

# Ticehurst Parish Past & Present



Ticehurst Village Institute.

## Ticehurst Parish Past & Present

2.1 Ticehurst is one of the largest civic parishes in the Rother District. It consists of three wards, Ticehurst Village, Flimwell and Stonegate, within which are a number of smaller settlements such as Cottenden, Battenhurst, Three Leg Cross, Dale Hill, Shovers Green and Birchetts Green. It is home to more than 4,000 people and covers 3,237 hectares. The name Ticehurst is said to have originated from the Anglo-Saxon, “tice” meaning goats and “hurst” meaning woods.

2.2 The Parish is situated within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and its landscape has barely changed since medieval times. It is a mix of sandstone ridges, clay valleys, small ancient woodlands, and irregular-shaped fields. Part of Ticehurst’s boundary crosses Bewl Water, the largest inland water reservoir in South East England, and it is bordered to the east by Bedgebury Forest and Pinetum which has 22km of cycle tracks. With its numerous countryside footpaths and leisure opportunities, its good connections via road and rail to the rest of the UK and to the continent, it is a popular place to live and an attractive place to visit.

2.3 Historically, Ticehurst was largely a rural community which derived its livelihood from woodland management, small mixed farming, wool, dairying, soft fruit, and hops. Where these have become less viable, the farms have become larger or have diversified, supplying small trades and services associated with the rural economy as our business survey in 2017 clearly illustrates.

2.4 With the benefit of modern technology, more people are also working from home and the unemployment rate in the parish is low (2.2% in 2011 census).



Welcome to Ticehurst.

## Ticehurst

2.5 Ticehurst is the largest village of the three that make up the parish, an ancient settlement established on the east-west Forest Ridgeway which passes from Tonbridge to Rye on the coast. It began as a crossing point linking ancient route ways and as a market centre serving an area of scattered farmhouses and manors. In the 13th century, a more permanent settlement began to develop around the market place, a triangular space known as Ticehurst Green. In the 1700s, the road through the village became a toll road and Toll Cottages, now private dwellings, still stand at each end of the village.

2.6 The Bell Inn in the centre of Ticehurst was originally a Wealden Hall House which became a 16th century coaching inn, one of two which dominated the central square. The High Street continues to be a busy thoroughfare: the volume and speed of traffic through the village is a concern to villagers and a problem which Ticehurst Parish Council is seeking to address. In the picturesque centre is the village square, all that remains of the old village green. It has a central island with a war memorial and garden dedicated in 1921, a pump house and well, built in 1887 and recently restored, with four recently planted hornbeam trees and one large mature chestnut tree.

2.7 Today the Square is often dominated by parked cars but it is regularly used by the community for events and is a valuable open space with potential for further improvement. The area around the square was designated a conservation area in 1990 and includes several Wealden

2.8 Hall Houses from the 16th century. The typical external wall materials used in the conservation area are a mix of weather-boarding, tile hanging and brickwork of a warm orange-red, traditional styles that are a strong feature of the village's character.

2.9 Ticehurst has gradually evolved to become an important centre for the surrounding area. It was identified by Rother District Council along with Robertsbridge as a "rural service centre" with a varied range of shops and businesses, a children's centre, pre-school nursery, a modern primary school, doctors' surgery and post office.



Ticehurst High Street.

2.10 To the west is Ticehurst House Hospital which was one of the earliest dedicated psychiatric hospitals in the country. Dr Samuel Newington opened the original Ticehurst House in 1792, and today it still specialises in the treatment of psychiatric disorders.

2.11 Ticehurst also claims to be home to the first Pick-Your-Own fruit farm to open in Britain, Maynards Farm. Pashley Manor Gardens is “one of the finest gardens in England”, and Dale Hill Golf Course and Hotel has two courses, one designed by Ian Woosnam.

2.12 The Village Institute was designed by the architect, Sir Aston Webb and built in 1899 on land given by Mr. Campbell Newington for the benefit of the parish of Ticehurst. In 1929 this Grade II Listed Building was inherited by his daughter, Beatrice Drewe, who set up a Charitable Trust and endowment fund. In 1970 Ticehurst Parish Council was made the Custodian Trustee and since 2005 the Beatrice Drewe Trust has been run by annually elected management trustees for the benefit of Ticehurst and its locality. It is a busy centre for parish meetings, village clubs and activities, serving residents from the very young to the elderly and from the fit to the disabled.

2.13 The Recreation Ground, part of this endowment, is used by local junior football clubs; the senior football takes place at the Bell Field. The Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have a dedicated Scout Hut nearby at the end of Pickforde Lane.

2.14 The Anglican church, St Mary’s, occupies a prominent position on the ridge in the centre of the village. Its foundation goes back 700 years; built of local sandstone with a typical Sussex spire, it retains much of its ancient character. A small room has recently been added, which has proved a valuable and accessible additional resource for the community.

2.15 The village values its hourly bus service to Tunbridge Wells and Hawkhurst during the daytime but there is no service on Sundays nor in the evening. Children usually leave the village by bus to attend secondary schools, mainly in Wadhurst and Tunbridge Wells. There is a good train service to London and Hastings, with stations at Stonegate and the neighbouring village of Wadhurst (with a more frequent service, it is often preferred by commuters).

## Flimwell

2.16 The village is located on either side of the busy cross roads where the A21 meets the A268 to Hawkhurst and the B2087 to Ticehurst. It was once a staging post for travellers on the road from London to Rye and has outstanding views across the Weald. Flimwell covers an area of approximately 350 hectares, of which about 5% is built-up.

2.17 The village is linear in shape and was constituted in 1839 when the Ticehurst Union Workhouse was built there to serve eight parishes. This has since been demolished and a small housing development called Bewl Close is now on the site. St Augustine's Anglican Church, Grade II listed, was designed by Decimus Burton, and built in 1830 in local sandstone.

2.18 The main area of development in modern times has been along the B2087 to Ticehurst, joining the smaller settlements of Union Street and Berners Hill. The village has an active cricket club and ground, with a multifunctional pavilion and children's playground, which is currently being upgraded. It has, however, no defined centre and relies on other local villages, in particular Ticehurst, for most of its services. A corner site, next to the B2087 and A21, is currently being built with 25 dwellings and a new village hall and shop will be part of this development.

2.19 Flimwell supports many successful businesses for which good transport links are important. The office of the High Weald AONB Unit, set up to protect and raise awareness of the special High Weald landscape, is situated on the east side of the village.

2.20 This area is also a venue for training and research for all enterprises associated with the sustainable management of woodlands, run by Plumpton College. Flimwell Park, currently being built, will add artisan workshops and host architectural courses in conjunction with the Bartlett School of Architecture (part of UCL)



Flimwell Crossroads.

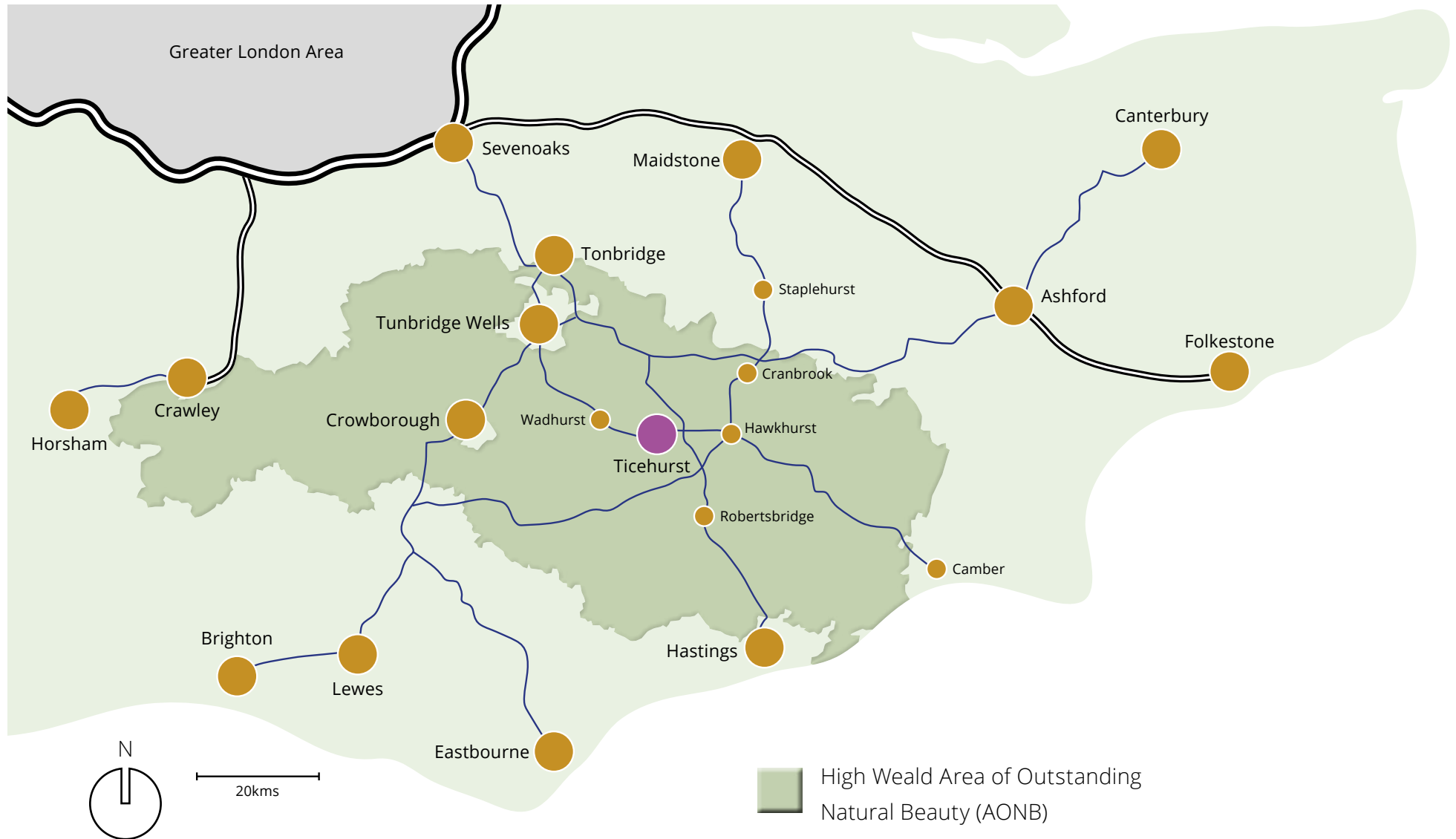
## Stonegate

2.21 This village is thought to have begun where two old Roman roads met, one linking Pevensey with the inland hills and the other linking Bardown, an old Roman ironworks to the north of the village which was abandoned at the end of the Roman period. The land then fell into the hands of the Cistercian Abbey in Robertsbridge until the dissolution of the monasteries. It remained a very small settlement until the coming of the railway in Victorian times, when a station was built in 1851 on the Hastings to London railway, one mile outside the village.

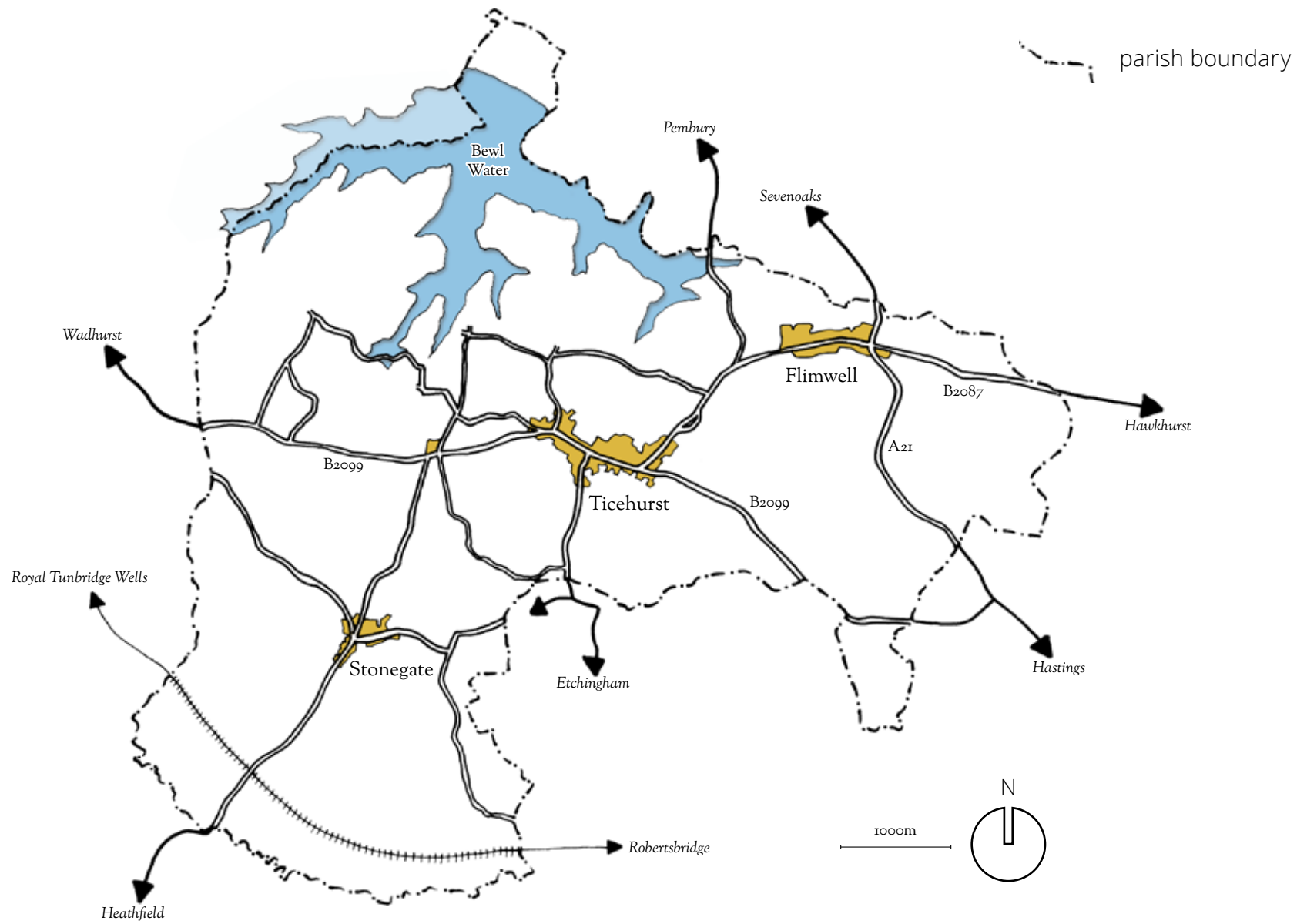
2.22 Today it has an hourly service to London and is popular with commuters. Like Flimwell, the village was constituted in 1839 when it was said to have 81 houses. St Peter's Anglican Church was built in 1836 and rebuilt in 1904. There is also a primary school, a village hall and playground, a cricket club and football field, and a very active dramatic society. It remains a small village with few services and relies on other local centres for shops and facilities.



Stonegate Crossroads.



Map 2 — Ticehurst Location: Regional Context Plan.



Map 3 — Ticehurst Parish: Local Context Plan.