26 | "Spring Field"   | B H W |

# Local Landscape Character & Green Spaces



## Key to green space typologies

- |                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>B</b> Beauty      | <b>R</b> Recreational |
| <b>G</b> Green Edges | <b>T</b> Tranquillity |
| <b>H</b> Historic    | <b>W</b> Wildlife     |



## Rural Context — Issues & Opportunities



Footpaths and bridleways that link the built areas of the parish with one another are to be protected and enhanced.



Evaluating the potential for changes to the crossroads is a major project emerging from the neighbourhood plan.



Walking routes on the edge of open countryside are a key feature that makes life in Hawkhurst a positive experience.



Providing a more convenient and more connected pedestrian network is an aim of the neighbourhood plan.



On-plot parking can be discreet and approaches such as this are a welcome technique in a rural setting where the parked car can detract from the visual quality of a village.



Modern styles need to be treated with caution. A clear demonstration of the merits of proposed designs will be required.



Rows of linked properties can be an efficient way to create small areas of character and identity.



Rows of houses have a sense of rhythm and variety as they address topographical changes, such as this run of handsome properties on Highgate Hill. This type of successful development should be used to inform new proposals.





There remains a question over the future of the local landmark that is All Saints but future use for the benefit of the community is preferred.



Delivering much improved sports provision at The Moor in the form of upgraded pitches and an extended and modernised pavilion is a key aim of the neighbourhood plan.



The KINO digital cinema is a key community asset and is a much-appreciated feature of village life. Activities such as this are to be protected by the neighbourhood plan.



Clear and well-designed footpath maps have been installed in the parish to encourage greater use of the network.





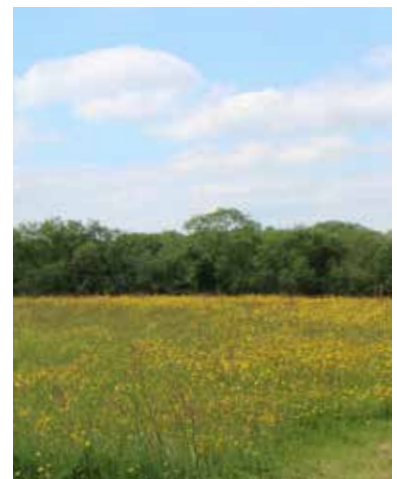
Views out to adjacent countryside is part of the appeal of living and working in Hawkhurst.



Protection of long distance views towards local landmarks is given through the neighbourhood plan.



Waterways, rivers and ponds have been integrated into the green space protection policy.



The landscape in the parish already benefits from nationally protected status so this plan ensures that this protection is upheld.

# Vision & Objectives

The neighbourhood plan has been developed to deliver an overall vision for Hawkhurst and help meet various measurable objectives



*“Hawkhurst has developed slowly over centuries, with gradual change blending its environment with the needs of the population. This plan aims to encourage change within manageable limits to retain and strengthen Hawkhurst's distinct history and character”*

Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

## Neighbourhood plan objectives

4.1 The extensive public consultation process has revealed a series of issues that are of concern or a source of anxiety to local residents and businesses. The same process also identified the features and characteristics of the parish about which people are proud and wish to see protected or enhanced. Together, these results have been used to generate the eight aims and objectives of the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. These are the guiding principles of the plan and are designed to strike the right balance between protection and enhancement. All eight objectives are of equal importance.

4.2 The planning policies are written to help the plan deliver these objectives. Each policy is referenced against the key objectives that are of greatest relevance to it. The eight objectives will also serve as useful monitoring of the plan moving forward.

### 1 Character & Identity

Maintaining and enhancing the rural character of The Moor, Highgate, Gills Green Sawyers Green and Four Throws and the wider Hawkhurst parish.

### 2 Local Prioritisation

Coordinating all new development so that it prioritises the creation of safe, sustainable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and essential services for everybody who lives and works here.

### 3 Choice of Movement

Creating a robust yet flexible access and movement network appropriate for all modes of travel and for current and future residents, businesses and visitors.

### 4 Resource Efficiency

Using land and resources efficiently so that new developments have a reduced demand for energy and motorised travel.

### 5 Environmental Protection

Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the built environment and the wider countryside.

### 6 Design Quality

Ensuring the quality of new development through the appropriate use of materials, details and inclusive design that responds to the Hawkhurst context.

### 7 Managing Change

Ensuring that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people's quality of life, for both new and existing residents.

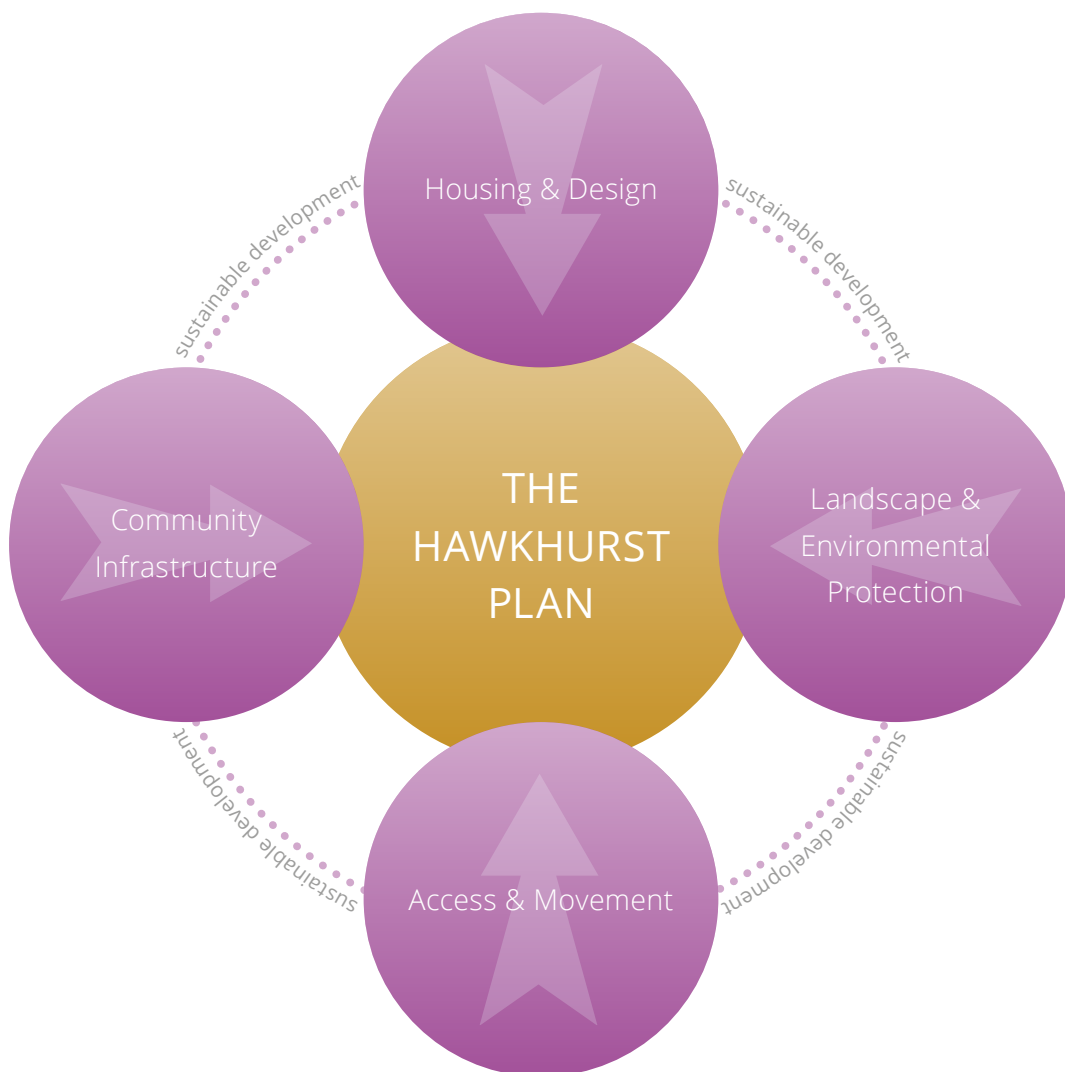
### 8 Future Infrastructure

Delivering the community infrastructure necessary to support a changing village in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

# Planning Policy Structure

The four policy themes that will help guide the development of Hawkhurst into the future

5.1 This diagram below shows how the four key policy themes will contribute to the overall plan for Hawkhurst. Each policy theme, and the individual policies within them, have been developed in direct response to the community consultation outcomes. The policies are complementary to both the Vision Statement and the eight Neighbourhood Plan Objectives. This coordination will ensure the policies will be effective at delivering change and protection in the most appropriate ways. All policies will support the delivery of sustainable development, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.



## How the plan policies support the plan objectives

5.2 This table (pages 33 — 34) demonstrates how each of the four policy themes and the 15 individual policies will help deliver the eight plan objectives. This mapping of the policies against the plan objectives will be important to ensure effective plan monitoring.

Policy Theme	Planning Policies		Plan Objectives
Housing & Design	HD1	Site Selection Criteria	1 Character 2 Prioritisation 4 Efficiency 5 Protection 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	HD2	Future Housing Mix	1 Character 2 Prioritisation 6 Quality 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	HD3	Modern Living	1 Character 2 Prioritisation 6 Quality 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	HD4	Design Quality	1 Character 2 Prioritisation 5 Protection 6 Quality 8 Infrastructure
Landscape & Environmental Protection	LP1	Views to Open Countryside	1 Character 5 Protection 7 Change
	LP2	AONB Support	1 Character 5 Protection 7 Change
	LP3	Designation of Green Spaces	1 Character 5 Protection 7 Change



Policy Theme	Planning Policies		Plan Objectives
Access & Movement	AM1	Highgate Hill Junction	1 Character 3 Choice 4 Efficiency 5 Protection 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	AM2	Pedestrian Environment	1 Character 3 Choice 4 Efficiency 5 Protection 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	AM3	Countryside Access	1 Character 3 Choice 4 Efficiency 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	AM4	Walking & Cycling Strategies	1 Character 3 Choice 4 Efficiency 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
Community Infrastructure	CM1	Sports Provision	2 Prioritisation 4 Efficiency 6 Quality 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	CM2	New Community Hall	2 Prioritisation 4 Efficiency 6 Quality 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	CM3	New Medical Centre	2 Prioritisation 4 Efficiency 5 Protection 7 Change 8 Infrastructure
	CM4	Preserving & Enhancing Services	1 Character 2 Prioritisation 4 Efficiency 5 Protection 7 Change 8 Infrastructure

# Plan Monitoring

## Monitoring is an essential and continuous part of the planning process.

6.1 If successful at examination and referendum the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will become part of the statutory development plan once it has been made (brought into legal force) by the planning authority, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.2 The plan will be monitored by both Hawkhurst Parish Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to assess whether it is supporting and delivering the aims of the Local Plan strategy.

6.3 The monitoring indicators identified here are a mix of relevant indicators drawn from a number of sources including the National Planning Policy Framework, indicators identified in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan and local indicators identified in respect of key policies of the Local Plan.

6.4 The key indicators for the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan will be on delivery of community infrastructure, employment, housing and positive environmental change.

### 1. General Delivery Indicators

Coordinated development on allocated sites with planning permission; Percentage of completions on previously developed land, including planning permissions implemented involving planning condition(s) for remediation.

### 2. Environmental Indicators

Quality and quantity of new open space provided, especially natural/semi-natural green space; Change to number of buildings on national and local lists of buildings at risk; The amount of open space/facility established by type relative to the standard; The number of permissions granted and implemented for low-carbon schemes; The number of developments which use sustainable drainage systems; The number of applications which do not receive approval for water supply and wastewater connection from the appropriate water company; The amount of new habitat created, especially natural/semi-natural green space; Any monitoring undertaken of Kent Biodiversity Action Plan, including habitats created.

### 3. Housing Indicators

The number of dwelling completions that are provided relative to the Council's estimated provision; Change in the total number of households; Average densities on permitted housing sites; Starter and affordable housing completions; Objective measures to determine the quality of design.

### 4. Employment Indicators

Changes (up or down) in the number of companies/businesses (no. of VAT registered) located in the area; Employment land lost or gained compared to other uses.

# Housing & Design

## Planning Policies



7.1 It is acknowledged that neighbourhood plans are required by legislation to “plan positively” by setting out the types of development that will be encouraged or permitted on certain sites rather than saying what will not be permitted. Therefore, this policy theme sets out the types of development that will be supported over the plan period.

7.2 The parish wants to meet its future housing needs, but the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan expresses a clear preference for smaller-scale development while still acknowledging that there needs to be a degree of flexibility over this as the replacement Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is prepared.

7.3 The Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy requires that approximately 240 net additional dwellings be developed in Hawkhurst during the period 2006 – 2026. At May 2017, 225 dwellings have been completed or started, of which 62 are commitments with planning permission. The following sites are allocated for development in the Tunbridge Wells Site Allocation Plan 2016:

- Former Springfield Garden Centre. This site is being developed incrementally, with approval of 25 dwellings at Brook House.
- Land at Woodham Hall for 16 dwellings, which has now been built out.
- Hawkhurst Castle. This site has been developed as a nursing home with 92 beds and is no longer available for housing.
- Birchfield, Rye Road, 26 dwellings built out.

This total of 296 net additional dwellings is sufficient to over deliver the Core Strategy’s housing requirement to 2026 by 23%. At September 2019, approval has been given for an additional 88 dwellings. Appendix 2 presents the interim housing position.

7.4 The housing requirement to 2033 and site allocations to deliver this will be determined by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council through the Local Plan review taking account of the policies in the neighbourhood plan.

Principal plan objectives supported

1 Character	7 Change
2 Coordination	8 Infrastructure
4 Efficiency	
5 Protection	

## Policy HD1(a)

### Preference for Small-Scale Developments

1) PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO THE REDEVELOPMENT OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED SITES OVER GREENFIELD SITES.

2) THE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL-SCALE INFILL SITES SUITABLE FOR 1 — 5 DWELLINGS BOTH WITHIN THE EXISTING LIMITS OF BUILT DEVELOPMENT (SEE MAP PAGE 42) AND WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF SHOPS AND AMENITIES WILL BE SUPPORTED.

3) ANY GREENFIELD HOUSING SITES SHOULD BE CONTIGUOUS WITH EXISTING LIMITS OF BUILT DEVELOPMENT (SEE MAP, PAGE 42) AND PROVIDE FOR SITES OF APPROX. 5 — 10 DWELLINGS, SUBJECT TO THE DEMONSTRATION OF EFFECTIVE PHYSICAL INTEGRATION WITH THE EXISTING SETTLEMENT PATTERNS FOUND IN AND AROUND HAWKHURST.



4) ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE OTHER POLICIES IN THE HAWKHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

### **Policy HD1(b)**

#### **Exceptions for Larger-Scale Developments**

1) LARGER DEVELOPMENT OF 10 OR MORE HOUSES WILL ONLY BE SUPPORTED IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE ARE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AS PRESCRIBED BY THE NPPF AND IF IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THEIR IMPACT ON THE SENSITIVE AONB LANDSCAPE SETTING AND THE CONSIDERABLE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS OF HAWKHURST CAN BE EFFECTIVELY MITIGATED.

2) PROPOSALS WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- i) The proposed development contributes to sustainable development;
- ii) Any application is supported by an assessment of the environmental and visual impact of the proposal and include as necessary appropriate mitigation measures;
- iii) The proposals can demonstrate effective physical integration with the existing settlement patterns found in and around Hawkhurst;
- iv) The proposals demonstrate how they meet the objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan.

### 3) ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE OTHER POLICIES IN THE HAWKHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

#### Policy Justification

7.5 The neighbourhood plan area lies in the centre of the High Weald, a stretch of important landscape character that has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). This is a medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops; small, irregular-shaped fields; scattered farmsteads; and ancient routeways. It is this landscape character that the High Weald AONB Management Plan seeks to preserve and this neighbourhood plan contains planning policies and objectives that are complementary to this work.

7.6 With this landscape context in mind, all new housing development proposals should have regard for the findings of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Landscape Character Assessment, 2017. All housing development proposals should also have regard to the other policies in the Hawkhurst neighbourhood plan, in particular the neighbourhood plan policies on Landscape & Environmental Protection.

7.7 The intention behind this policy is to ensure that future housing sites do not negatively impact upon the village's positive relationship with both the surrounding countryside and the existing built areas. New housing clusters need to be small-scale as this is a feature of Hawkhurst's evolutionary style and character, as supported by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Landscape Character

Assessment, 2017. There is a strong desire to avoid the development of large (e.g. 10+ dwellings) housing estates that feel detached from the core of the village.

7.8 In accordance with paragraph 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the site selection of greenfield sites should consider the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

7.9 Where the development of agricultural land for new housing can be clearly demonstrated as necessary, this should only be on areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality. For clarity, land graded under the DEFRA classification as 1, 2, 3a and 3b is considered "higher quality" should be retained as agricultural land while land graded as 4 and 5 is defined as "poor quality".

#### *Benefits of Small-Scale Developments*

7.10 Small-scale development of this type has several distinct benefits. Firstly, it can be assimilated more easily into the existing built environment of the parish compared to larger developments.

7.11 Secondly, small-scale development is more likely to attract local developers and local builders, thereby supporting the economy. Local builders are likely to use local architects who will understand the area well and this can add to the richness of designs that can be found across the parish. This beneficial outcome is supported by the housing white paper (Fixing our broken housing market, Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2017).

7.12 The third key benefit is that small-scale sites can help allow greater social assimilation between the new development areas and the existing settlement. This is because smaller clusters of housing are less likely to have a sense of self-containment that larger groups of houses can sometimes have. Smaller clusters of houses are also less likely to require high level of infrastructure investment in order to secure effective integration with the adjacent area.

#### *Development Phasing & Change Over Time*

7.13 The neighbourhood plan is seeking to avoid the sense of rapid change that multiple simultaneous small developments may create. The careful phasing of any new housing clusters is therefore encouraged to ensure a steadier sense of change over time. This will further help new developments to be more easily assimilated into the parish setting.

7.14 Any development around the village edges needs to be designed in a way that will provide a sense of enclosure to the village, prevent unchecked sprawl and ensure that new areas of homes can positively respond to the landscape.

7.15 Development on or near the edge of the built-up area should encourage public access to the countryside beyond. Small clusters of no more than 10 dwellings can allow for sufficient open space to be threaded between dwellings to create an open and integrated edge with countryside.

7.16 New development also needs to integrate the use of sustainable modes of travel between the site and the heart of the existing built areas.

7.17 For the purposes of policy HD1(a) walking distance in this instance is up to a maximum of 800m from origin to destination. This distance has been informed by the Institution of Highways & Transportation “Guidelines For Providing For Journeys On Foot” advice note, 2000. It should be noted that the hilly topography of the parish can make even short walks challenging for some so these guidelines need interpretation on the ground regarding any site-specific proposals.

#### *Larger-Scale Exception Sites*

7.18 In exceptional circumstances, larger developments of more than 10 homes might be supported, subject to an effective demonstration that their impact on the sensitive AONB landscape setting of the parish and the considerable environmental constraints of Hawkhurst can be successfully mitigated.

7.19 Mitigation of larger schemes needs to address two separate but related issues. The first is to demonstrate a clear understanding of the wider context at the scale of the whole settlement. Mitigation at this scale needs to use good design in terms of an appropriate response to topography, retention of existing landscape features (where appropriate), layout and establishing good connections. This will be a requirement of any planning application.

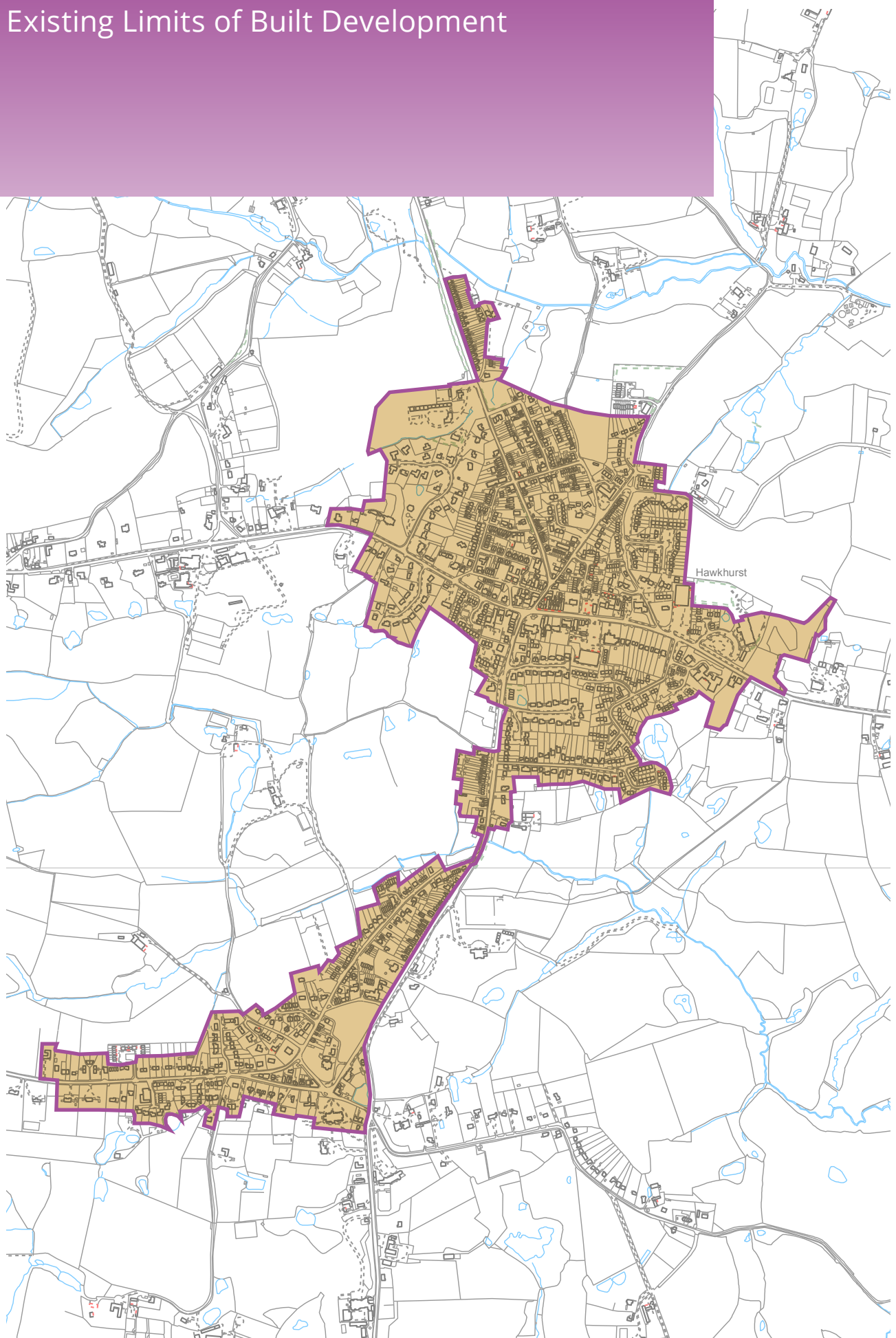
7.20 The second issue is to demonstrate a clear understanding of the immediate context. This will be particularly important when housing proposals are adjacent to existing developed areas. Mitigation at this scale needs to be in the form of carefully-designed and responsive housing layouts that respect the conditions enjoyed by existing residents, high quality landscape design towards the edges of the sites and architectural detail that draws upon local traditions and materials.

7.21 Hawkhurst does want to meet its future housing needs, but the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan expresses a clear preference for smaller-scale development as set out by HD1(a). It therefore does not actively promote larger-scale developments as described by HD1(b) but acknowledges that there needs to be a degree of flexibility over this as the replacement Tunbridge Wells Local Plan is prepared. Hence the inclusion of the exception policy for larger developments.





# Existing Limits of Built Development



## Policy HD2

### Future Housing Mix

A MIX OF HOUSING TYPES, SIZES AND TENURES SHALL BE PROVIDED ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF HOUSING THAT MEETS THE LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMANDS DEMONSTRATED IN THE MOST RECENT HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT AND HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR THE PLAN AREA.

*Note: The 2017 Housing Needs Analysis shows 30 affordable units are needed: 16 (53%) 1-bed units, 10 (33%) 2-bed units and 4 (14%) 3-bed units. Ten market/private rental housing units are needed: 8 x 2-bed units, 1 x 3-bed unit and 1 x 4-bed unit.*

Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 2 Coordination
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure

## Policy Justification

7.22 The type, tenure and size of future housing should reflect the local needs and demands of Hawkhurst parish. New housing development should aim to meet housing need in the area. Through this policy, the neighbourhood plan sets out the range of house types and sizes. The annual review of house size proportions will be based on the most recent Housing Market Assessment and Housing Needs Analysis and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council figures for homes needed by people with a Hawkhurst connection.

7.23 Future homes should be designed for a changing population. Initially this is likely to involve starter homes and homes for an ageing population to provide a good social mix, supporting social cohesion and independent living. An adequate amount of small-sized houses should be built to allow those wishing to downsize to release larger, family-sized properties back into the market.

7.24 Consideration should also be given for “self-finish” and “self-build” homes, as well as innovative hybrid housing that can respond to modern lifestyles. See Policy HD3.

7.25 Affordable housing delivery during the plan period will need to be in conformity with adopted policies as prepared by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. It is expected that Hawkhurst Parish Council will work with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to identify rural exception sites for affordable housing.

## Policy HD3

### Modern Living

1) NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT SHALL COMPRISE A VARIETY OF HOUSING DESIGNS AND DETAILS TO CREATE HOMES FIT FOR MODERN LIVING.

2) ACCESSIBLE HOMES SUITABLE FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED, IN PARTICULAR BUNGALOWS, WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

3) NEW HOUSING SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO MEET LIFETIME HOMES STANDARDS AND SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE EFFICIENT USE OF WATER AND ENERGY, AND LOCALLY SOURCED AND RECYCLED MATERIALS.

## Policy Justification

7.26 All future housing development should support modern lifestyles through careful design. This will include reducing energy costs through meeting high design standards as well as internal space standards and layouts that will encourage working from home. Design details, such as the ability to receive parcels securely when not at home, storage of several bicycles, flexible use of garage and garden spaces and the effective storage of waste and recycling bins should all be considered.

7.27 New housing development should be built to the space standards set out in the DCLG Technical Housing Standards.

7.28 All housing should seek to meet “Lifetime Homes” standards to ensure properties are sustainable and can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a changing population. The development of accessible dwellings, including one storey bungalows will be encouraged.

7.29 All housing designs should also promote efficient use of water, electricity and energy. The introduction of on-site generation technology, smart meters and other measures to reduce energy consumption should be considered across all housing sites. Locally-sourced and recycled materials for use in construction is also encouraged.

#### Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 2 Coordination
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure



## Policy HD4

### Design Quality

1) THE DESIGN, FORM AND DETAIL OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE PRINCIPALLY INFORMED BY THE TRADITIONAL FORM, LAYOUT, CHARACTER AND STYLE OF THE PARISH'S VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE. THIS WILL BE APPLICABLE TO BOTH NEW BUILD HOMES AND OTHER BUILDINGS AND TO ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES.

2) CAREFUL INNOVATION IN DESIGN OR THOUGHTFUL MODERN OR CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE IS NOT PRECLUDED BY THIS POLICY AND SUCH DESIGNS ARE ENCOURAGED.

3) ALL DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD COMPLY WITH THE DESIGN GUIDANCE NOTES ON PAGES 46 — 49.

## Policy Justification

7.30 The residents of Hawkhurst are generally agreed that they desire any development of their village to be of a high design standard. They are also keen to see new developments improve their environment rather than downgrade it. They are proud of their Wealden village with its history and culture and want to protect and enhance this legacy into the future.

7.31 Any new development, both residential and non-residential, should be shaped and influenced by the traditional character and style of the village. All new developments should reference the local context and demonstrate the use of high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place. For example, any extensions to existing properties and any small-scale infill developments that may come forward around the edges of the village should be sensitive to the rural and more historic context, by reflecting the character of housing in proximity to countryside. As recommended by the AONB Unit through consultation on the draft version of this plan, the inclusion of working chimneys will be encouraged except where it can be demonstrated it is not feasible or practical on smaller properties.

7.32 The aim for all new developments should be for them to leave a positive architectural legacy, to be sensitive to their local context and

#### Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 2 Coordination
- 5 Protection
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change

environment and add to the positive character of the Hawkhurst parish. This policy does not exclude innovation in design, modern or contemporary architecture. Such designs are encouraged across the parish, on individual sites for single dwellings. Where appropriate, architects are encouraged to create new designs that reflect both the local context and the current technology and materials of the era within which they will be built.

## Design Guidance Notes

7.33 The following section sets out design guidance to support Policy HD4. All new development proposals will be required to comply with this design guidance.

7.34 This design guidance should also be used to inform Policy HD1(a) and HD1(b).

**LAYOUT** — New developments should incorporate access routes and footpaths within the layout that reflect the historic character of Hawkhurst and this part of the High Weald AONB.

**INTEGRATION** — New buildings should be well integrated into the site and become part of a unified and interrelated composition, both with other buildings on site and with existing buildings adjacent to the site.

**LOCALITY** — New buildings are to be based on local needs, use local construction materials and reflect local building traditions. Materials to be obtained from local sustainable sources, for example timber cladding. Small-size clay tiles are preferred to concrete.

**TRADITION** — Styles and materials that relate to those found in the more historic parts of the parish will be encouraged. Well-maintained hedges will be more suited to Hawkhurst's green setting than fences.

**AMENITY** — Green spaces of appropriate scale and quality within new developments will be encouraged. All new houses to have private amenity space and/or gardens, at the front, back or side of the property, as appropriate.

**EVOLUTION** — The village is to evolve gradually and not to experience rapid large-scale development. All development proposals are required to demonstrate how they will contribute to this positive evolution.

**DOMESTIC** — Scale of new dwelling to be of a small or domestic scale suitable for a village environment. This is especially true within the existing built areas. There may be scope for larger properties, set in larger plots, located

towards the edges of the built areas of the village but these need to be demonstrated as appropriate through good design.

**DISCRETION** — Car parking is to be discreet, with a proper provision of off road parking as appropriate. On-road parking needs to be accommodated carefully to ensure that footways are not blocked or narrowed.

**EXTENSION** — House extensions are to be sympathetic with the style of the host house and use similar materials and fenestration. Modern style extensions to traditional houses will be resisted.

**DENSITY** — The density of new development should be in character with the local surrounding area, respect the rural nature of the parish and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness with opportunity for green landscape between buildings.

**CONSTRUCTION** — The build quality of new developments, and the materials selected as part of the construction process, should ensure a high standard of appearance over time. Construction techniques and materials should prevent a rapid deterioration that can lead to buildings with an unsightly or neglected appearance. Building maintenance should be cost-effective and easy to administer.

**SECURITY** — All developments and improvements in Hawkhurst should be designed to ensure that safety and security are built in. Designs should ensure people feel safe during hours of darkness through unobtrusive path lighting and active frontages (i.e. doors and windows facing onto the street) and safe, permeable routes where appropriate.

**LIGHTING** — Consideration should be given for the need for lighting, and where it is deemed essential, efforts should be made to seek to minimise its impact in the landscape through choice of light source and control of light spillage. Lighting should only be installed in areas of need, such as alongside pedestrian routes in and around the built areas of the parish. Areas adjacent to open countryside should be left unlit to avoid light pollution. Hawkhurst is part of the High Weald AONB Unit's Dark Skies pilot.

**SUSTAINABILITY** — New development should seek for ecological enhancement to the immediate area, such as provision for birds and bats to be incorporated into new buildings. In order to support the local wood fuel industry and thereby the management of AONB woodlands, new residential development should include provision for working log burners through the inclusion of a working chimney except where it can be demonstrated it is not feasible or practical on smaller properties. This design measure has been recommended by the AONB Unit through consultation on the draft version of this plan.

**RESOURCE EFFICIENCY** — Measures to help conserve water (e.g. grey water storage) and energy in new buildings will be encouraged. The reuse and recycling of building materials will be encouraged, as will the use of locally sourced timber in construction.

**COLOUR** — All colours should be taken from the AONB Unit's "Guidance on the Selection and use of Colour in Development".

**CONTEXT** — Names of new roads to reflect the location's history and sites' current names so as to be clearly placed in Hawkhurst.

## Design Guidance Notes— some key issues for new development proposals to consider



1. Bay windows help add a sense of overlooking and natural surveillance to the public realm. Variety in the form and detail of dwellings at street level is encouraged and supported. Side gardens, mixed in amongst front gardens can break up the length of built form and add further green elements to the street scene.



2. Vertical elements in the street scene, such as taller chimney stacks, window detailing and gables can add a sense of grandeur and elegance. However, such techniques are best used within the existing built-up areas and where street widths are generous.



3. Deep front garden spaces create a sense of privacy through a set-back from the public realm. They allow for residents to personalise the space and create distinct identities for their home.

Over time, landscape in these small spaces can mature and create verdant edges to streets and lanes.



4. Buildings accessed directly from the back of the footway can also work successfully in the more compact and higher density parts of the parish. This technique may be suitable for infill schemes where sites are small. In such instances, car parking to the rear of the property is preferred as on-street in front of the property may block the footway and damage the street scene.

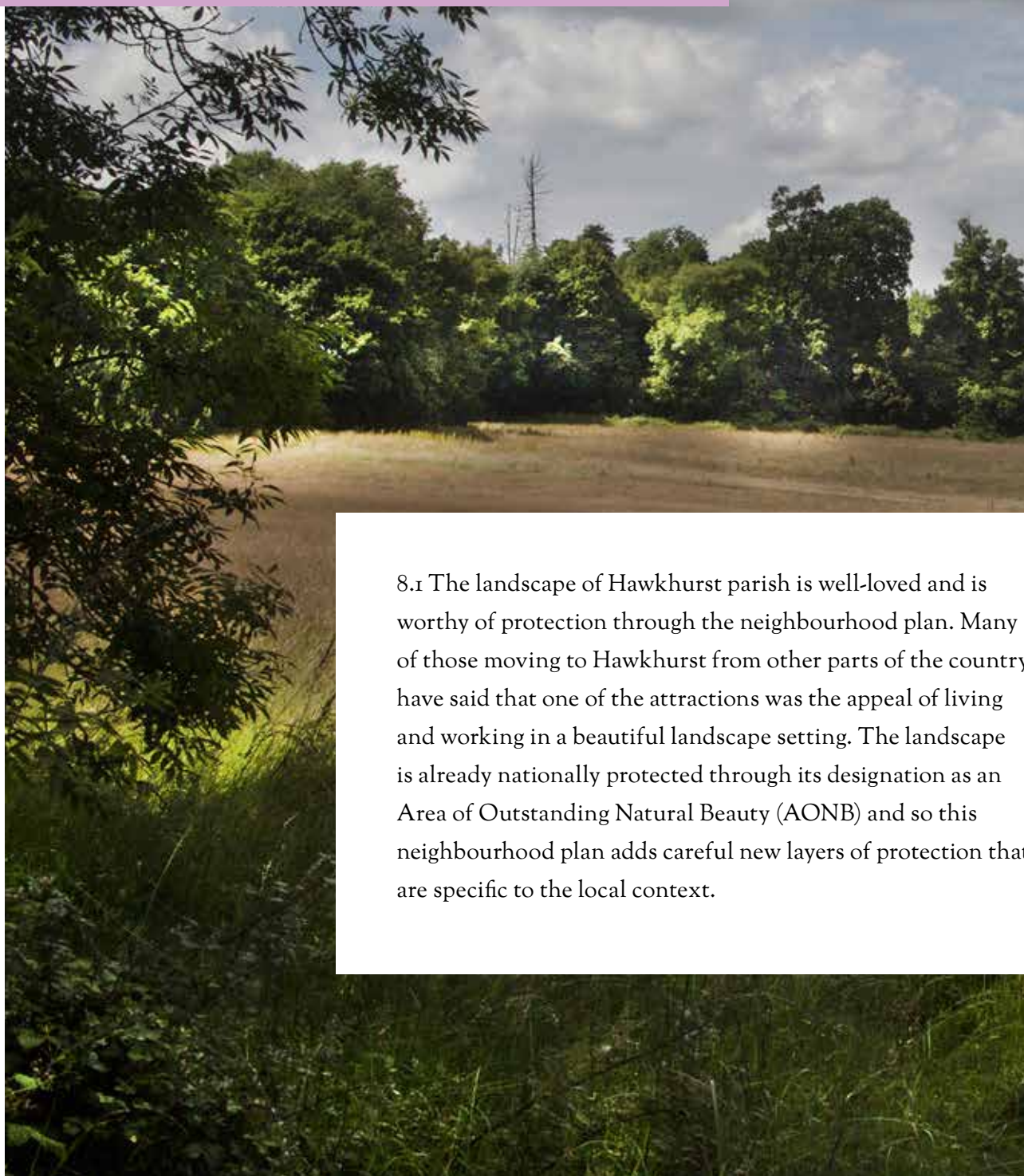
5. Strong and consistent building lines should be adhered to by the main element in the composition with smaller elements, such as garage block and small extensions, adopting a more sensitive location further back. Flat roofs should be avoided. Vertical timber fencing can make an effective boundary treatment, although green edges in the form of well-maintained hedges are preferred in Hawkhurst.



6. Rural clusters of buildings, creating open-sided courtyards around feature trees are characteristic of the parish. Where the opportunity exists, new development proposals should explore the idea of similar low-rise, low-impact clusters that can create attractive new additions to the parish.

# Landscape & Environmental Protection

## Planning Policies



8.1 The landscape of Hawkhurst parish is well-loved and is worthy of protection through the neighbourhood plan. Many of those moving to Hawkhurst from other parts of the country 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 are specific to the local context.

## 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
- 7 Change

## 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.

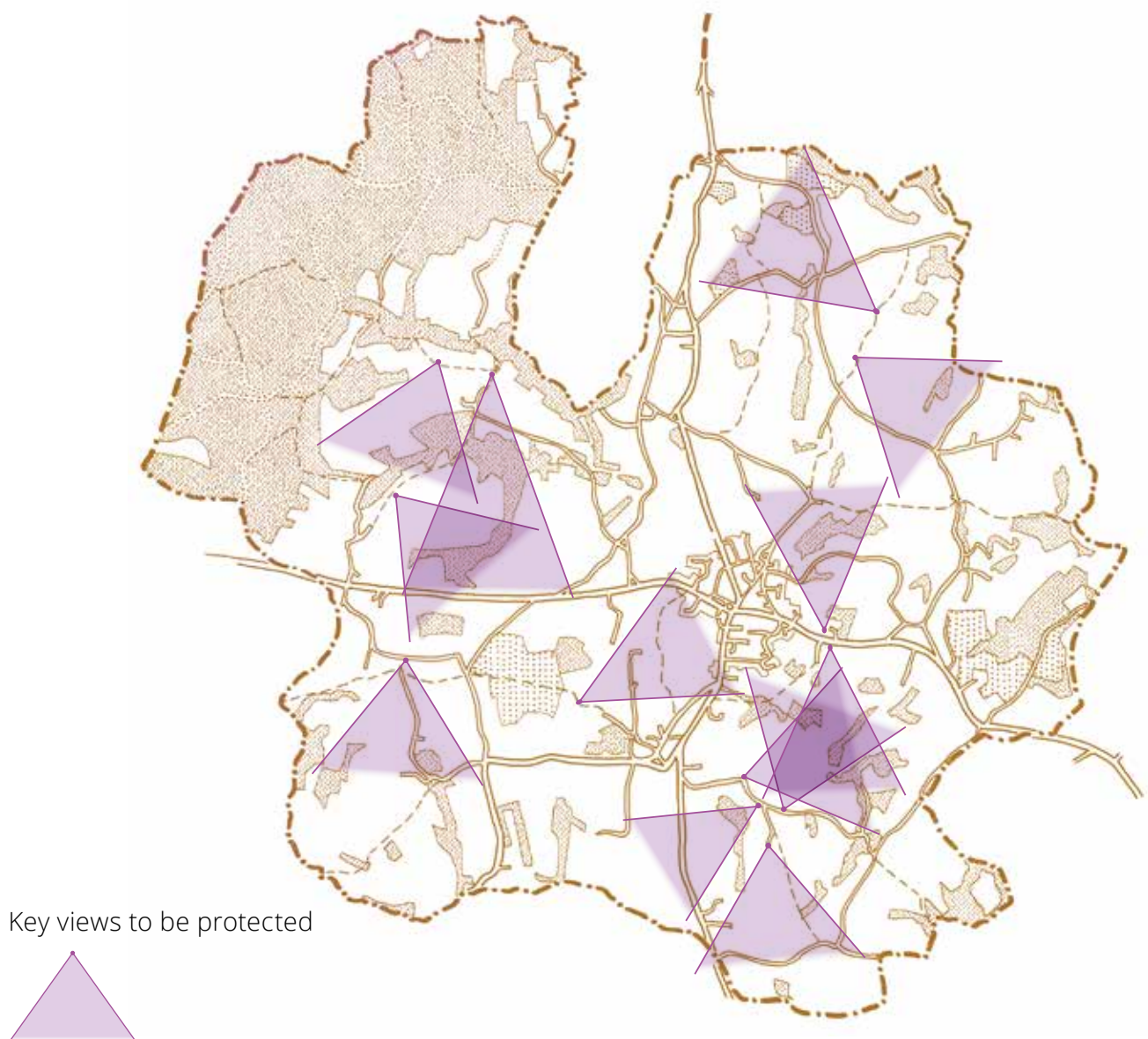


Looking north towards Highgate. A good example of the strong relationship between the surrounding landscape and the built elements of Hawkhurst parish.



## 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 LP1 (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.

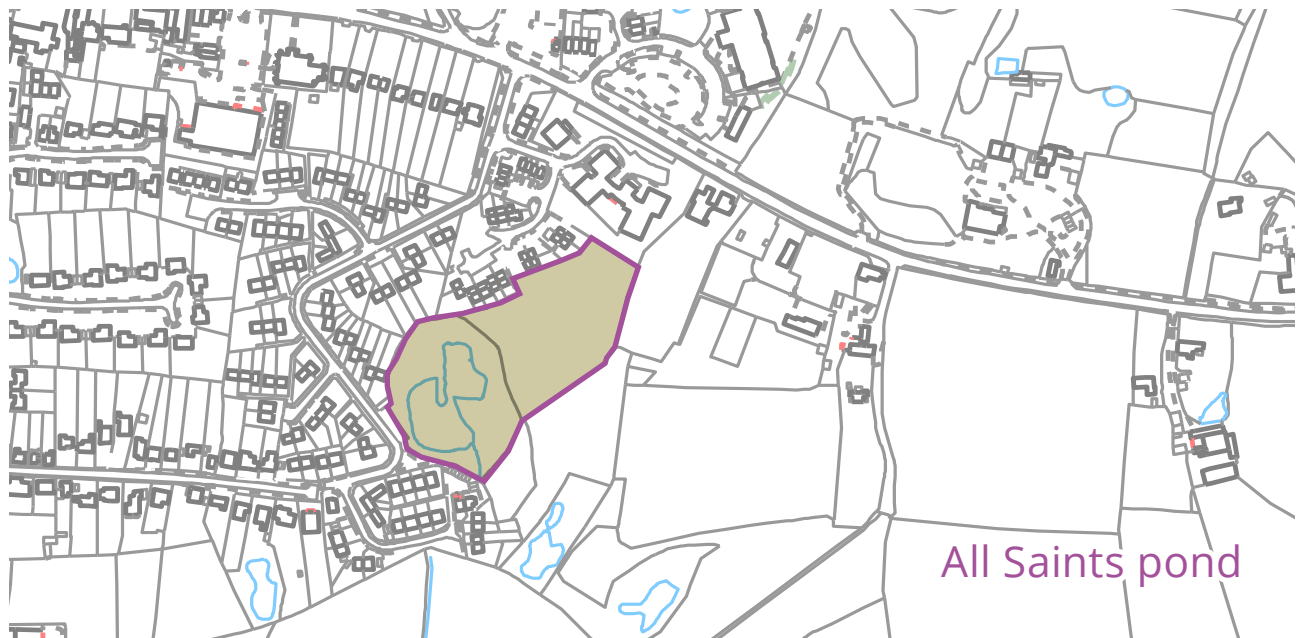
8.11 Areas of green space have been identified as part of this network. These will be designated as “Local Green Spaces” in the Hawkhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

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.

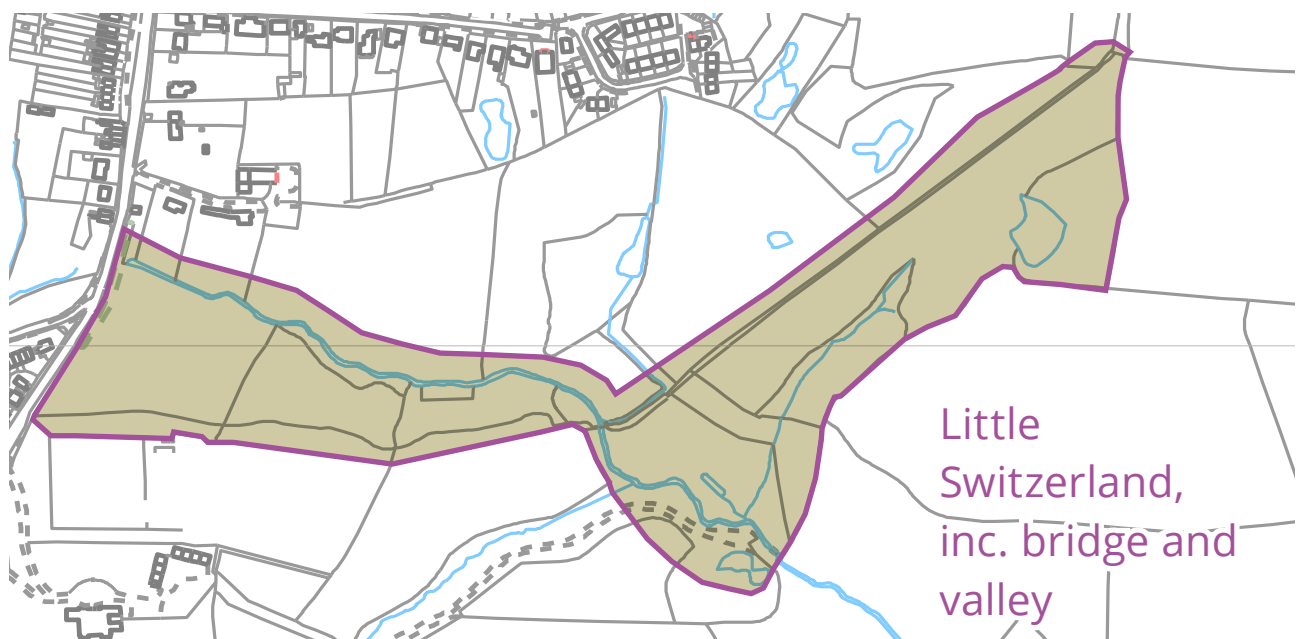
8.13 The consultation work to date has shown that the Moor enjoys significant areas of green open space while Highgate appears to lack small, accessible green space for enjoyment by the public. This means that any development sites in and around Highgate will need to provide sufficient green space to 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.



Church pond



All Saints pond



Little  
Switzerland,  
inc. bridge and  
valley

# Access & Movement

## Planning Policies



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.



## Policy AM1

### 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.

#### Principal plan objectives supported

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

## Policy AM2

### 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.

## Policy AM3

### 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.

Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 3 Choice
- 4 Efficiency
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure

## 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 trails, 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.

## Policy AM4

### 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.

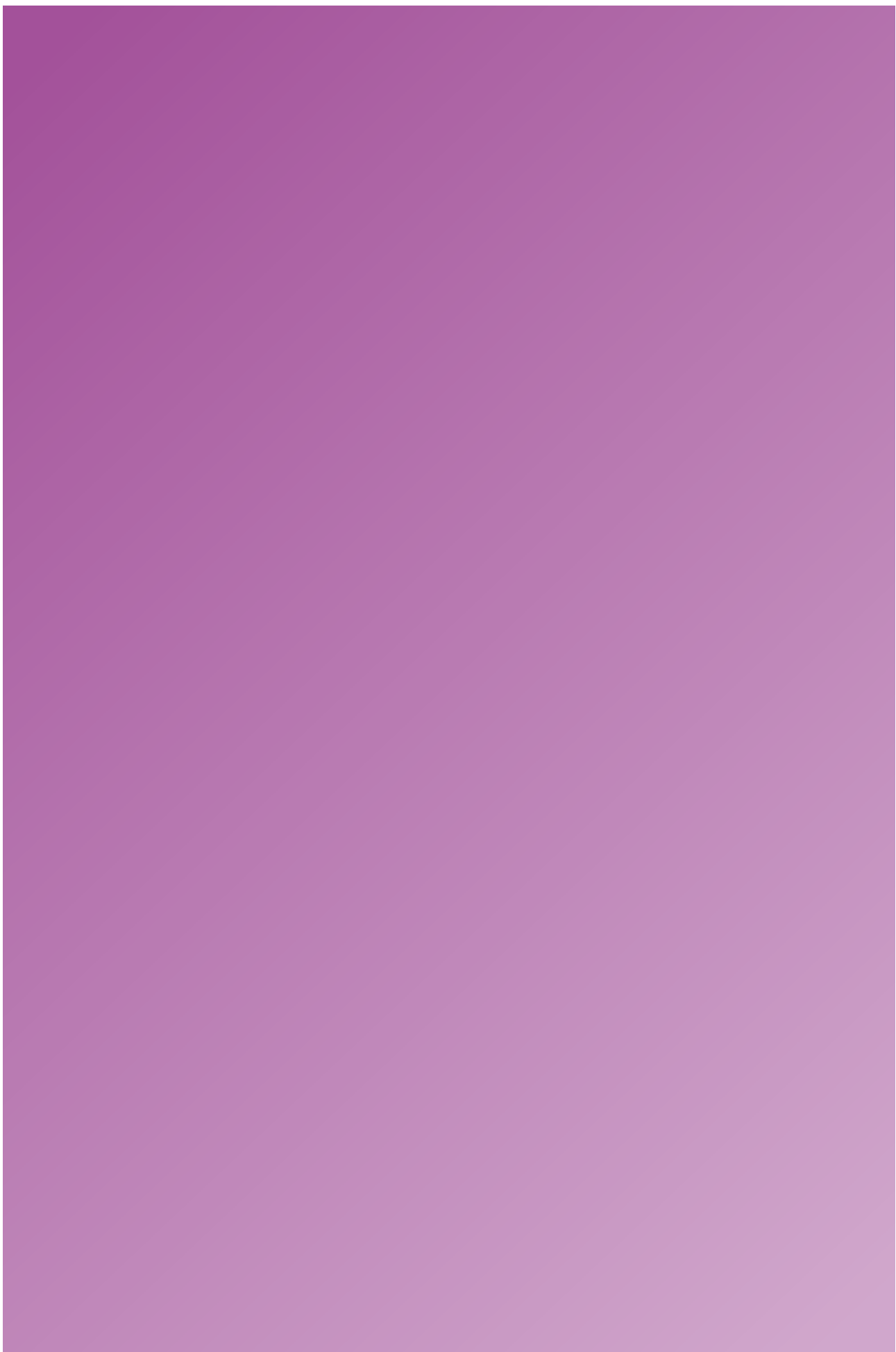
9.17 Meanwhile, Hawkhurst is surrounded by attractive open green space and areas. The creation of off-street recreational routes will enhance existing access and connections between the built-up parts of the village and the green spaces beyond. These routes need to be convenient, accessible and enjoyable. 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 well-connected 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.

#### Principal plan objectives supported

- 1 Character
- 3 Choice
- 4 Efficiency
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure





# Community Infrastructure

## Planning Policies



10.1 The issues of community infrastructure — that is, the supporting services that create the quality of life village residents and businesses require — was another principal theme of the consultation results. Residents expressed concern about a sense of continual erosion of the type, ranges and variety of shops, services and other facilities in the parish. In recent memory many have disappeared so this policy theme has developed to protect those that remain and add new services to meet identified demand.

10.2 With regard to sports provision, the parish currently has two areas dedicated to sports provision, at Hartenoak 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.

## Policy CM1

### 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 well-used 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 facilities 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.

10.4 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.

#### Principal plan objectives supported

- 2 Coordination
- 4 Efficiency
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure

## Policy CM2

### New Community Hall

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

Principal plan objectives supported

- 2 Coordination
- 4 Efficiency
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure

## 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.



## Policy CM3

### 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

- 2 Coordination
- 4 Efficiency
- 6 Quality
- 7 Change
- 8 Infrastructure

## Policy Justification

10.10 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.

## Policy CM4

### 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.

#### Principal plan objectives supported

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1 Character    | 7 Change         |
| 2 Coordination | 8 Infrastructure |
| 4 Efficiency   |                  |
| 5 Protection   |                  |

## CM4 Preservation & Enhancement of Community Services



*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.

# Made Version of the Neighbourhood Plan

Approved at Referendum



11.1 This is the made version of the neighbourhood plan. The plan was subject to referendum on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and was voted upon by registered electors living within the Hawkhurst Parish boundary. The neighbourhood plan was supported at referendum with a 91% vote in favour of the plan, on a turnout of 35% of the electorate.



## Further information

11.2 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](mailto: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,  
TN11 1RS.

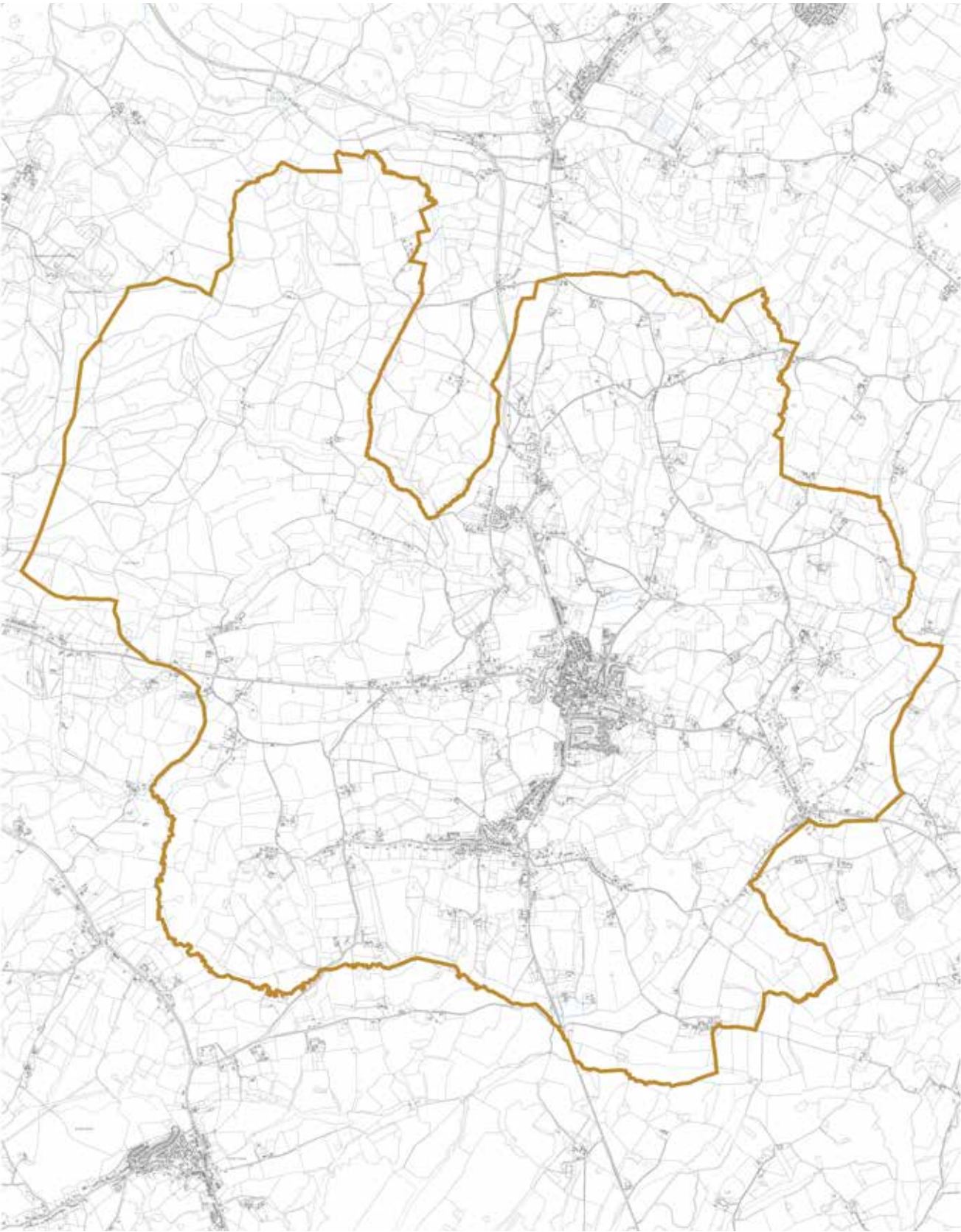
— 01892 554056

— [planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

— [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

# Appendix 01

Boundary for  
the Hawkhurst  
Neighbourhood Plan



## Appendix 02

Interim Housing  
Position for Hawkhurst



## Interim Housing Position

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

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

## Appendix 03

Highgate Crossroads  
Concept Scheme

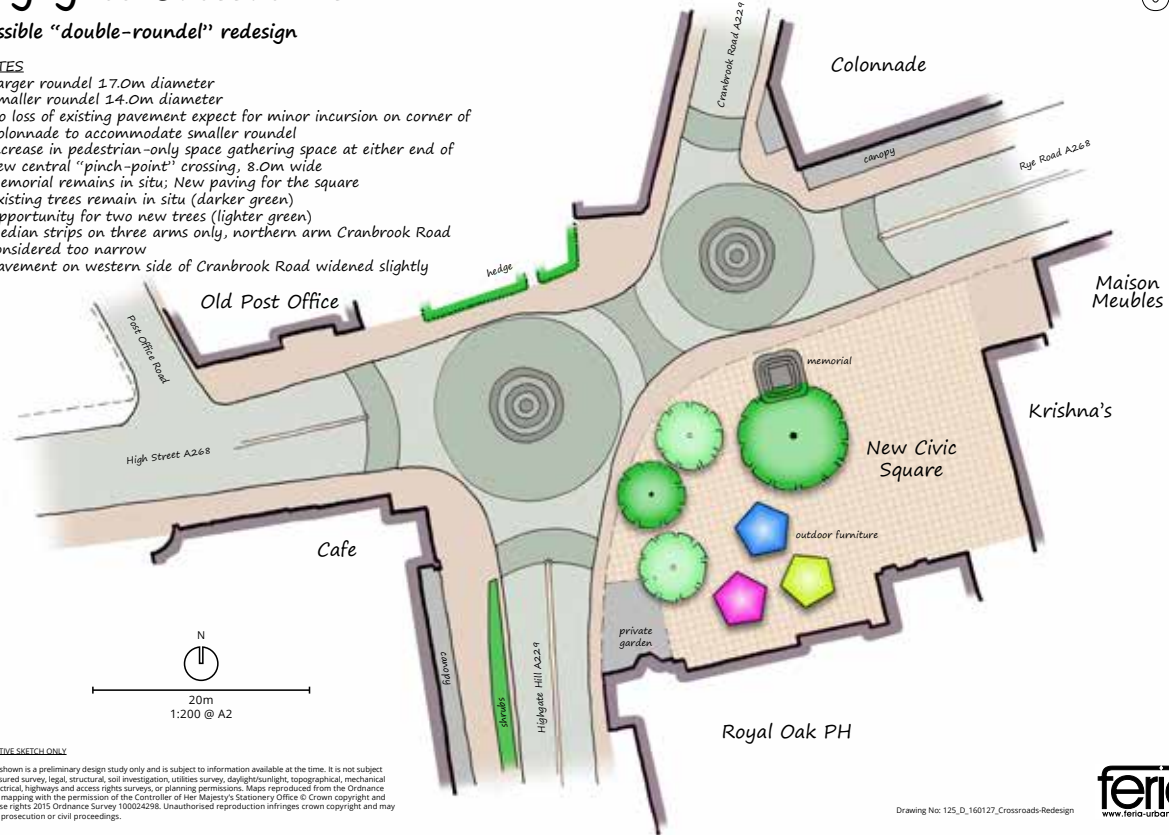
# Highgate Crossroads

01

Possible "double-roundel" redesign

**NOTES**

- Larger roundel 17.0m diameter
- Smaller roundel 14.0m diameter
- No loss of existing pavement expect for minor incursion on corner of Colonnade to accommodate smaller roundel
- Increase in pedestrian-only space gathering space at either end of new central "pinch-point" crossing, 8.0m wide
- Memorial remains in situ; New paving for the square
- Existing trees remain in situ (darker green)
- Opportunity for two new trees (lighter green)
- Median strips on three arms only, northern arm Cranbrook Road considered too narrow
- Pavement on western side of Cranbrook Road widened slightly



**INDICATIVE SKETCH ONLY**

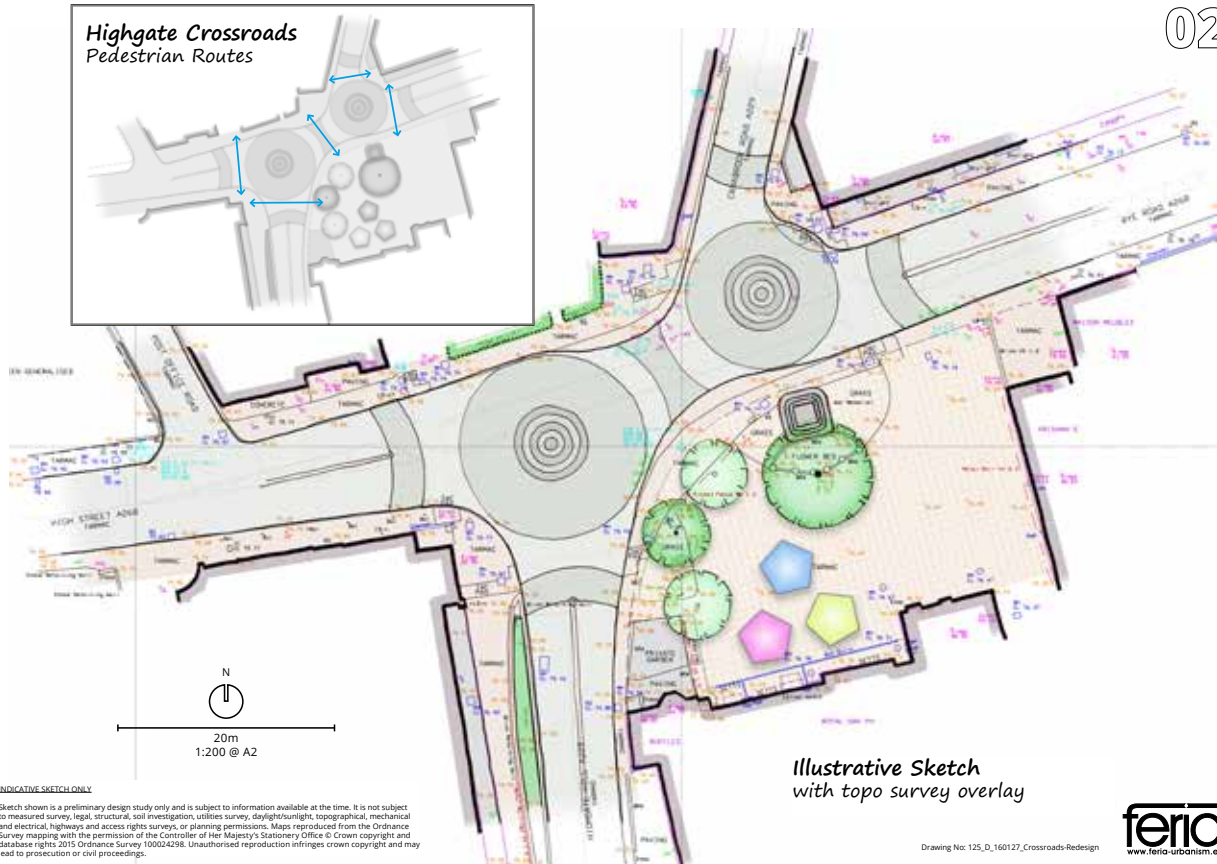
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Drawing No. 125\_D\_160127\_Crossroads-Redesign



## Highgate Crossroads Pedestrian Routes

02



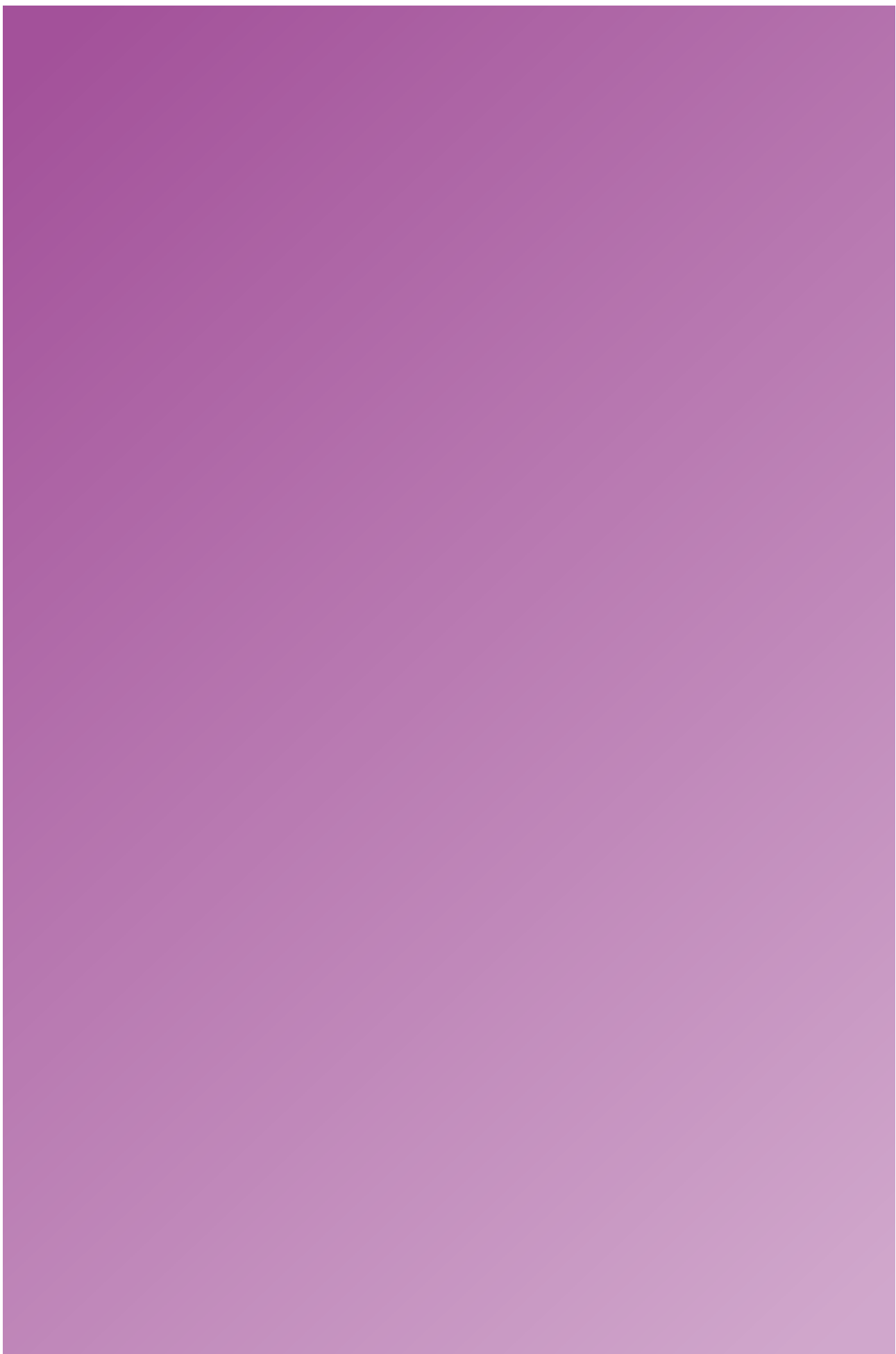
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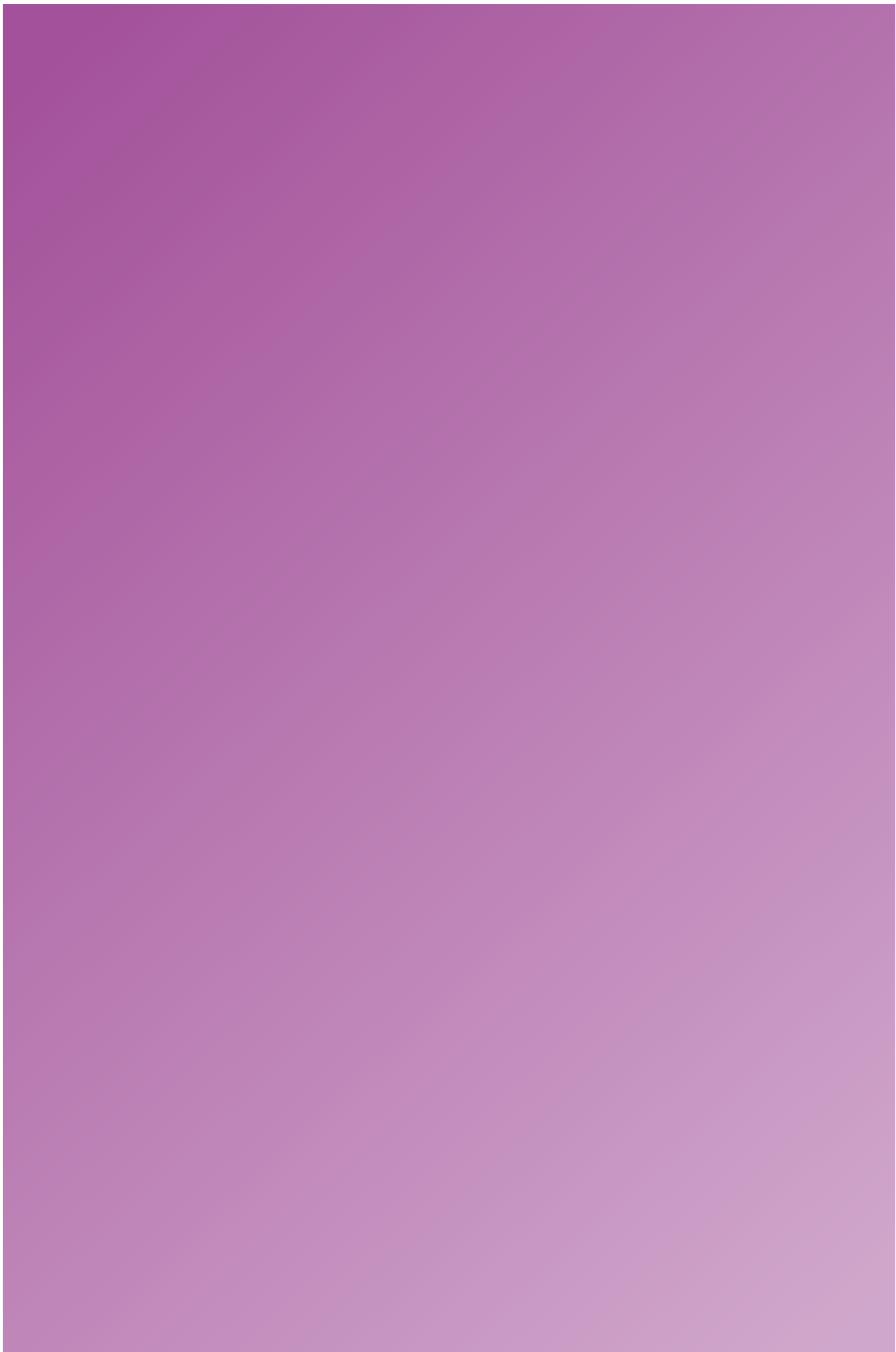
Illustrative Sketch with topo survey overlay

Drawing No. 125\_D\_160127\_Crossroads-Redesign











Hawkhurst  
Parish  
Council