

February 2016

Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan

Full Results of the Three Visioning Events



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In January 2016 a series of visioning events were held in Ticehurst, Flimwell and Stonegate to explore the main challenges and opportunities in each village. The results of these events are set out here and will provide a key ingredient to the emerging Ticehurst Parish Neighbourhood Plan.



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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Contents

Results from the Visioning Events

page 06 Ticehurst

page 18 Flimwell

page 28 Stonegate

Please note that Tasks 6, 7 and 8 were not completed at the three individual events due to time constraints although printed materials for these tasks was prepared in advance. Hence why the results shown on the following pages are for Tasks 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 only.

TICEHURST

12th January 2016



Task 01 — People & Places

In this task, participants were asked about the different challenges and opportunities faced by different demographic groups.

Teenagers

Challenges

Poor public transport (mentioned four times); No decent meeting place/youth club (mentioned four times); Need more sports facilities/teams (mentioned twice); Limited out of school activities; No sense of community for this age group.

Opportunities

Access to countryside; Multi-court facilities.

Summary

Ticehurst offers teenagers a great place from which to enjoy the countryside. The surrounding landscape offers many opportunities and activities, however access to these areas can be limited. There are sections within and around Ticehurst where no footpaths are present, forcing pedestrians into the roads or deterring them completely. These areas need to be improved, if young people are to be encouraged to travel using alternate modes to the car, and relying on parents or careers. Better public transport services would

also enable teenagers to travel to nearby villages and towns into the evenings and on weekends too. This age group appears to lack a sense of community and enhancing the existing sports and activity groups, alongside the provision of a meeting place or a youth club could help to bring individuals together.

Businesses & Employers

Challenges

Parking arrangements (mentioned twice); Currently inadequate broadband (mentioned twice); Communication; Opportunities.

Opportunities

No Comments Made.

Summary

Businesses and employers in Ticehurst need to be offered better opportunities if they are to be sustained and enhanced. There needs to be much improved communication between businesses, customers and consumers. The current broadband also needs to be upgraded to allow for greater business scope and networking access. Improving external factors such as parking arrangements could help a business to develop with a consideration to its immediate surroundings.

Pensioners & Empty-Nesters

Challenges

Speed of traffic (mentioned twice); Connecting footpaths (mentioned twice); Better access for those with disabilities; Need more safe crossing points.

Opportunities

Good grounds for exercise; Wide variety of activities; Cafes; Clubs; Volunteering; Good health service.

Summary

Pensioners and empty-nesters in Ticehurst have many opportunities to get involved in community activities. There are painting clubs, walking groups and voluntary work available, alongside the University of the Third Age (U3A). The doctor's surgery and pharmacy are considered to be very good, although they are believed to be reaching towards the higher end of a manageable capacity.

Pedestrian accessibility is one of the main concerns for the older generations. There needs to be provision of footpaths outside the immediate village, as the roads head out towards other nearby settlements. When implementing and maintaining footpaths, the access for those with disabilities needs to be considered. The speed of traffic needs to be monitored and slowed down and there is a strong requirement for more safe crossing points to become available.

Young Professionals Without Children

Challenges

Poor transport and late night service (mentioned three times); Restricted access into the housing market (mentioned twice); Do not take part in village life; Need access to better broadband.

Opportunities

Restaurants; Squash clubs; Cycling; Reasonable train services from Wadhurst.

Summary

Ticehurst offers a choice of restaurants and sports clubs and opportunities for the younger generations. Ticehurst's young professionals would benefit from improved access to transport, alongside an improved service for public transport.

The rail connections to London from neighbouring train stations such as Wadhurst are considered to be reasonably good. To enhance the access to such train stations, the bus services to and from Ticehurst need to become more reliable and more frequent.

Many of the younger generation need to be encouraged to partake in village life and communicate with those living nearby. The quality of broadband should also be improved.

This particular age group need better access into the housing market with true, affordable housing. This is especially needed for those that have grown up in Ticehurst and with family connections in the area.

Families With Young Children

Challenges

Affordable housing (mentioned four times); Pavement parking (mentioned twice); Better footpaths; Poor public transport; Local employment opportunities.

Opportunities

Good playgrounds (mentioned twice); Cafes; Access to Bedgebury.

Summary

For families with young children there are many attractions in and around Ticehurst. There are good local playing areas and fields for the children, and a range of cafes that may also serve as meeting points for families. Further afield, Bedgebury Forest is a popular family attraction. As with housing for young professionals, young families also need an equal opportunity to buy property and live in the area.

To enhance the experiences of living in Ticehurst, the public footpaths and transport should be improved. There needs to be safe pedestrian access throughout the area, and especially on routes leading to schools and shops. These paths need to be kept wide enough to allow room for pushchairs and this also concerns parking arrangements, where vehicles should not be allowed to obstruct pedestrian ease of access.

Providing access to local, relevant employment opportunities would help with the work-life balance of families too.

Visitors & Tourists

Challenges

Access to public transport (mentioned twice); Need for better parking (mentioned twice); Easier access to signage (mentioned twice); Better choice of accommodation.

Opportunities

Bowl Water; National Trust properties; Village centre; Fruit farms.

Summary

There are many places and spaces in and around Ticehurst for visitors to enjoy. The pretty village centre provides a sense of arrival and offers the potential to rest and recoup. Just to the north of Ticehurst is Bowl Water and in the wider surrounding areas there are National Trust properties for tourist to enjoy.

There is a choice of accommodation available, however it is believed that the range available could be better, alongside a wider range of amenities. Better public transport, car-parking facilities and signage would also greatly enhance a visitor's experience.

Students

Challenges

School buses and public transport (mentioned three times); Quality of broadband; Temporary employment opportunities.

Opportunities

Employment; Apprenticeships.

Summary

Access to much higher quality broadband is important for students in Ticehurst. School buses and other public transport are currently inadequate and restrict accessibility for this particular group. There also needs to be more temporary and flexible employment opportunities for students and possibly the chance to learn through apprenticeships.



Groups mark on plans and maps areas of potential change in and around Ticehurst.



Groups assess the qualities that best define and describe Ticehurst.

Task 02 — Top Ten Qualities

	<u>Number of Appearances & Calculations</u>
1. Friendly	6x Friendly (1) (2) (3) (1) (1) (4) - $12/6 = 2$
2. Safe	5x Safe (1) (4) (2) (3) (1) - $11/5 = 2.2$
3. Attractive	6x Attractive (6) (3) (6) (2) (4) (2) - $23/6 = 3.8$
4. Green	5x Green (4) (5) (2) (6) (7) - $24/5 = 4.8$
5. Distinctive	3x Distinctive (2) (8) (5) - $15/3 = 5$
6. Considered (charming)	3x Considered (charming as it is) (10) (4) (2) - $16/3 = 5.3$
7. Working Village	4x Working Village (5) (5) (6) (8) - $24/4 = 6$
8. Fun	3x Fun (8) (9) (3) - $20/3 = 6.7$
9. Clean	4x Clean (5) (7) (10) (6) - $28/4 = 7$
	2x Refreshing (7) (7) - $14/2 = 7$
	3x Open (4) (10) (8) - $22/3 = 7.3$
10. Refreshing	4x Inclusive (7) (8) (10) (9) - $34/4 = 8.5$

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 03 — Limited Growth?

This task tested how the village could accommodate a limited amount of new housing and what criteria may need to be applied to make this acceptable.

The preferred areas and types of development were as follows. The number of groups and/or respondents who mentioned this land as suitable for development is in brackets.

—Develop in the field behind Acres Rise, Ticehurst & Flimwell school – needs to be attractive properties with tree screen and affordable homes (7)

—Develop in the green space to the east of Lower St. Mary's Road (6)

—Develop in the field immediately to the south of the B2099, just to the south west of Upper Platts road (on the east entrance into Ticehurst) (5)

—No developing to the south of B2099, behind Hillbury Gardens – could be highway, drainage, access or wildlife problems (5)

—No developing to the north of the B2099 and the east of Cross Lane Gardens due to access issues (4)

—Develop in the field behind The Bell Inn and the football pitch. (2)

—Develop along Church Street (2)

—Develop on orchards to the north of Vineyard Lane

—Develop at or around Maynards pick-your-own to the west of Three Leg Cross Road

—Develop infill land to the east of Three Leg Cross Road

—Develop wedge of land to the north east of Farthing Hill

—Develop in the field to the north of Steellands Rise and behind The Cherry Tree Inn

—Develop in the field to the north of Upper Platts road – sledging field

—Develop to the east of Eden Court, south of St Mary's Close

—Develop behind Coronation Cottages heading to Flimwell

— No developing on the fields to the east of Horsegrove Avenue (next to golf course)

— Focus on locals with shared equity and affordable housing (min. 40%)

— Improve amenities, health services, retail facilities and traffic management (2).

Summary

The suggested areas for development in Ticehurst are mainly situated in and around the village centre. Residents consider the north side of the village an area more suited for larger development sites. Development of the field to the north of the local car-park and football pitch, behind The Bell Inn is considered feasible, as is development on the field between Acres Rise and Ticehurst & Flimwell School. Any development on these sites will be open and visible, therefore the architecture and landscaping must be of high quality.

Building on land to the south west of the village centre, behind Hillbury Gardens is a contentious subject. Residents believe that it would be encroaching out of the current village development boundary and will possibly have detrimental effects to highway and drainage infrastructure and the local wildlife. Similarly, building to the east of Cross Lane Gardens could come with access issues.

Other suggested areas for development are infill sites heading east along the south side of the B2099, and also along the west side of Church Street. Land to the front and back of The Cherry Tree Inn has also been highlighted as suitable for new homes. A key aspect that residents would like to see for new development in Ticehurst is affordable housing which is primarily focused at existing locals who may be first-time buyers.



Groups explore how the area around Ticehurst is used and managed at present.



Workshop participants look at the areas where new homes could be located at a future date.

Task 04 — Learning From Other Places

Participants were asked to mark on a plan the places that they liked with a green sticky dot and the places they did not with a red sticky dot.

Places to be proud of

- The Bell Inn
- St. Mary's Church & views
- The Priory — employment & architecture
- Ticehurst & Flimwell Primary School
- Recreational grounds
- Allotments
- Church Street — architecture & views
- New housing in front of Springfields
- The village square
- High Street — views to the south

Summary

Ticehurst, particularly the centre, is considered to be pretty, with many examples of good architecture highlighted with green dots across the map. The Bell Inn and St. Mary's Church were both repeatedly mentioned as popular destinations that bring people in from further afield. St. Mary's Church also offers vistas of its surroundings from within the grounds. Similarly the shops, cafes, architecture and approach into the village along Church Street are considered great assets for the area.

There are many pockets of valuable green space spread throughout Ticehurst that are also popular with the locals. These include the allotments situated between Pickforde Lane and Farthing Hill, local play areas, ponds, recreational fields and fields useful for tobogganing in the snow. The square in the centre of Ticehurst is an important feature for the area and needs to be maintained. Further from the square, footpaths allow walkers to venture off in all directions into the surrounding countryside and enjoy the views.

Places that could be better

- Village square — parking
- Village square — needs updating
- High Street — parking
- High Street — size of passing vehicles
- Church Street — vehicular traffic
- Church Street — parking
- Dale Hill — pedestrian access
- Ticehurst Village Hall — facilities
- Ticehurst Village Hall — crossing the road
- The Coachworks development

Summary

The village square centred in the heart of Ticehurst has great potential. Current layouts for vehicular and pedestrian use restrict this potential and locals feel that the area needs improving. Parked cars currently dominate the area as there is no specific order or strategy to the parking, which makes access across the square difficult for pedestrians.

Many parked cars also line the main high street and this again can prove difficult for pedestrians negotiating their path and also other road users navigating the roads safely. The speed and size of the traffic that passes along the B2099 is currently an issue, and the junction of Church Street and St. Mary's Lane can be dangerous for pedestrians and vehicle users alike.

The lack of a pedestrian footway running along the B2087 where the one-way system occurs is a growing concern and needs addressing. Many school children use that route to walk to school and as it is a one-way system, vehicles have a tendency to speed along this section of road. The Village Hall is another great asset within Ticehurst however it is considered not fit for purpose and in need of improvements.

Crossing the B2099 to get the hall and the recreational fields behind can prove difficult too. The new Old Coachworks just to the west of the centre and situated on the B2099 is considered a “monstrosity” and a development that should have been low-cost and for young people in the village.

Task 05 — Top Ten Challenges

	<u>Number of Appearances & Calculations</u>
1. Housing Growth	6x Housing Growth (1) (3) (1) (1) (4) (6) - 16/6 = 2.7
2. Health Services	3x Health Services (3) (1) (4) - 8/3 = 2.7
3. Traffic	6x Traffic (4) (2) (6) (2) (2) (1) - 17/6 = 2.8
4. Super-Fast Broadband	2x Super-Fast Broadband (5) (3) - 8/2 = 4
5. Maintaining Village Character	5x Maintaining Village Character (2) (1) (10) (3) (7) - 23/5 = 4.6
6. Employment	3x Employment (5) (6) (3) - 14/3 = 4.7
7. Countryside Protection	5x Countryside Protection (5) (9) (4) (5) (2) - 25/5 = 5
8. Architectural Quality	3x Architectural Quality (3) (5) (8) - 16/3 = 5.3
9. Sense of Community	4x Sense of Community (7) (10) (2) (6) - 25/4 = 6.3
10. Town Square & Civic Spaces	3x Town Square & Civic Spaces (8) (4) (7) - 19/3 = 6.3
	3x Non-School Youth Opportunities (6) (9) (5) - 20/3 = 6.7

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 09 — Audit Of Local Services

This task asked participants to record the local services and facilities that they felt were vital to quality of life in the village. This audit of local services will inform the areas that need protecting and nurturing by the neighbourhood plan.

Pubs (10); Doctors (8); Football pitch/recreational grounds (8); Church (7); Primary school (6); Shops (6); Buses (6); Pharmacy/Chemist (5); Sheltered housing (5); Golf course (5); Village club (5); Allotments (5); Post office (4); Fruit farm (4); Bakery (4); Scouts (3); Dentist (3); Florists (3); Industrial estate (3); Garages (3); Two car parks (3); Indian takeaway (3); Village hall (3); Ponds (3); No Butchers (3); Fish & Meat once a week (2); Bewl Water (2); Railway shop (2); Institute (2); Hairdressers (2); Greengrocers (2); Dry Cleaners (2); Pizza van (2); Fish and chip van (2); Ancient woodland (2); Walks & footpaths (2); Hotel (2); Cafes (2); Pre-school (2); Drapery; Parish council; Dress shop; B&B accommodation; Public toilets; Banks.

Summary

The village is considered to be the central ‘hub’ of the parish. With an open village square at its centre and the offer of many pubs, shops and cafes, it attracts locals and tourists for convenience and leisure. The local health services such as the doctor’s surgery, dental practice and chemists are also situated in this area. Ticehurst has a public bus service that serves the wider areas and allows connections to the surrounding area. There are two car parks within the heart of the village, which encourages people to drive into the area, not just to use the local amenities but also as a base to reach other settlements and countryside.

Car-park users could be staff for local businesses, residents of the parish wanting to use the more frequent bus service of Ticehurst, or tourists starting their expeditions from the centre. This central part of the parish offers varied accommodation from bed and breakfasts in the local pub, to a hotel on the golf course. The golf course is an attraction. There is no butcher shop in Ticehurst anymore, however there is the opportunity to buy fish and meat once a week from a frequent mobile service. There are also regular takeaway vans that set up in the centre.

This again shows the importance and the current popularity of the village square, and how it serves not only Ticehurst residents but also the whole of the parish.

FLIMWELL

13th January 2016



Task 01 — People & Places

In this task, participants were asked about the different challenges and opportunities faced by different demographic groups.

Teenagers

Challenges

Need evening transport to Hawkhurst and Wadhurst (mentioned twice); Lack of a range of sporting activities; Need better facilities.

Opportunities

Have an organised youth and sports club.

Summary

Whilst Flimwell is considered to have good vehicular access to the wider surrounding areas, there is a need for better public transport links for those that do not drive. This is especially noticeable in the evenings, when teenagers would like to travel between Flimwell, Hawkhurst and Wadhurst with ease, but currently cannot. Flimwell does have an organised youth and sports club and this should be expanded upon to provide better facilities and activities.

Businesses & Employers

Challenges

Need to advertise local businesses; Commuting on public transport is an issue; Quality of broadband and phone signal is weak.

Opportunities

Rail links are available; Road links are good; Light industry; The Weald Smokery.

Summary

The A21/A268 crossroads provide easy vehicular access into the wider areas. There are rail links within a distance, but commuters have to first travel to the surrounding train stations; such as Stonegate, Etchingam and Staplehurst. Flimwell contains a few light, industrial units with many of the businesses being local.

The Weald Smokery provides some employment and is well known in and around the area. Flimwell needs to find a way to advertise the smaller local businesses that many villagers are not currently aware of. Online networking and communicating could also be improved through the provision of better broadband and phone signals.

Pensioners & Empty-Nesters

Challenges

Need better community facilities (mentioned twice); Can be lonely; Need motor transport to access activities; Pedestrian access to Ticehurst.

Opportunities

Have clubs; Sheltered housing; Ticehurst Friends.

Summary

Pensioners and empty-nesters can be lonely if they are isolated and living in Flimwell. Travelling to and from the surrounding areas often requires motorised transport and at present, pedestrian access into Ticehurst is challenging as there are not always pavements to walk along. Flimwell needs improved community facilities to enable greater engagement between residents. There are a few clubs and societies that are currently running and available to locals.

Young Professionals Without Children

Challenges

Lack of dining choice; Getting involved with the village; Affordable housing; Choice of shops; Facilities.

Opportunities

Good countryside links; Outdoor activities.

Summary

Flimwell provides good countryside links for local outdoor activities which are popular with the younger generation. There is a need for more shops however, and a wider range of facilities and local dining opportunities. The young professionals and first-time buyers also need to be given the opportunity to settle down in the area and purchase affordable housing.



Participants explore how different demographic groups feel about Flimwell.

Families With Young Children

Challenges

Safer pedestrian access to schools and shops;
Pedestrian access around the crossroads;
Capacity of schools.

Opportunities

Playgrounds; Recreational areas; Nursery school.

Summary

For families with young children, Flimwell provides a nursery school, playgrounds and a recreational area. The recreational area is predominantly used by the local cricket club and this can sometimes be an overbearing deterrent for children wanting to use the grounds. Safer pedestrian access also needs to be considered around shops, schools and the crossroads. The junction of the A21/A268 currently splits Flimwell into two halves and divides the settlement.

Visitors & Tourists

Challenges

No Comments Made.

Opportunities

Good range of sporting activities; Kino cinema in Hawkhurst; Hotels and pubs.

Summary

Flimwell offers a variety of facilities and activities for visitors and tourists. Bedgebury Forest and Bewl Water attract cyclists and horse-riders. The golf course is also a key attractor. The neighbouring village of Hawkhurst offers entertainment from the Kino cinema. There are also a few local hotels and pubs available for non-residents of Flimwell.

Students

Challenges

Local public transport is infrequent.

Opportunities

Potential for new architecture students to study and work in the parish at the redeveloped Bird Park (to become a new architecture school).

Summary

Students living in Flimwell have to rely upon cars to travel in and out of the area. The local bus service is too infrequent. The redevelopment of the Bird Park as a new university architecture school should prove rewarding for students and could be a great asset to the area. To assist with the needs of students and staff that will use the premises, Flimwell and its neighbouring settlements may need to provide new suitable accommodation.

Task 02 — Top Ten Qualities

	<u>Number of Appearances & Calculations</u>
1. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	3x AONB (8) (1) (1) - $10/3 = 3.3$
2. Safe	2x Safe (4) (3) - $7/2 = 3.5$
3. Green	4x Green (1) (1) (8) (6) - $16/4 = 4$
4. Friendly	3x Friendly (4) (6) (3) - $13/3 = 4.3$
5. Distinctive	2x Distinctive (2) (9) - $11/2 = 5.5$
6. Enterprising	2x Enterprising (9) (2) - $11/2 = 5.5$
7. Active (sporty)	2x Active (sporty) (7) (4) - $11/2 = 5.5$
8. Clean	3x Clean (2) (5) (10) - $17/3 = 5.7$
9. Attractive	2x Attractive (6) (7) - $13/2 = 6.5$
10. Harmonious	2x Harmonious (6) (8) - $14/2 = 7$
	2x Independent (7) (9) - $16/2 = 8$

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 03 — Limited Growth?

This task tested how the village could accommodate a limited amount of new housing and what criteria may need to be applied to make this acceptable.

The preferred areas and types of development were as follows. The number of groups and/or respondents who mentioned this land as suitable for development is in brackets.

- Develop on land to the south-west of the A21/B2087 junction (3)
- Develop on patch of land to the west of Old Wardsdown road (2)
- Build on land to the north of B2087 and opposite the junction for Fruit Fields road
- Build slip road for the A21, bypassing London Road to the east – this will inevitably create more housing to the east of London Road (A21) along Hawkhurst Road
- Cluster of houses near Coronation Cottages area already planned?
- Bird Park development
- Develop to the south and sides of the cricket ground.

Summary

To prevent Flimwell from merging into Ticehurst, residents feel that the land between the two settlements should be preserved as open and undeveloped. This will help to distinguish the entrance and exit into different areas of the parish.

Development of 20+ dwellings on the land to the south west of the A21/B2087 junction is supported, although there needs to be careful consideration for the entry and exit points to the site.

Areas of land to the west, north and east of Old Wardsdown Road have been suggested as suitable development sites, as has the land that surrounds the cricket ground to the south of the B2087. It appears that residents would prefer to see Flimwell sympathetically expand to the north and south, rather than creating ribbon development that runs east — west.

Task 04 — Learning From Other Places

Participants were asked to mark on a plan the places that they liked with a green sticky dot and the places they did not with a red sticky dot.

Places to be proud of

- The Weald Smokery
- Recreation ground
- Golf course - employment, leisure & AONB
- Woodland Enterprise Centre
- Bewl Water - footpaths & AONB
- Bedgebury National Pinetum & Forest
- The Royal Oak
- Bird Park development
- Fruit Field lane farms
- Allotments

Summary

For this task, there were far more green dots than red dots. Although there is concern that the crossroads dissect Flimwell and deter pedestrians, there are several positive attributes to the community that are located around this part of the area. There are a handful of independent local businesses along the north side of London Road that provide local economic value as well as employment. The Weald Smokery along Hawkhurst Road also attracts locals and those from further afield, with a growing Garden Centre business sitting next door.

To the south of Flimwell, along the A21, there are expanding industry and business centres that respond to their surrounding environment and respect their wooded location. Further along Hawkhurst Road is the popular and quaint Flimwell Church which is an important aspect to the area for residents. North of the church lies Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest which is a very popular wooded park that attracts people from far and wide. The area that currently separates Flimwell and Ticehurst sits between areas of outstanding natural beauty and is considered to be open with good views of the surround countryside. This particular area also offers footpaths that reach towards Bewl Water and in the opposite direction, towards the golf course.

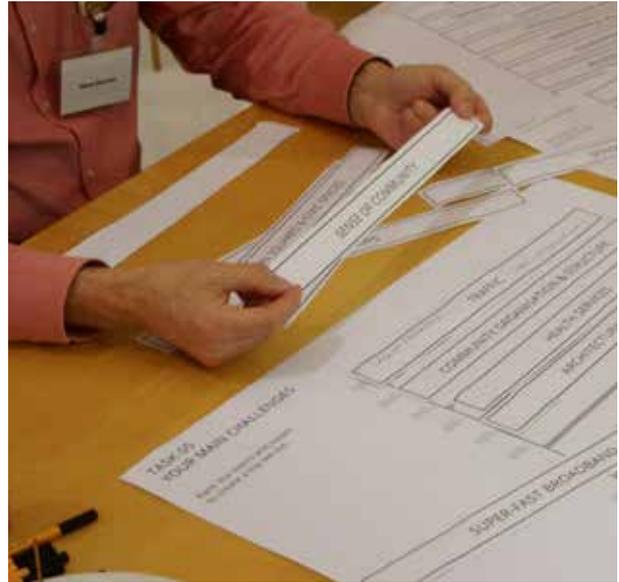
Places that could be better

- A21/B2087 - car parking
- A21/B2087 - speeding traffic
- A21/B2087 - dangerous for pedestrians
- A21 - bus route/services
- Cherry Tree Nursery/Garden Centre

Summary

Flimwell is centred on vehicular crossroads and the red dots for this task highlighted the issues with the current transport passing through the area. The crossroads for the A21/B2087 are considered dangerous and traffic is often speeding to get through the green light.

Parked cars also prove as obstacles on the road and participants felt that off-road parking needs to become available to address this issue. The access to public transport could also be improved by providing more regular bus services to desired locations.



Participants test the best ways to describe Flimwell and the wider area.



Workshop participants mark up plans and maps with their thoughts about the future.

Task 05 — Top Ten Challenges

1. Traffic
2. Housing Growth
3. Pedestrian Access to Ticehurst (school)
4. Super-Fast Broadband
5. Shops
6. Non-School Youth Opportunities
7. Sense of Community
8. Community Organisation & Structure
9. Architectural Quality
10. Countryside Protection

Number of Appearances & Calculations

3x Traffic (2) (1) (1) - $4/3 = 1.3$

2x Housing Growth (5) (2) - $7/2 = 3.5$

2x Pedestrian Access to Ticehurst (school) (5) (3) - $8/2 = 4$

3x Super-Fast Broadband (3) (2) (8) - $13/3 = 4.3$

3x Shops (1) (7) (7) - $15/3 = 5$

2x Non-School Youth Opportunities (6) (4) - $10/2 = 5$

3x Sense of Community (9) (3) (5) - $17/3 = 5.7$

2x Community Organisation & Structure (8) (4) - $12/2 = 6$

3x Architectural Quality (7) (10) (9) - $26/3 = 8.7$

Countryside Protection (4) - 4

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 09 — Audit Of Local Services

This task asked participants to record the local services and facilities that they felt were vital to quality of life in the parish. This audit of local services will inform the areas that need protecting and nurturing by the neighbourhood plan.

Cricket pavilion/grounds (7); Weald Smokery (6); Bedgebury (6); Easy commuting (6); Royal Oak Pub (5); Church (4); Self-employed hub/garages (4); Café (3); Yellow Coat Woods (2); Allotments (2); Woodland centre (2); Walk, outdoor activities and cycling; Saw Mills.

Summary

Flimwell sits to the north-west of the parish and offers easy access into London and towards the south east coastline via the A21/A268. This also makes Flimwell popular with residents from other parishes and towns, increasing the popularity of such places as the Weald Smokery and Bedgebury Forest. There is a strong self-employed business hub situated in and around the crossroads with garages, shops, cafes and a popular pub.



Workshop participants look at the areas where shops and services are found.

STONEGATE

14th January 2016



Task 01 — People & Places

In this task, participants were asked about the different challenges and opportunities faced by different demographic groups.

Teenagers

Challenges

Need to travel to other towns and villages for activities (mentioned four times); Nowhere to meet (mentioned twice); Poor quality broadband.

Opportunities

Can walk to Stonegate train station; Fruit-picking.

Summary

The teenagers in Stonegate rely upon private transport to be able to take part in activities. As they get older, they become less dependent and a lot more mobile. For many parents however, it is common to transport their children to other towns or villages for activities or social events. The Stonegate railway station is within reach for those wanting to independently travel further afield. Stonegate needs to offer teenagers a place to meet and spend time with each other outside of the home. The access to broadband and the speed of it is also in much need of improvement.

Businesses & Employers

Challenges

Poor mobile signal and broadband quality; No business community; Limited office space.

Opportunities

Able to walk to train station.

Summary

Businesses and employers are ideally situated in Stonegate as the local train station is a good transport connection to the wider areas and is within reach. There are many small scale ventures and business opportunities within Stonegate, along with a few home-workers. Providing a link between these different businesses, such as shared office space or a place to meet would enhance the existing business community and enable better networking. To improve this further, mobile phone signal and the quality of the broadband in the area needs vast improvement.

Pensioners & Empty-Nesters

Challenges

Public transport; Social activities; Seeking help looking for odd-jobs; Place to meet, Broadband; No shop.

Opportunities

U₃A; Yoga classes; Quiet natural surroundings.

Summary

The older generations and those with children that have moved out enjoy the quiet, natural surroundings of Stonegate but need opportunities to connect socially with others. Although there are a few opportunities for socialising, these need to be advertised more successfully. If there was a place to meet, this could be a space where events and activities take place or where they advertised.

There is access to part-time work such as gardening or helping with odd-jobs, but there needs to be a way in which those seeking help can get easy access to potential workers.

Currently there are yoga classes available, alongside the opportunity to join the University of the Third Age (U₃A). There is also a need for a local shop. Again, this could be a more informal place to meet or advertise for events and work.

Young Professionals Without Children

Challenges

No social hub; Requires regular commuting.

Opportunities

Stonegate station; Yoga classes.

Summary

The younger, working population with Stonegate expect and require commuting to work. There is the opportunity to walk to the local train station which provides access nationwide. A social hub would enable this younger generation to meet with others in the area and relax outside of their working day.

Families With Young Children

Challenges

Pedestrian access (mentioned twice); Better play-school; Public transport; Broadband; Meeting place.

Opportunities

Good school (mentioned twice); Playgroup; playground; Access to baby-sitting.

Summary

Families with young children need better pedestrian access when walking to and from the schools. Better public transport would also help families to access wider areas and have more choice of access. There is currently no meeting place for families other than the playground. The educational opportunities within the local schools are considered to be good, with some improvements possibly

needed for the play-school. Stonegate is considered a lovely place to bring up children and there is a local playground and access to baby-sitters for the time spent out of school.

Visitors & Tourists

Challenges

Need better signage; Better access to transport; Somewhere to camp; Broadband.

Opportunities

Rural, attractive getaway; Access to B&B's; Walking; Local attractions; Bewl Water; Bedgebury; Kino cinema in Hawkhurst.

Summary

Visitors and tourists are attracted to Stonegate because it is considered an attractive, rural environment and a quiet getaway. There is good access to local bed and breakfast accommodation and holiday-lets, as well as attractions such as Bewl Water, Bedgebury Forest and Hawkhurst for the Kino cinema.

To improve experiences, places and services should be well-signed so that visitors can easily navigate the area and are not reliant upon the locals for directions and transport advice. Better broadband and the opportunity to camp in Stonegate would enhance visitor's experiences greatly.

Students

Challenges

Need transport; Access to public transport; Poor quality broadband.

Opportunities

Fruit-picking; Enjoying the tranquillity.

Summary

Students living in Stonegate need good access to transport and also good transport services. They would also benefit from much improved broadband and greater access range. There are some part-time jobs available to students, such as fruit-picking, and they enjoy the peace and quiet of Stonegate outside of term.



Groups explore how the area around Stonegate is used and managed at present.

Task 02 — Top Ten Qualities

	<u>Number of Appearances & Calculations</u>
1. Friendly	3x Friendly (2) (1) (1) – $4/3 = 1.3$
2. Unique	2x Unique (1) (2) – $3/2 = 1.5$
3. Safe	4x Safe (3) (3) (7) (2) – $15/4 = 3.8$
4. Attractive	4x Attractive (5) (5) (3) (3) – $16/4 = 4$
5. Clean	2x Clean (7) (1) – $8/2 = 4$
6. Independent	2x Independent (4) (4) – $8/2 = 4$
7. Green	4x Green (6) (6) (2) (10) – $24/4 = 6$
8. Enterprising	4x Enterprising (8) (10) (6) (4) – $28/4 = 7$
9. Open	2x Open (9) (6) – $15/2 = 7.5$
	2x Considered (10) (5) – $15/2 = 7.5$
10. Considered	2x Fun (7) (8) – $15/2 = 7.5$
	2x Rural (9) (9) – $18/2 = 9$

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 03 — Limited Growth?

This task tested how the village could accommodate a limited amount of new housing and what criteria may need to be applied to make this acceptable.

The preferred areas and types of development were as follows. The number of groups and/or respondents who mentioned this land as suitable for development is in brackets.

—Land north of The Acorns should be 2/3 bed and 40% affordable and should be protected from large-scale development (3)

— Land to the north of the land behind The Acorns, off Bardown Road, should be 2 bed, 2 car spaces and for first-time buyers. Land could be for a shop? (2)

— Land north of the village hall could be developed and some funds out aside to upgrade village hall and introduce a café and shop (2)

— Land opposite church could be used as a car park for the church and school or for houses (2)

— No to the above, the land should be preserved to preserve the setting of the church

—Land south of Cottenden Road should be protected because of views (2)

— Develop land south of Cottenden Road Alan Tucker's field, former golf course

—Land to the west of Station Road should be protected because of views

—No development towards the train station, this area is not part of the village and would cause ribbon development

—Land west of Sheepstreet Lane, could be hamlet development.

Summary

There is strong support for possible housing development to take place to the north of the Acorns. This will give Stonegate “controlled growth” between Bardown Road and Lynden Lane. It is believed that this area of land should be protected from large-scale development, but should provide 2/3 bed homes with 40% being affordable. Land further north of this has also been suggested for development of smaller homes or a local shop. Developing behind the village hall has also been considered, as a way to fund a better equipped village hall and a possible café and shop. There is conflict of opinion for the future of the patch of land that sits opposite St Peter's Church. Some residents would like to see it used as a car-park for the school and church or filled with houses. Others would like to see the patch of green space kept, to compliment the church and protect its setting. Residents would like to see land to the west of Station Road and the south of Cottenden Road protected because of the long-distance views that both of these areas provide.

Task 04 — Learning From Other Places

Participants were asked to mark on a plan the places that they liked with a green sticky dot and the places they did not with a red sticky dot.

Places to be proud of

- Views to the south
- Cottenden Road — pond & woodland
- Countryside walks
- St. Peter's Church
- Stonegate Primary School
- Cricket pitch
- Stonegate Village Hall
- Local employment
- Bricklehurst Manor School
- Allotments

Summary

There is a strong sense of pride for the rural setting of Stonegate and its views and accessibility into the surrounding countryside. The ponds, woodlands and walks that lie to the north and south of Cottenden Road were repeatedly highlighted with green dots. There was a greater emphasis on the key views and walks to the south of Stonegate.

St. Peter's Church, the adjacent school and the local village hall were all marked as good examples of buildings. This may have been for a variety of reasons including their architectural value, location and importance to the community. Similarly, the local allotments to the north of Limden Close and the cricket pitch were noted as valuable open space for the community.

Places that could be better

- Stonegate junction — layout
- Stonegate junction — parking
- New development at the junction
- Bus shelters/stops
- Lymden Lane — heavy goods vehicle use
- Station Road — school parking
- Cottenden Road — maintenance
- Dale Hill — pedestrian access
- Stonegate Village Hall — facilities
- Station Road — cycling to train station

Summary

For the red dots, a recurring cluster appears around the central junction of Stonegate.

This is the space where the four roads in and out of Stonegate meet. The immediate area is considered to be in need of a better layout and strategic improvements.

Vehicles park on the junction as well as parking along Station Road during school peak times.

Cottenden Road also needs maintaining and its potholes removed. Although Lymden Lane is a cherished part of Stonegate, HGVs and articulated trucks often drive up and down the road to get to the Authentic Reclamation yard which has expanded rapidly.

Although this increase in business is good for local employment, it has a negative impact upon a lane which has a maximum weight limit of 7.5 tonnes. Station Road is a vital link to and from the train station for the whole parish and those living locally would like to see improved connections for cyclists. The cricket pitch is a valuable attribute to the community but the adjacent pavilion is considered to be inadequate and a new building is required. Equally, the village hall is popular but is in need of improvements and expansion.

Task 05 — Top Ten Challenges

1. Super-Fast Broadband
2. Sense of Community
3. Health Services
4. Bus Services
5. Traffic (school run & parking)
6. Non-School Youth Opportunities
7. Shops
8. Countryside Protection
9. Employment Space (workshop & industrial)
10. Schools & Education

Number of Appearances & Calculations

3x Super-Fast Broadband (1) (3) (2) - $6/3 = 2$

2x Sense of Community (1) (4) - $5/2 = 2.5$

2x Health Services (6) (1) - $7/2 = 3.5$

2x Bus Services (7) (1) - $8/2 = 4$

2x Traffic (School-run/Parking) (5) (3) - $8/2 = 4$

2x Non-School Youth Opportunities (8) (2) - $10/2 = 5$

3x Shops (2) (7) (7) - $16/3 = 5.3$

2x Countryside Protection (8) (3) - $11/2 = 5.5$

2x Employment Space – workshop/industrial (5) (6) - $11/2 = 5.5$

3x Schools & Education (9) (6) (4) - $19/3 = 6.3$

2x Housing Growth (3) (10) - $13/2 = 6.5$

2x Architectural Quality (8) (9) - $17/2 = 8.5$

2x Opportunities for Seniors and the Retired (10) (10) - $20/2 = 10$

NOTE : Only phrases and words that were nominated more than once were considered for inclusion in the top ten results table.

Task 09 — Audit Of Local Services

This task asked participants to record the local services and facilities that they felt were vital to quality of life in the parish. This audit of local services will inform the areas that need protecting and nurturing by the neighbourhood plan.

Primary school (9); Train Station – access London or Hastings and everything in-between. (8); Village hall (8); Church (6); Playing fields – cricket/football for youths/adults (5); SADS (Stonegate Amateur Dramatics Society) (4); Walking routes/ponds (4); Garage (3); Yoga/dog training/parties/choir/riding school (3); Farmers Market (2); Makers and craftsmen/businesses/architectural restoration – light industrial (2); Cheese factory further south (2); Allotments (2); Pre-school; Children’s play area; Chiropodist; Hairdressers; No shop.

Summary

Stonegate is set in the more rural part of the parish. Although there is not yet a place for residents to informally meet, there is a strong sense of community that is provided through the many activities that take place within Stonegate. The village hall is a vital part of Stonegate and many recreational classes are held in the building, alongside well-known performances by the local amateur dramatics society, which bring people in from the neighbouring parishes.

This part of the parish offers an enhanced connection with traditional farming and provides locals with horse-riding lessons and hosts a regular farmer’s market. Stonegate is home to many small crafts/light industrial businesses with a focus on making and restoring. Stonegate also has a railway station which provides regular connections to and from London. To better connect the community and provide for local needs, residents of Stonegate would like to see a shop open up in the area.





