



Cranbrook & Sissinghurst

Neighbourhood Plan

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Development Plan

2020 to 2038

Made Version October 2023



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Executive Summary

This Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by a Steering Group of volunteer parish councillors and residents for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council on behalf of those who live and work within the parish.

The plan comprises a vision statement for the future and a set of objectives that encapsulate the views expressed by the community through extensive consultations since March 2017, in accordance with the neighbourhood planning regulations. The vision and objectives are the touchstone for all future development in the parish. These are supported by a set of planning policies and a series of projects to realise the vision and objectives. The plan has been informed by the strategic policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan, against which it needs to be in general conformity.

The policies and projects in this plan aim to ensure that the distinctive heritage and rural nature of the parish is preserved, whilst securing the community and economic benefits that growth can bring.

Policies and projects are focused on the following key areas:

- Landscape & the Natural Environment
- Heritage & Design
- Access & Movement
- Business & Employment
- Housing
- Culture & Community
- Infrastructure

The comments received during the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation in the Autumn of 2020 showed clear support for all aspects of the draft plan. The level of support for each policy was over 65%, averaging 81%, while the level of objection never exceeded 22%, with an average of only 6%. In response to the comments some revisions were made to the draft plan. Details of the comments and the revisions can be found in the Consultation Statement.

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish is an historic, vibrant, and beautiful corner of Kent, and one which is much admired. It is the intention of the policies and projects

in this document to support the community through the enormous changes during the next fifteen years.

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1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1. This submission consultation plan has been prepared by Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council on behalf of those who live and work within the parish. The plan sets out a vision for the future and is supported by a set of planning policies and a series of projects. The plan has been informed by the strategic policies in the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan, against which it needs to be in general conformity. In accordance with the neighbourhood planning regulations, this plan has been prepared through extensive community consultation. The neighbourhood area was designated in July 2016. The neighbourhood area is the parish of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. It is shown on map [FIGURE 01]. The plan period is 2020 to 2038.
- 1.2. The draft strategic Local Plan policy STR/CRS1 sets out proposals for the delivery of an additional 415-429 homes as set out in the Tunbridge Wells BC Local Plan on five sites in the parish between the plan period 2020 – 2038. The policies in the TWBC Submission Local Plan that propose to deliver dwellings are AL/CRS 1 Brick Kiln, CRS 2 Corn Hall, CRS 3 Turnden, CRS 6 Land south of The Street, CRS 7 Land at the corner of Frittenden Road and Common Road, Sissinghurst.
- 1.3. The parish contains a hierarchy of small-scale settlements typical of a Wealden landscape: at the centre lies the small historic market town of Cranbrook, to the north east of which sits the village of Sissinghurst, These main settlements are interspersed and surrounded by hamlets and numerous historic farmstead settlements, set within gentle rolling countryside and remnants of ancient woodland. Within the parish lies a watershed between the two main river systems of the Medway and the Rother. From here the Crane Brook rises and flows north through the centre of Cranbrook, and beyond to join the Hammer Stream just east of the parish boundary.
- 1.4. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish has a wealth of heritage and culture dating back centuries and is largely nestled within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with the north of the parish lying in the equally beautiful Low Weald.
- 1.5. Being within the High Weald AONB confers national importance on the landscape. It contains one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in North West Europe. The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee states, 'It is an

outstandingly beautiful landscape cherished by people for its scenery, tranquillity and wildlife' (High Weald AONB Management Plan, 2019- 2024). The settlements nestle harmoniously within their landscape setting where wedges of countryside penetrate right into the town and villages particularly along the Crane Valley. There are three conservation areas within the Parish and the internationally renowned historic Sissinghurst Castle and Garden.

- 1.6. It is an historic green and leafy landscape, with many trees and hedgerows, ponds, and streams. It is in a "fruit belt" character area, with a mixture of small pasture, arable and mixed fruit farms.
- 1.7. As custodians of this incredibly special place, it is vital that it should be protected and safeguarded by all for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.
- 1.8. Cranbrook is a vibrant and extremely attractive small rural town nestled in the Crane Valley. Historically, it grew prosperous through the woollen and cloth trade during the Medieval and Tudor period. It is characterised by its distinctive and varied architecture and many independent shops and businesses. It has a range of services and facilities, including four schools (a co-educational grammar, two specialist schools and one primary), two children's nurseries, a supermarket, a museum, a library, health, leisure and sports facilities, places of worship, public green spaces, a small community facility and a number of free car parks. Public transport is limited to two regular bus routes, with an additional service to Hastings on Sunday. A network of pedestrian routes connects the town centre to the outlying residential areas and the countryside beyond, including the High Weald Landscape Trail. A Sustrans cycle route runs just to the south of the parish through Bedgebury Forest. The nearest railway station is 6 miles away at Staplehurst with services to London, Tonbridge, Ashford, Canterbury, and the Kent coast.
- 1.9. Sissinghurst is a small close-knit village with the Milk House Pub and local convenience shop at its heart. It also has a primary school, a community hall, a children's nursery, a takeaway outlet, several playing fields, and one bus service. The internationally renowned Sissinghurst Castle and Gardens lies just to the north east of the village and is a major draw for tourists.
- 1.10. Hartley is largely a residential linear hamlet, historically grown because of a railway station (now closed). A small number of facilities include a café and farm shop, fishmonger, and children's nursery.
- 1.11. Colliers Green is a small, dispersed hamlet with a primary school at its centre.
- 1.12. Other small hamlets in the parish include Golford, with the parish cemetery and a school, Wilsley Green, Flishinghurst and Swattenden. Over the past 30 years or so, the diversification of agriculture locally has been an economic necessity and has led to several new business ventures growing up around

farmsteads, including food processing and farm shop retail, plus other related service, and leisure activities.

- 1.13. During 2020 and 2021 the coronavirus pandemic, as well as increasing concerns over the impacts of climate change, have highlighted the need for local policies which ensure good access to green space, well-designed sustainable homes, strong local broadband questions, and good provision for community activities. The neighbourhood plan policies seek to meet these requirements.
- 1.14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the broad national policies for sustainable development, was updated in July 2021. Included in the revisions is a greater emphasis on meeting the UK's obligations under the United Nations 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development, including the making of well-designed beautiful and safe places, protecting, and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment and improving biodiversity.
- 1.15. In response to this, as well as to feedback received during the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation in the Autumn of 2020, the neighbourhood plan policies now include neighbourhood-level design guidance, as well as strengthened policies to protect and enhance the Crane Valley as an area in the parish which will enable the increase in biodiversity.

Pre-submission consultation

- 1.16. Following the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation draft of the neighbourhood plan, the comments of statutory consultees, members of the local community and other stakeholders were considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the Parish Council. As a consequence, a revised Regulation 16 Submission draft Neighbourhood Plan has been produced.
- 1.17. Further details of the comments and the responses are found in the Consultation Statement.

Submission to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

- 1.18. The revised neighbourhood plan, together with the Consultation Statement, and a statement of the Basic Conditions has been formally submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, the local planning authority.

Independent Examination

- 1.19. The plan will then be published for a further six-week period of consultation, after which an independent planning examiner will be appointed to examine the plan in a series of public meetings. Should the independent planning examiner find the neighbourhood plan to be in conformity with the basic conditions, then it will go forward to be the subject of a referendum, to be voted upon by the residents of the parish. A majority affirmative vote will ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan becomes 'made' (adopted) as part of the development plan for the borough.

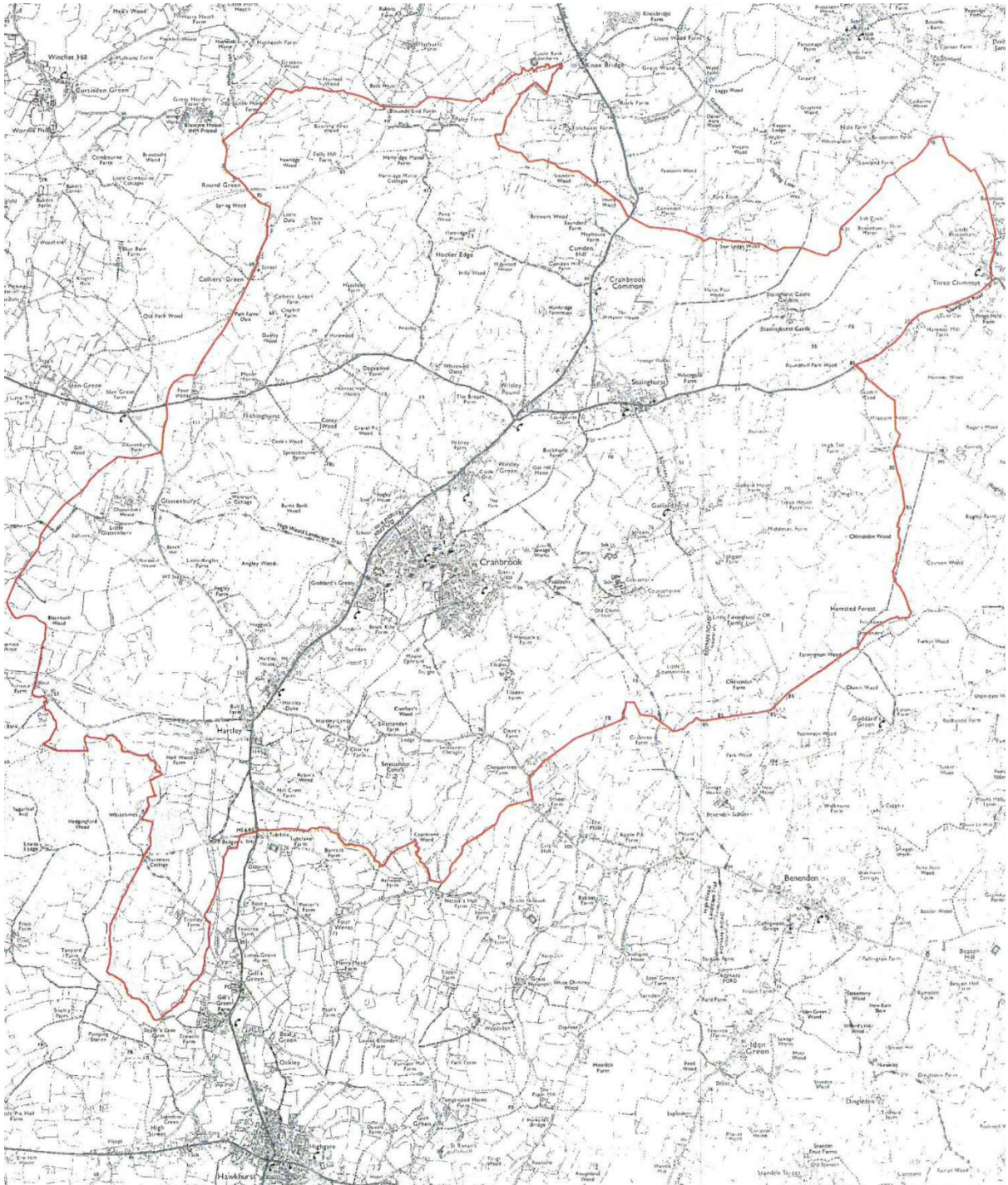


FIGURE 01

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan Area



2. Vision & Objectives

Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

In fifteen years' time, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish will be a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable place to live, work and visit. It will have protected and enhanced its distinctive rural Wealden character and richness of its landscape, its settlements, and its built environment. High quality well-designed and well-connected new developments which are sympathetic to the distinctive local heritage, will provide new homes for local workers and new residents. Greater social and environmental sustainability will have been achieved through improvements to technological infrastructure, active travel routes, community facilities and public realm spaces, as well as enhancements to ecological connectivity for the benefit of people and wildlife. These, in turn, will have brought increased opportunities to boost the local economy through a range of new businesses in a variety of sectors including new green and technological economies, to serve the needs of both residents and visitors.

- 2.1. The Vision Statement and Objectives are the touchstone for all future development. They represent the views of those who live and work in the parish, as captured during extensive public consultation. Applicants should reflect the objectives within their proposals to contribute to the realisation of the Vision for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

- 2.2. Public consultation raised a series of concerns, expressed by residents and businesses, and identified features and characteristics of importance to preserve. These have informed seven key objectives:
- The seven objectives are of equal importance
 - Planning policies have been written to meet these objectives
 - Objectives will be useful for monitoring going forward
- 2.3. These objectives create the structure of the Plan. A series of land-use policies are set out in Sections 3-9 of the Plan. A series of non-land use Projects are set out in Section 10 of the Plan. The policies will form part of the development plan in the parish. The Projects will not form part of the development plan. However, in several cases, they will support the implementation of the policies.

Summary of Objectives

- Conserve distinctive character and heritage of built environment through high quality design
- Conserve the historic landscape character and the natural environment, green spaces, and biodiversity for the health of people and wildlife
- Provide a mix of housing and employment space which meet local need
- Create lasting low and zero-carbon energy-efficient buildings for future generations
- Prioritise and promote active travel routes and safe streets
- Enable provision for community health, education, and leisure
- Provide essential infrastructure

Objective 1 – Heritage & Design

- To protect, conserve and enhance the historic and architectural character and appearance of historic buildings and other heritage assets, listed or unlisted, throughout the Parish.
- To retain the local historic settlement pattern.
- To protect, conserve and enhance the historic Conservation Areas of Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Wilsley Green and any future Conservation Areas that may be identified within the parish.
- To maintain and enhance the landscape setting of Cranbrook town centre, its roofscape, landmark buildings and views.
- To maintain and enhance the surrounding setting of Sissinghurst village centre, its roofscape, landmark buildings and views.

- To maintain and enhance the surrounding historic farmsteads and farmyards.
- To ensure that any new development should have regard for the rich heritage within the parish.
- To create living and working environments that complement the rich heritage.
- To prioritise and optimise the use of previously developed land (“brownfield sites”) for new housing development which will enhance and improve these areas.
- To promote the highest quality of design, resource efficiency, and appearance
- To encourage good innovative design respecting the context in which it sits.
- To protect the Dark Skies and reduce levels of light pollution across the parish.

Objective 2 – Landscape & the Natural Environment

- To protect and enhance the historic landscape character, natural beauty, and rich ecological biodiversity of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish both within the High Weald AONB and its setting.
- To protect and enhance the upland river catchment areas in the parish, such as the Crane Valley, in order to increase the landscape’s resilience to climate change and provide opportunities for the recovery of nature.
- To ensure that any new development makes a positive contribution to its distinctive landscape character; to identify and protect distinctive historic landscape features, such as ancient woodlands, shaws and gills, veteran trees, hedgerows, field patterns, routeways, ponds, and watercourses.
- To ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and green and blue infrastructure of the parish.
- To protect and enhance valued green spaces, significant views and priority habitats.
- To promote community access to green space, whilst protecting sensitive sites.
- To protect the distinctive settlement pattern and support the spatial strategy for Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish through the protection of green gaps between settlements.

Objective 3 – Mix of Housing & Employment Space

- To enable low wage employees to live and work in the Parish without commuting
- To provide space for IT and highly skilled businesses to create highly paid employment so the young do not need to leave the Parish once they are educated.
- To create office and production space for low risk start-ups and expansion of existing businesses.

- To prevent the loss of employment land to residential development, particularly in the town centre
- To meet the growing need for health services and ensure sustainability of supply
- To leverage heritage and tradition to maximise tourism and related business opportunities in ways sensitive to the town and landscape
- To integrate business and community by developing shared retail and amenity spaces and services that meet the needs of the whole population.
- To reinvigorate the relationship between business and countryside through the innovative use of local resources, production, and marketing

Objective 4 – Buildings for the Future

- To provide a range of energy efficient housing types and tenures to meet the needs of a growing population
- To deliver the housing needs of the parish in ways that respect heritage and tradition, yet ensure innovative design fit for the future in line with the Lifetime Homes Standards and the Building for a Healthy Life design tool
- To meet the demand for tenure blind affordable housing to enable all who work in the parish, and wish to live here, but who are unable to afford to do so, to live locally
- To ensure the design of new housing schemes maintain the distinctive model of development by being well-related to existing built-up areas or elsewhere by being small scale, sensitive and dispersed in the landscape
- To ensure the needs of all people across all ages are provided for

Objective 5 – Active Travel Routes & Safe Streets

- To ensure that the neighbourhood area is a safe and pleasant place to move around.
- To provide a range of interlinked movement choices that are convenient, sustainable, and safe and which facilitate healthy lifestyles and well-being.
- To support changes to streets, spaces and the public realm that can deliver lasting benefits for the local economy, the local environment, and local communities (National Design Guide 2019, Para 76).

Objective 6 – Community Provision

- Enhance a sense of community within the parish by encouraging local groups' activities
- Promoting a sense of belonging which contributes to all residents' health and well-being
- Support land allocations for a community space in Cranbrook and a new village hall in Sissinghurst
- To promote Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish as a cultural destination
- Encourage a mindset of participation and volunteering
- Encourage organisations in the parish to reach out and engage with other communities

Objective 7 – Infrastructure

- To ensure that existing and new residents are adequately provided with the necessary improvements to infrastructure
- To create social connections between all demographics across the parish
- To ensure residents have their needs met throughout all stages of their lives
- To ensure facilities are sensitively designed in the context of the beautiful landscape
- To ensure that services and facilities are future proofed to meet the borough's target of being carbon neutral by 2030
- To attract businesses to the parish that require high connectivity
- To encourage and enable home working
- To enable telemedicine



3. Landscape & the Natural Environment

Introduction

NOTE – A glossary of terms can be found in Section 12 of this plan.

The parish of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst lies partly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and partly within the Low Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and contains what are considered to be some of the best surviving examples of medieval landscape in northern Europe (High Weald AONB Management Plan, 2019-2024). It is a quintessential landscape of distinct historic character, richness, and beauty.

- 3.1. Its value lies not just in an aesthetic appreciation, however, but also in the natural environment which provides us with the essentials for life: fresh air, clean water, healthy soils to grow our food, natural resources to utilise in our economy and a rich ecological biodiversity.
- 3.2. The Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan recognises the importance of both landscape and the natural environment, and when considering future development will seek to ensure their utmost protection, enhancement, and celebration in order to maximise the benefits they bring both for our social well-being, our economic vitality and our resilience to climate change.

Overall Policy Aims

- To protect and enhance the historic landscape character, natural beauty, and rich ecological biodiversity of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish both within the High Weald AONB and its setting.
- To protect and enhance the upland river catchment areas in the parish, such as the Crane Valley, in order to increase the landscape's resilience to climate change and provide opportunities for the recovery of nature.
- To ensure that any new development makes a positive contribution to its distinctive landscape character; to identify and protect distinctive historic landscape features, such as ancient woodlands, shaws and gills, veteran trees, hedgerows, field patterns, routeways, ponds, and watercourses.

- To ensure new development makes a positive contribution to the biodiversity, ecological connectivity, and green and blue infrastructure of the parish.
- To ensure new development does not increase the levels of light pollution in the parish.
- To protect and enhance valued green spaces, significant views, and priority habitats.
- To promote community access to green space, whilst protecting sensitive sites.
- To protect the distinctive settlement pattern and support the spatial strategy for Cranbrook & Sissinghurst parish through the protection of green gaps between settlements.

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Policy LN3.6	Protection & Enhancement of Sissinghurst Castle Garden
Policy LN3.7	Local Green Space Designations

Policy LN3.1

Biodiversity & Ecology

- a) Development proposals should conserve and, where practicable, enhance habitats and sites of ecological significance in accordance with their status.**
- b) Development proposals which actively support and enable the protection, enhancement and active positive management to conserve and enhance biodiversity and the ecological networks of wildlife habitats as identified on High Weald AONB Unit “Green and Blue Infrastructure and Ecological Networks” will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.3. Policy LN 3.1 addresses a series of ecological and biodiversity issues. They are key features of the character of the parish.
- 3.4. Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish is characterised by an ecological network of a wide variety of valuable wildlife habitat, including historic fields, wildflower meadows, grasslands of importance, orchards, wood pasture & parkland and woodlands (ancient, broadleaved, mixed, scrub and coniferous) connected by a network of hedgerows containing mature and veteran trees, watercourses, lakes and ponds. This provides habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, including rare and legally protected species. The Neighbourhood Plan wishes to protect and enhance these ecological assets, in order to maximise opportunities for the recovery of nature in the parish.
- 3.5. Protected and rare species known to be present in the parish are reliant on suitable areas of habitat to thrive or can become genetically isolated and eventually locally extinct. Providing habitat connectivity extends the area over which such species can live.
- 3.6. The “Making Space for Nature Review” commissioned by Defra and completed in 2010, stated that to reverse biodiversity decline we need to establish coherent and resilient ecological networks – we need more, bigger, better and more joined habitats. This requires consideration of ecological connectivity not at the site level but at a landscape-level.
- 3.7. There is now a significant body of evidence linking access to the natural environment with mental and physical health and wellbeing in communities. A healthy natural environment provides ecosystem services such as clean water and air as well as a pleasant place to live, work and take leisure. There is an opportunity within new development to provide best practice features which enhance biodiversity. The parish is well placed within the rural context to

provide high quality development which integrates such enhancements, and if executed well could perhaps become a case study for future design guidance. Impact on habitats on species should be a key consideration of the design.

- 3.8. Where European Protected Species are concerned, the planning authority has a duty under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to satisfy the three derogation tests: is the development in the public interest, is there no satisfactory alternative and will species be maintained at a favourable conservation status. Local twitchers have reported a hawfinch in Sissinghurst, currently on the “red” conservation status list with the RSPB and more than 28 different species of bird including kingfishers and sparrowhawks have been observed in gardens in Cranbrook.
- 3.9. Further information on habitats in the parish is available from Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre, the MAGIC website, the National Biodiversity Network, and the Kent Wildlife Trust. In addition to the legally protected species, others are identified as Priority Species by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Further information on these species is also available from the organisations listed above. The High Weald AONB Unit has also identified Green and Blue Infrastructure and Ecological Networks.

Local Protection & Enhancement of the Crane Valley

- 3.10. Kent County Council has identified Cranbrook as a key area at increased risk of agricultural land flooding now and where risk is likely to increase in the future (KCC Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment (CCRIA) for Kent & Medway Part 2 – Agricultural Sector).
- 3.11. To mitigate against flooding and the impacts of climate change it is essential that the natural function of the river systems within the parish be protected and restored. The Crane Brook plays a vital role in this mitigation as it is the parish’s largest watercourse and forms part of the upland catchment area for the River Medway.
- 3.12. Natural flood management measures that can slow and capture surface water run-off from the land surrounding the upland tributaries of the River Medway (of which the Crane Brook forms a part) are seen as a vital part of the solution to the complex problem of flood management across the system (Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway 2020, People, and the Built Environment Sector Summary).
- 3.13. Flood defences utilising Nature Based Solutions (NBS) are now being employed in upper catchments across Kent to protect built infrastructure and rural areas downstream. For example, on the River Beult (downstream of the Crane Brook), NBS include planting of riparian vegetation and trees, installing buffer strips and reinstating water meadows. Similar schemes are taking place

along the River Teise near Tunbridge Wells and Hawden Stream, near Tonbridge among others (KCC Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment (CCRIA) for Kent & Medway Part 2 – Agricultural Sector).

- 3.14. The topography of the land as the Crane Brook flows into Cranbrook becomes increasingly undulating, with its banks protected by ancient gill woodland and marshy areas to absorb excess water. These features not only act as natural engineers of the watercourse but also provide an essential function through their combined role as green and blue infrastructure, as a wildlife corridor. The Crane Valley is also very accessible to those wishing to connect with nature and enjoy the countryside and views, being traversed by a network of Public Rights of Way, including the High Weald Landscape Trail.
- 3.15. At the heart of this is the much-loved Crane Valley Nature Reserve (LNR)¹, a 1.5ha woodland, scrub, and wetland haven for wildlife, which is managed by the High Weald Partnership with the support of local Cranbrook in Bloom volunteers. This unique environmental resource is much valued by the community and opportunities to enhance further areas of the valley (both upstream and downstream) for the benefit of the environment, wildlife and people are an aspiration of this neighbourhood plan.
- 3.16. The nature reserve was the site of a former millpond used in the medieval cloth and iron-working industries, as identified by a local historian (*Watermills and Windmills of Cranbrook*, C.R.R. Pile, 1954). It was one of several such millponds found along the brook which, together with the smaller pit ponds formed from clay-extraction to make bricks and source marl and iron-ore, now form part of the distinctive historic landscape character of the area. These large tracts of wetland and woodland along the Crane Valley were an ideal habitat for large birds such as the crane, heron and egret to nest and thrive, surrounded by plenty of foraging pastures.
- 3.17. The potential to make a significant contribution to the net gain for biodiversity by creating Crane Valley Rewilding Areas through the introduction of riverside buffer zones, of pasture, woodland, and wetland meadow, as follows:
- 25m – Riparian Buffer Zone to protect the riverbank from erosion and prevent sedimentation and pollution of the watercourse from contaminants.
 - 100m – Buffer of pasture, woodland, and wetland meadow to act as natural flood defence management measure to slow and capture surface water run-off and provide substantial increase in wildlife habitat. Land to be managed to support invertebrates, amphibians, birds, and small mammals.
 - 500m – Buffer to safeguard future nesting and/or foraging habitat for large birds such as the Crane.
- 3.18. 'The broader enhancement of the Crane Valley supports the government's aspirations for the identification of local priorities for increasing biodiversity through the establishment of Nature Recovery Networks (NRN). The Crane Valley provides an opportunity to make a local contribution to the national goal

of improving landscape’s resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk, and sustaining vital ecosystems such as improved soil, clean water, and clean air. It reinforces the natural and cultural diversity of our landscape and protect our historic natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and people (Nature Recovery Network Policy Paper 2020).

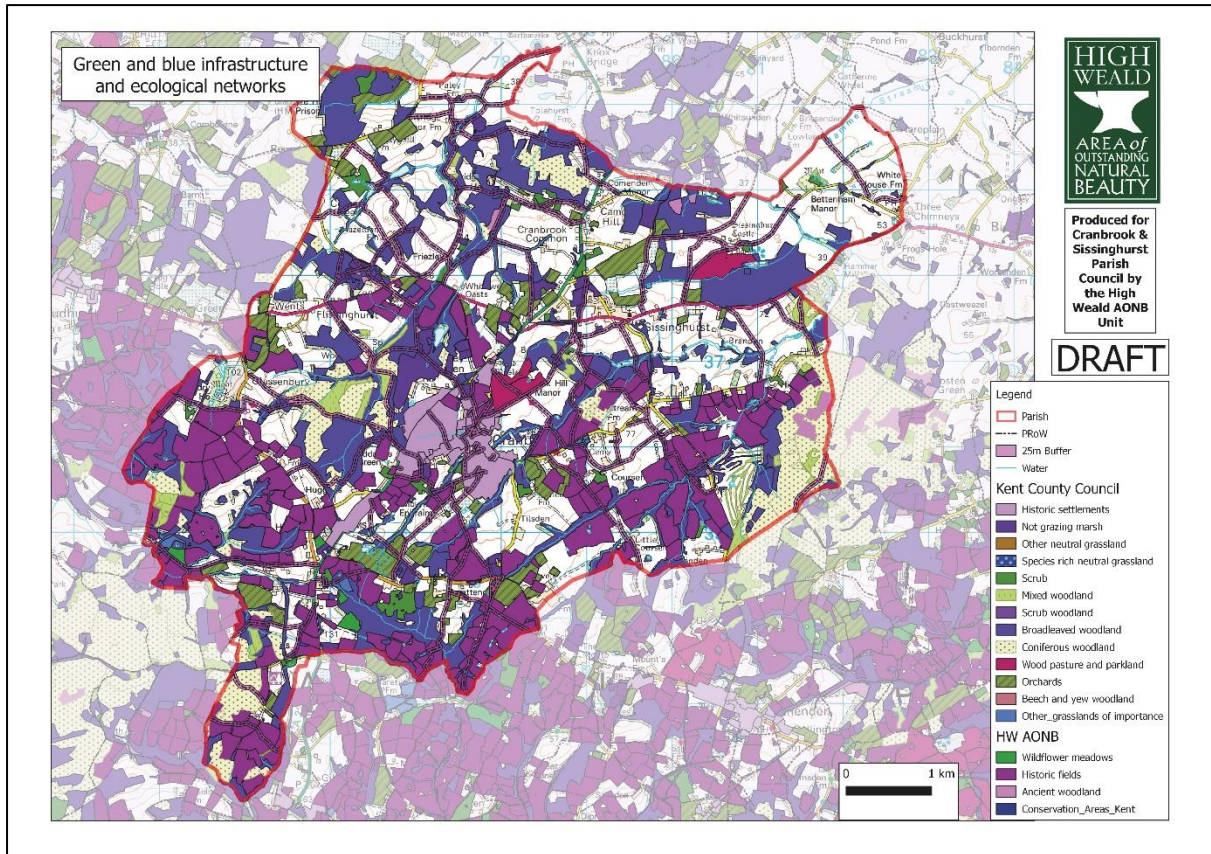


FIGURE 02

High Weald AONB Unit “Green and Blue Infrastructure and Ecological Networks”

Policy LN3.2

Protection of Geodiversity

Wherever practicable, development proposals should retain the topsoil removed during development and secure its future use on the same site.

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.19. The loss of soil micro-organisms alone will have a substantial impact on biodiversity. According to the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, one teaspoon of topsoil contains 1 billion individual microscopic cells and around 10,000 different species. These organisms are vital to support a healthy environment and grow food. The retention of this soil during development within the parish is essential to care for our precious landscape and provide essential nutrients for food production. Development proposals which intend to retain and reuse the topsoil from the site concerned should indicate at the planning application stage how this will be achieved.
- 3.20. This policy seeks to ensure that applicants are aware of the potential impact development may have on its surroundings, lots of it largely unseen given the microscopic nature of topsoil species. Due care and attention regarding topsoil will ensure the protection of geodiversity to the benefit of all.

Policy LN3.3

Protecting the Historic Landscape Character

- a) **Development proposals within the settlements of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, and outlying hamlets, should protect and enhance the historic landscape. This includes the patterns of tracks, lanes, field boundaries, archaeological sites treescape, ancient hedgerow and watercourse network and species-rich roadside verges (green infrastructure). Where appropriate, new development should respond positively to these patterns and demonstrate in their masterplans how they will be protected and enhanced.**
- b) **New developments on the edges of the settlements should demonstrate how their proposal will protect and enhance the existing patterns and framework of green and blue infrastructure, and how it will complement and connect to that of the built environment to which it relates.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.21. The Historic Landscape Characterisation dataset (2017) created by the High Weald AONB Team, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and KCC provides the most detailed assessment of the historical landscape-characterisation-2017 historicity of the visible landscape and is an essential starting point for any consideration of historic landscapes in the area (Kent Landscape Information System landscape character resources).
- 3.22. The patterns of tracks and lanes are particularly important as these show the communications routes that linked communities and those communities in turn with places of work.
- 3.23. The top of St Dunstan's Church Tower offers spectacular views of the historic rural landscape, treescape, mature hedgerow and shelterbelt pattern which gives the parish its distinctive 'green' feel and provides an important setting for the historic centre. Street trees, the churchyards in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst, the hedgerows and trees which frame and define our recreational green spaces, playing fields, private gardens, remnants of historic parkland and school grounds all contribute to this both within the Conservation Areas and beyond.
- 3.24. There are many ancient and veteran trees and hedgerows, as well as significant and historic ponds and watercourses within the settlement boundaries of Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and outlying settlements which need to be protected and enhanced. Any new developments which abut the existing settlements will need to complement, protect, and enhance the existing network of green and blue infrastructure.
- 3.25. These shelter belts play a vital role in maintaining soil fertility, offering protection from wind, preventing soil erosion, mitigating against flooding, and

improving air quality. Street trees also provide essential shade, combat air pollution, absorb noise and soften the aesthetic of the built environment. Trees, hedgerows, streams (including the Crane Brook), ponds and unkempt roadside verges provide valuable habitat essential for sustaining a rich biodiversity of species and biological connectivity to the environment beyond the settlements.

- 3.26. These features also make a positive contribution to the settlement character and wider historic landscape (See Policy LN3.5).
- 3.27. The work of 'Cranbrook in Bloom' volunteers significantly enhances the street scene with vibrant floral displays. The Copse in Cranbrook High Street provides an excellent example of how a simple roadside strip of land can be transformed into a wildlife haven which also enhances the street scene. The Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council are also responsible for maintaining many of these areas through the work of the Environmental Management, and Burials & Properties Committees. Evidence gathered at the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Landscape Character Assessment workshop supports the aims of this policy.

Policy LN3.4

Green Gaps & Preventing Settlement Coalescence

- a) Development proposals should preserve the integrity of the green gaps between the historic settlements of Cranbrook, Wilsley Green, Sissinghurst and Hartley.**
- b) Proposals which are of a scale or scope that would result in the coalescence of the historic hamlet and farmstead settlements will not be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.28. The historic settlement hierarchy pattern is distinctive with the town of Cranbrook being closely neighboured by the village of Sissinghurst, interspersed with the hamlets of Wilsley Green, Wilsley Pound, Colliers Green, Golford, and Hartley. Interspersed amongst these are many historic farmstead settlements which formed the original settlement pattern of the parish.
- 3.29. This settlement pattern is well documented in the High Weald AONB Management Plan. The importance of the Conservation Areas of Cranbrook, Wilsley Green and Sissinghurst are well documented in the CCAAC Appraisal 2010. All these settlements lie within or within the setting of a highly rural and wooded landscape which is a nationally designated protected AONB landscape.
- 3.30. The value of green spaces between settlements to people's physical & mental health and well-being has become even more important since the pandemic.

Protection of green gaps between settlements is vital to prevent coalescence of the historic settlement pattern. Responses gathered at the November 2017 draft policy poster presentation support the aims of this policy. The green gaps which have been identified as being at most risk of coalescence are areas of land between the following settlements:

- Cranbrook & Sissinghurst (including between Wilsley Green & Wilsley Pound)
- Cranbrook & Hartley
- Sissinghurst & Wilsley Pound
- Cranbrook Conservation Area and Wilsley Green Conservation Area.

Policy LN3.5

Protection of the High Weald AONB and its Setting

- a) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the parish and, as appropriate to their scale and nature, address the objectives of the High Weald AONB management plan.**
- b) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should demonstrate that due regard is paid to the components of natural beauty as shown on map High Weald AONB Unit “High Weald Character Components”.**
- c) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should seek to restore the natural function of watercourses to improve water quality; prevent flooding and enhance wetland habitats.**
- d) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should relate well to historic routeways and seek to ensure access is maintained or improved and their rural character is not degraded by loss of distinctive historic features such as banks, hedgerows, verges or other important features. Proposed landscape enhancements related to these features will be supported.**
- e) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should not result in the loss or degradation of ancient woodland or historic features within it and, where appropriate, contribute to its ongoing management.**
- f) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should conserve and enhance the ecology of fields, trees including veteran trees and hedgerows and retain historic fields.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.31. Planning Practice Guidance says, “Where landscapes have a particular local value, it is important for policies to identify their special characteristics and be supported by proportionate evidence” (Paragraph: 036 Reference ID: 8-036-20190721).
- 3.32. The AONB landscape is of economic value as a valued visitor attraction for people from outside the area and important for the local tourist economy.

Water Courses & Drainage

- 3.33. Restoration and protection of the natural function of river catchments is essential to mitigate against flooding and climate change. The AONB Landscape character map: Geology, Landform, Water systems & Climate identifies and maps these significant features.
- 3.34. These distinctive characteristic features of the landscape are valued and require sensitive active management. The ecological role as wildlife habitats and enablers of permeability are important contributors to the richness of biodiversity found in the parish.
- 3.35. The watershed of the two major river systems (Medway to the north and Rother to the south) lies in the south of the parish along the Hartley-Swattenden ridge. A number of springs are located here along with the sources of several streams and brooks, including the Crane Brook whose source is located in Swattenden Lane and flows north-east into and through Cranbrook (being culverted under the Tanyard car park and St. David's Bridge) and beyond to the south and east of Sissinghurst, converging with the Hammer Stream before reaching the River Beult SSSI, a tributary to the River Medway. Angley Woods also has several water sources with streams running northeast through Hocker Edge and Colliers Green.

Streets, Roads & Lanes

- 3.36. The network of often narrow and winding lanes with ancient hedgerows are rich in ecological biodiversity and wildlife connectivity. There are many sunken lanes and wooded green tunnels which are evocative features of this landscape. They have evolved through historic use, for example as old drovers' routeways through the parish. Key characteristics of these rural lanes include, but not limited to:
- Ancient mixed native species hedgerow, including holly.
 - Hedges coming right up to the road
 - Sunken roads with multiple ditch and bank features
 - Braided routes and driveways
 - Ancient veteran trees within the hedgerow, as well as old stubs and ancient grown-out lain hedges, all growing on the tops of banks
 - Semi-native verges rich in biodiversity
- 3.37. Features such as but not limited to, close-boarded fencing, non-native hedgerow and screen planting, pavements, street lighting, intrusive highway engineering, whilst still seeking effective ways to improve their safety for non-car traffic are significant detractors in the rural landscape of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish.
- 3.38. Instead, chestnut post-and-rail, close-pale fencing, native hedge-planting and hedge-laying and other local traditional boundary treatments should be encouraged.

Woodland & Field Structures

- 3.39. Duty of Regard is relevant in considering development proposals that are situated outside National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty boundaries, but which might have an impact on the setting of, and implementation of, the statutory purposes of these protected areas.
- 3.40. The High Weald AONB is characterised by the great extent of ancient woodland, gills, and shaws in small holdings, the value of which is inextricably linked to their long-term management. The objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan for Ancient Woodland are to enable their active management for their survival in perpetuity.
- 3.41. The High weald AONB Landscape Character: Ancient Woodlands map shows the extent of such areas within the parish. The High Weald AONB is characterised by small irregular shaped and productive fields often bound by (and forming a mosaic with) hedgerows and small woodlands, and typically used for livestock grazing, small holdings, and a non-dominant agriculture, within which can be found distinctive zones of heaths and inned river valleys. The objectives of the High Weald AONB Management Plan for Field and Heath are:
- To secure agriculturally productive use for the fields of the High Weald
 - To maintain the pattern of small irregularly shaped fields bounded by hedgerows and woodland
 - To enhance the ecological function of field and heath as a part of complex mosaic of High Weald habitats
 - To protect the archaeological and historical assets of field and heath
- 3.42. The High weald AONB Landscape Character: Field and Heath map shows the extent of such areas within the parish. Responses gathered at the November 2017 draft policy poster presentation and the June 2018 exhibition support the aims of this policy. This policy is further supported by evidence gathered in the Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Landscape Character Assessment Workshop.

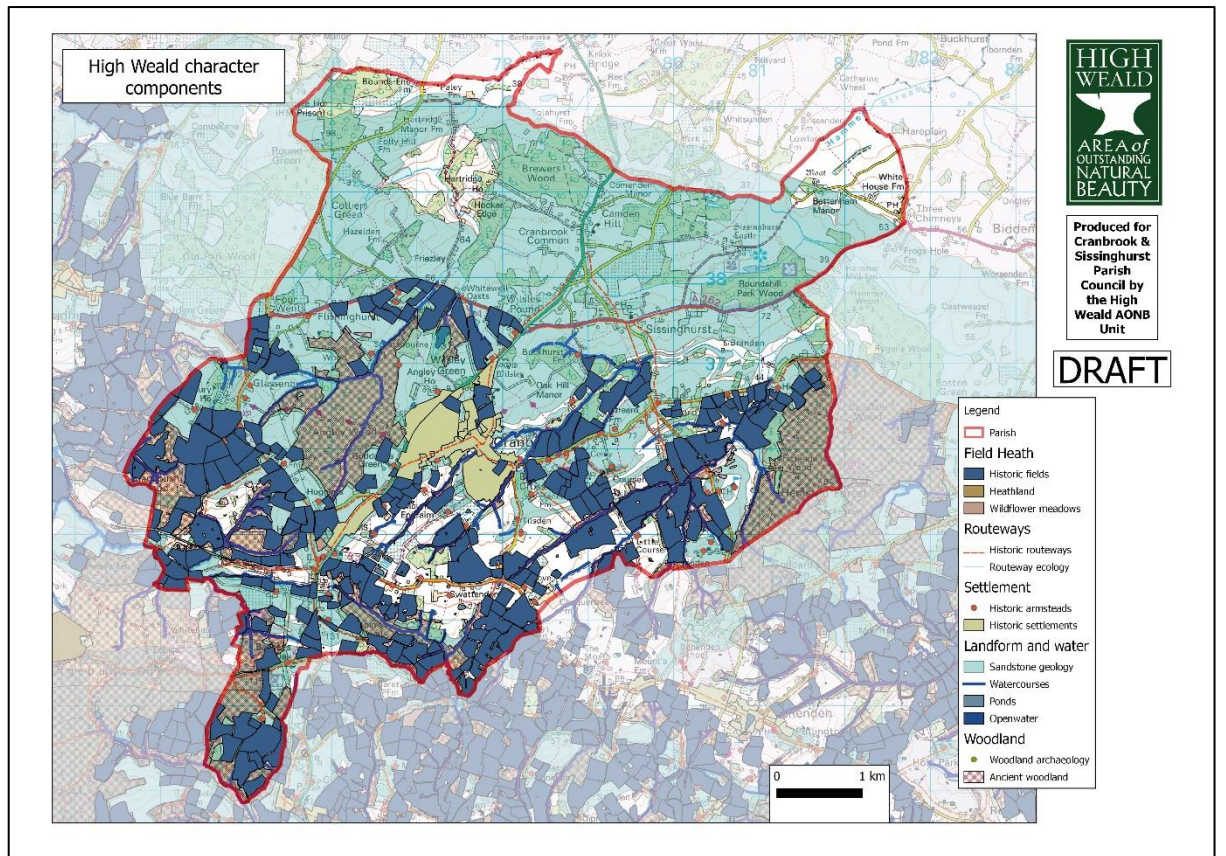


FIGURE 03

High Weald AONB Unit “High Weald Character Components”

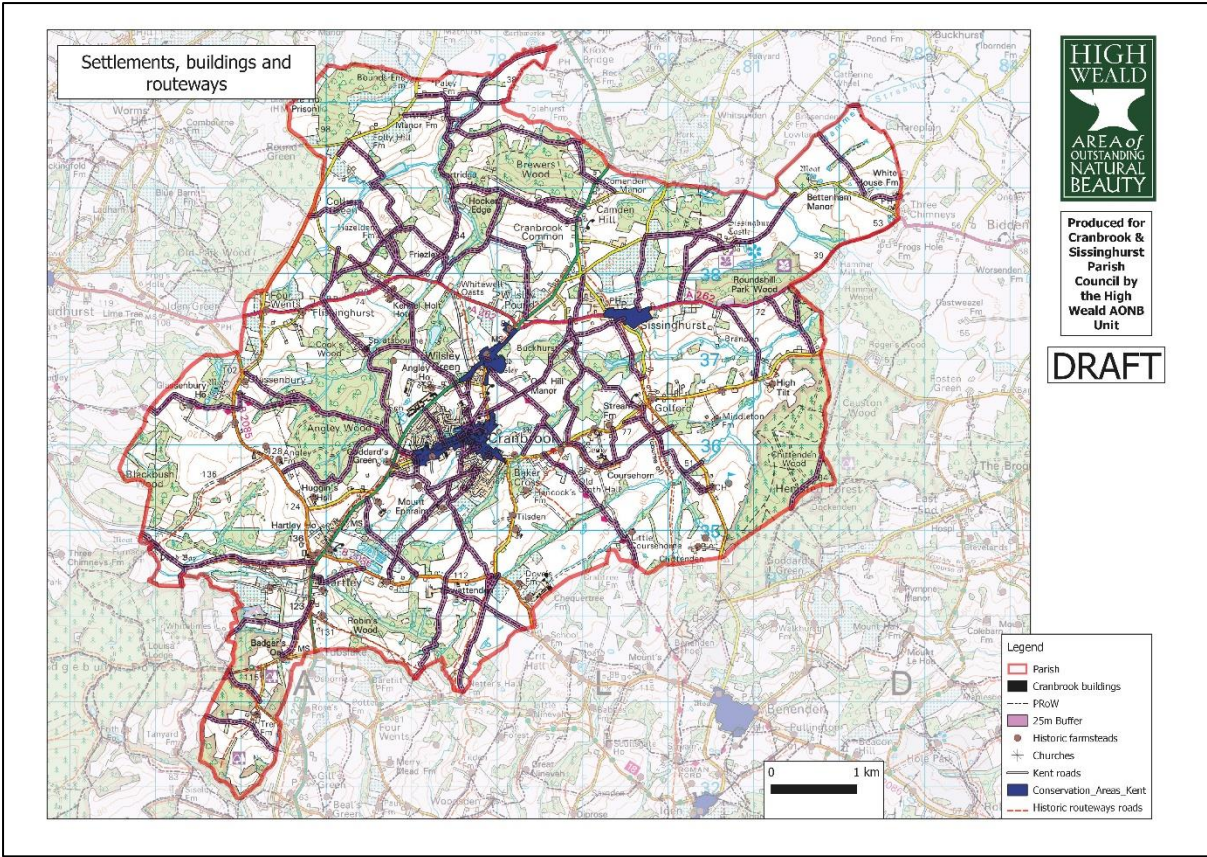


FIGURE 04

High Weald AONB Unit “Settlements, Buildings and Routeways”

Policy LN3.6

Protection & Enhancement of Sissinghurst Castle Garden

Development proposals for Sissinghurst Castle, its estate, and its setting should conserve and enhance its role as a heritage asset and a visitor attraction. Proposals should be designed to ensure that any harm to the significance of the estate's heritage assets is avoided or minimised.

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.43. Sissinghurst Castle, which is owned and managed by the National Trust, is both a significant heritage asset and landscape feature, as well as a major visitor attraction making a considerable contribution to the local economy. The site creates a setting for the designated heritage assets of Sissinghurst Castle and Gardens and reflects the local landscape particularly to the East of Sissinghurst village, enhancing the character of the wider Kentish Weald landscape. The National Trust intend to maintain and enhance the visitor offer at Sissinghurst Castle to ensure its sustainable future whilst sensitively caring for its historic significance and sense of place. Visitor enhancements may include additional retail and new visitor welcome space and other improvements to the visitor offer.
- 3.44. The Neighbourhood Plan recognises and supports the major contribution that Sissinghurst Castle makes to the heritage of the area. This policy seeks to support Sissinghurst Castle's continued viable use as a visitor attraction and to protect and enhance the Castle and its grounds for the benefit of current and future generations to allow it to remain a celebrated focal point within the parish.

Policy LN3.7

Local Green Space Designations

The Plan designates the parcels of land in the following schedule and maps as local green spaces. Development proposals on local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.

Policy Supporting Text

- 3.45. The aim of the Local Green Spaces designation is to identify and protect important green areas within the parish which are of particular importance to them (NPPF para 102). This designation affords these spaces the same protection as Green Belt land. The criteria for inclusion are specific “where the green space is:
- in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves
 - demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - local in character and is not an extensive tract of land” (NPPF para 102).
- 3.46. The plan wishes to enable and promote continued access to the countryside and recreational green space as well as recognising the historical significance of some of these areas. Their contribution to the rural open feel of the settlements, the mental health and wellbeing of residents, levels of activity in children and adults, social and community development and the ecological networks throughout the parish is recognised. The importance of these green spaces has been highlighted during the Pandemic. Policy LN3.7 takes the matter-of-fact approach in paragraph 103 of the NPPF. If proposals come forward on the proposed local green spaces, they can be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Borough Council. In doing so it will be able to make its own assessment if the proposal meets the very special circumstances required by the policy.
- 3.47. The most recent Sport England surveys ‘Active Adults Lives’ and ‘Active Lives Children and Young People’ indicate reasonably high levels of activity and volunteering locally for adults, but lower levels of activity amongst children (Sport England Active Lives Surveys 2020-2021).
- 3.48. The list of designations includes a diverse range of green spaces from the Ball Field in Cranbrook and the King George V Field in Sissinghurst to much smaller informal recreation areas such as the allotment gardens, and areas of particular historical significance, such as the Cranbrook Museum Garden and Horse Pond. The variety and number of Local Green Space designations proposed seeks to ensure the provision of a mix of accessible formal and informal areas to provide plenty of opportunity for people, especially children and younger people to be active. This includes areas of amenity playing

fields, sports pitches, nature reserves, community orchards, allotments, walking and cycling routes, and other smaller incidental areas.

- 3.49. Evidence gathered from the Cranbrook Museum, Wellbeing in the Weald, the Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Landscape Character Assessment workshop schedule and responses gathered at the November 2017 draft policy poster presentation and the June 2018 public exhibition support the aims of this policy.
- 3.50. Community responses gathered in the Regulation 14 Consultation indicate considerable support for these green space designations, especially for the Crane Valley, Cranbrook Ball Field, all the playing fields and the allotments.

Site LGS 1

Allotments at the Frythe Estate

- Map reference TQ776357
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space as it offers an essential grow-your-own food resource for the community. It is of particular local importance because of its recreational value, as a place of tranquillity and its aesthetic beauty.



Site LGS 2

Allotments at Oatfield Drive, Southern Section Only (PC owned)

- Map reference TQ776363
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space as it offers an essential grow-your-own food resource for the community. It is of particular local importance because of its recreational value, as a place of tranquillity and aesthetic beauty. The Wellbeing in the Weald initiative now have a community allotment plot which enables anyone wishing to benefit from the health-giving aspects of gardening to join in a social environment.



Site LGS 3

Big Side

- Map reference TQ778367
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This site has been designated as a local green space due to its visual prominence and the contribution it makes to the local character and setting of the settlement of Cranbrook. The site's topography (this is the highest point to the northern side of the settlement) gives it an open nature which provides an awareness of space, natural light and fresh air, which all contribute to the mental well-being of those walking the footpaths which surround the site.



The open nature of the site preserves the integrity of the Conservation Areas of Cranbrook and Wilsley by acting as a green gap between the two, along with the last remaining part of the Long Field (LGS 15), to ensure their historic character is retained. The site is also of historic significance as it has been a school playing field for at least 150 years. Maps from 1870 show that a pavilion was present on the site. There are good views of significant buildings in the town from this site, including the Windmill.

Site LGS 4

Colliers Green School Field

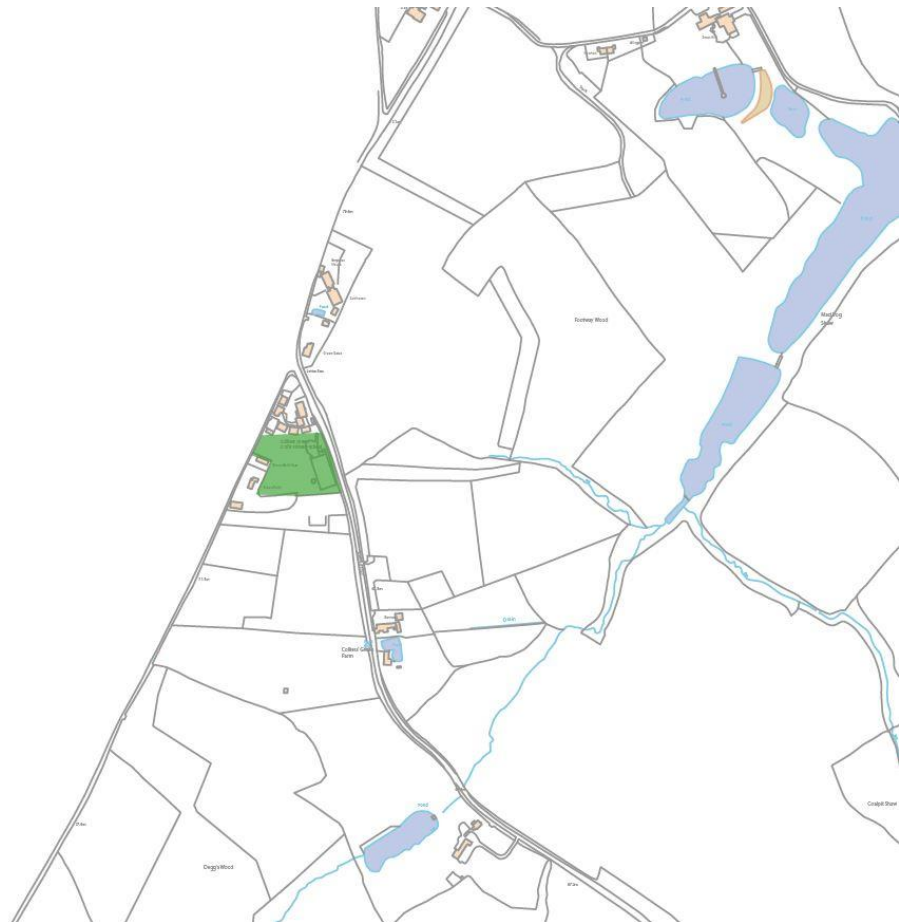
- Map reference TQ759388
- This site doesn't lie within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is used by Colliers Green School for informal recreational activities and is of particular local significance because of its recreational value. The site is visually prominent and is also adds to the local tranquillity and character/setting of this small hamlet settlement.



Site LGS 5

The Community Orchard Wilsley Green

- Map reference TQ778370
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this community orchard is used by the local community for informal recreational purposes and is appreciated by many local residents. This area is therefore of particular local significance because of its recreational value. Cranbrook in Bloom volunteers maintain the orchard. This green space also forms a valuable contribution to the distinctive northern gateway to Cranbrook.



Site LGS 6

The Copse Nature Reserve

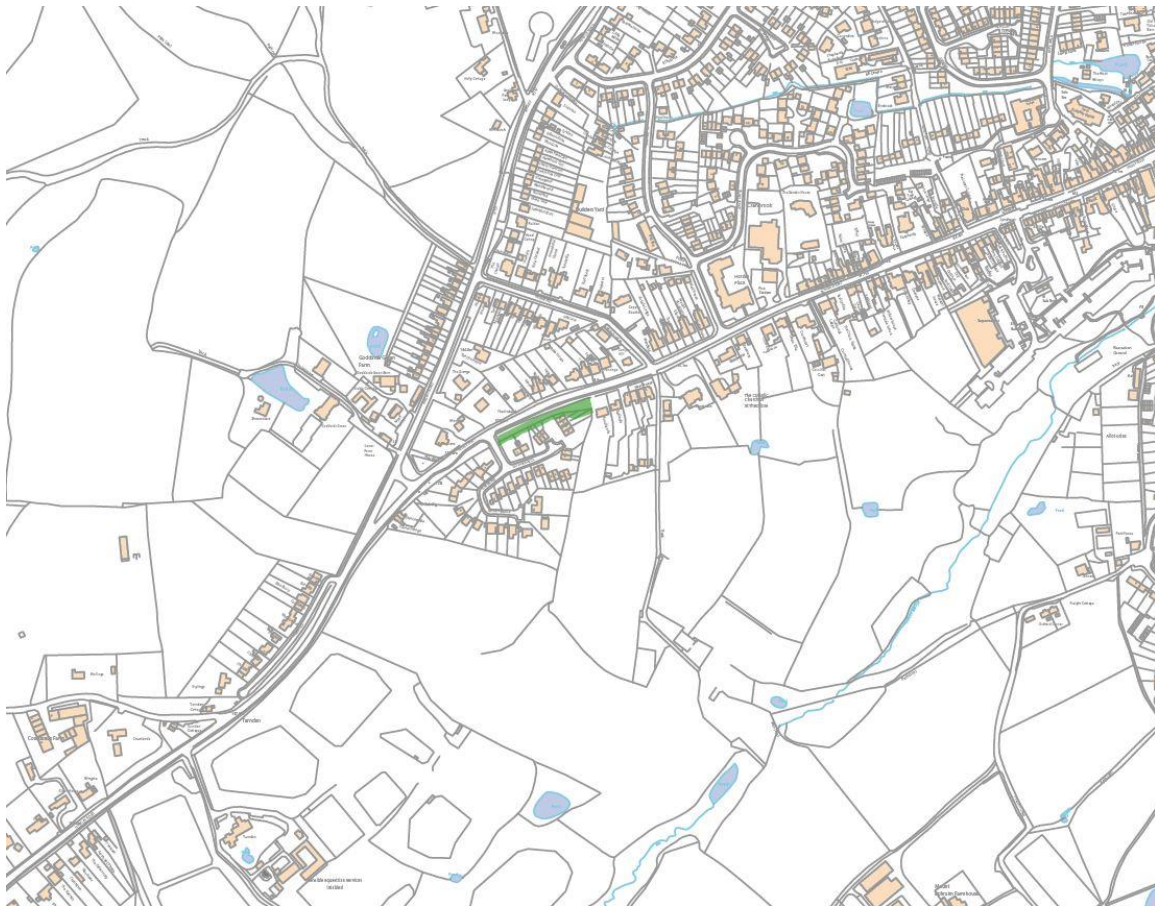
- Map reference TQ779358
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this small Roadside Nature Reserve is a wildlife haven cared for by the community. It is visually prominent and accessible. It is of particular local significance because of its wildlife and is therefore suitable for Local Green Space designation.



Site LGS 7

Cranbrook Ball Field & Bowling Green

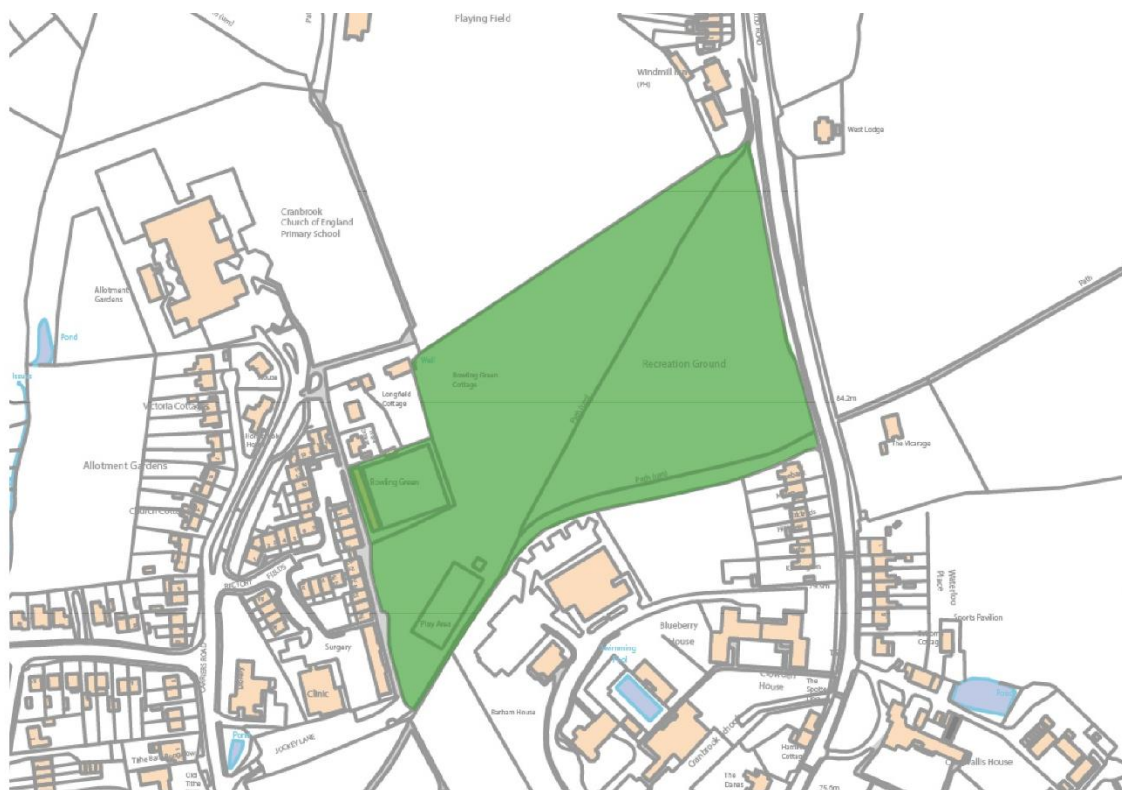
- Map reference TQ777362
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is a recreational open space, used by the community for formal and informal activities. This area is therefore of particular local significance not only for its recreational value but also its historical importance, its aesthetic beauty and significant views of prominent buildings in Cranbrook (the windmill and the church). The area is an historic recreation field referenced in historical texts and artworks over centuries. This area has got good public access.



Site LGS 8

Cranbrook School Pond, Waterloo Road

- Map reference TQ779362
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this pond contributes to the visual attractiveness of the settlement and is therefore demonstrably special to the local community. Kingfisher spotted November 2017.



Site LGS 9

The Crane Valley

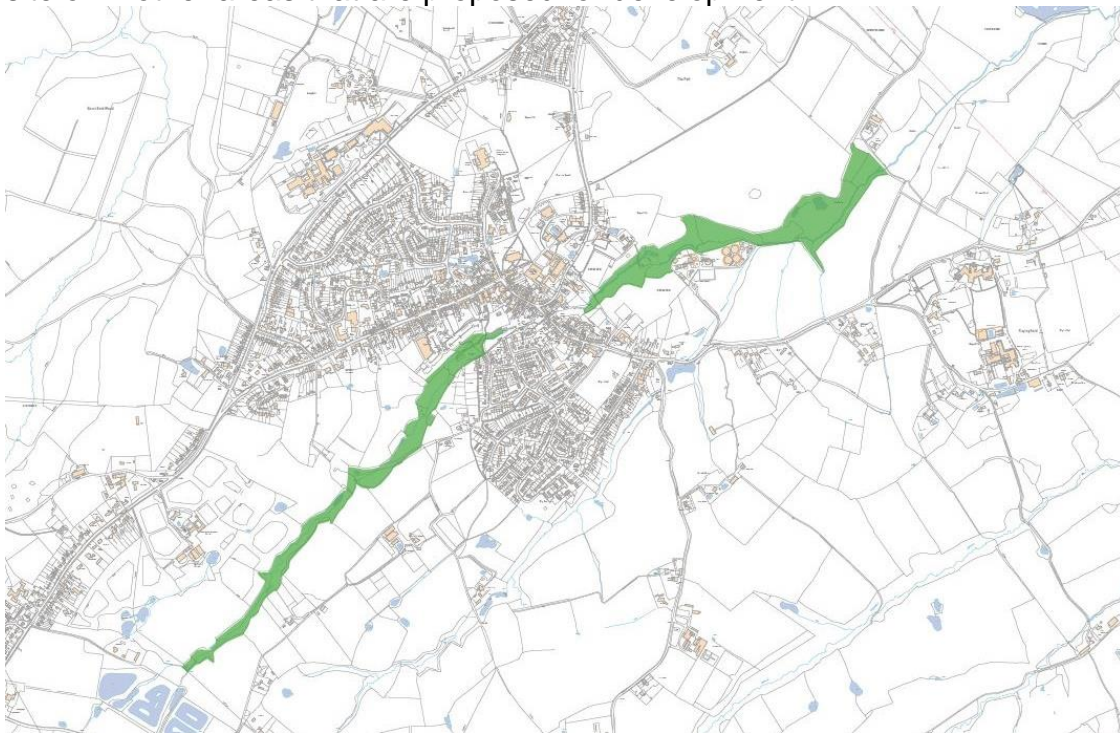
- Map reference TQ775358
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is of particular local significance because of its richness of wildlife and visual amenity. This area is also of local historical importance (remains of old iron/fulling ponds & watermills sites on site). This area has got public access in parts. However, although this area is already partly identified as Ancient Woodland and as a Local Nature Reserve, this area is particularly special to the local community and acts as an important green corridor going through the built development of Cranbrook. Furthermore, this area is also partly allocated for development in the TWBC Allocations DPD, this area will form part of the non-developable area of the allocated site or in other areas that are proposed for development.



Site LGS 10

Golford Cemetery

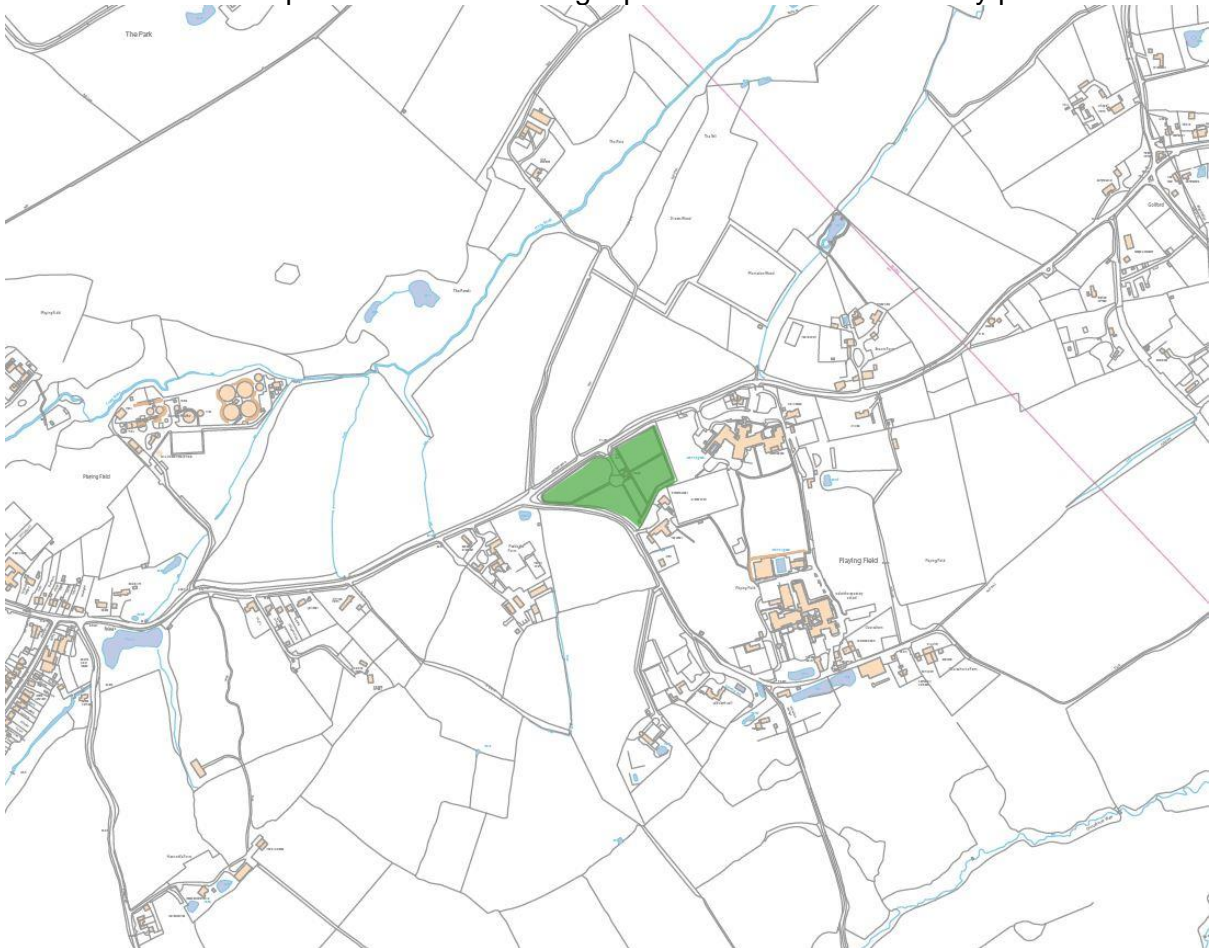
- Map reference TQ790361
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is of particular local historic significance and as an important area for the community to use for quiet reflection and contemplation. This area has got public access and is visually prominent.



Site LGS 11

High Weald Academy Field

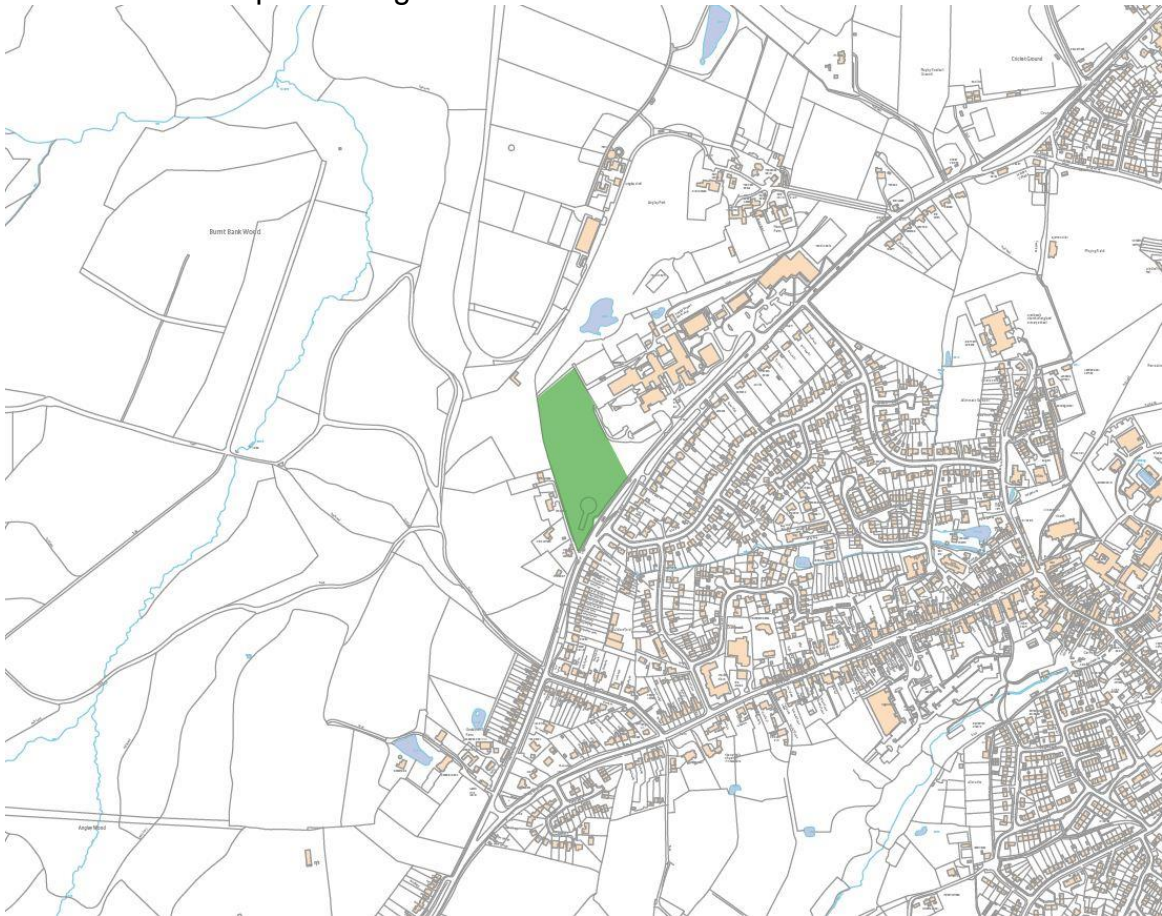
- Map reference TQ769362
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area comprises a school's private playing field and there is no official public access to the site. Despite this, this green area is visually prominent to the local community and contributes to the character/setting of the settlement. This area is therefore suitable for Local Green Space designation.



Site LGS 12

Cranbrook Museum Garden, The Horse Pond & Access Path

- Map reference TQ775361
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space as it lies in the heart of the Cranbrook Conservation Area and is of great historical significance, as well as being a peaceful and beautiful asset for the community. It is part of what was formerly known as 'The Green' and was associated with commerce, dating back to the markets granted by Edward I in 1289. The Horse Pond is so named as it is where horses were tethered to drink on market days. The Museum Garden is an intrinsic part of what the Museum has to offer, as well as being beautiful in its own right. It is a vital outside area for the display of artefacts. The dye, physic and culinary herb gardens contribute to an understanding of local history.

The garden is home to numerous birds (including kingfisher), insects and amphibians, as well as badgers, foxes and two species of bat. It is managed in a wildlife-friendly way and appears on the B-Lines map for the South of England. The Museum Garden is an occasional venue for small community events, a place for speaking to groups of visitors to Cranbrook and for local craft demonstrations. It is more often appreciated as a tranquil area where people can sit, without cost, thereby contributing to the mental health and well-being of residents and visitors. It is maintained by volunteers, including a U3A gardening group.



Site LGS 13

Jubilee Field Recreation Ground, Sissinghurst

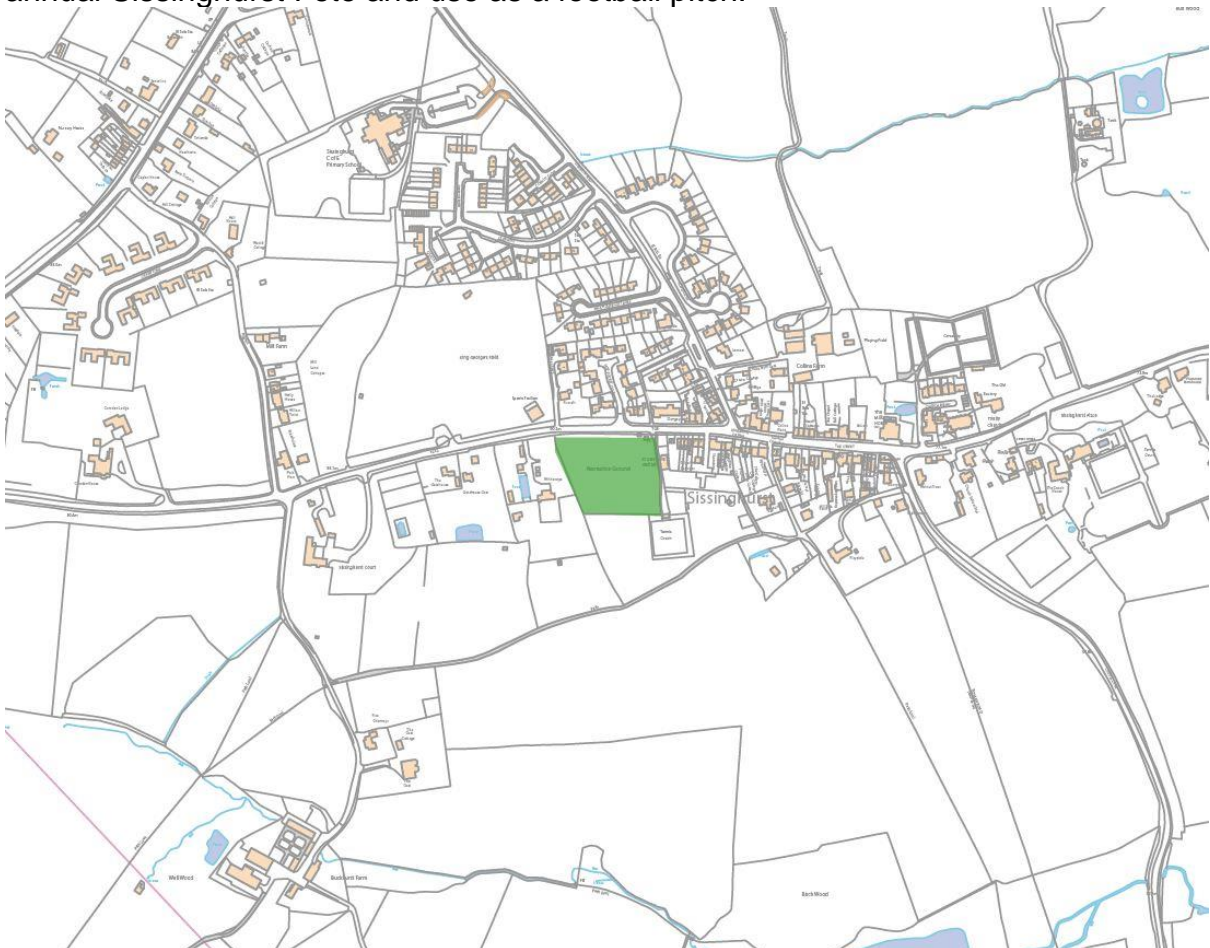
- Map reference TQ793375
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is an open recreational space used for a variety of community activities. These include the annual Sissinghurst Fete and use as a football pitch.



Site LGS 14

King George V Field, Sissinghurst

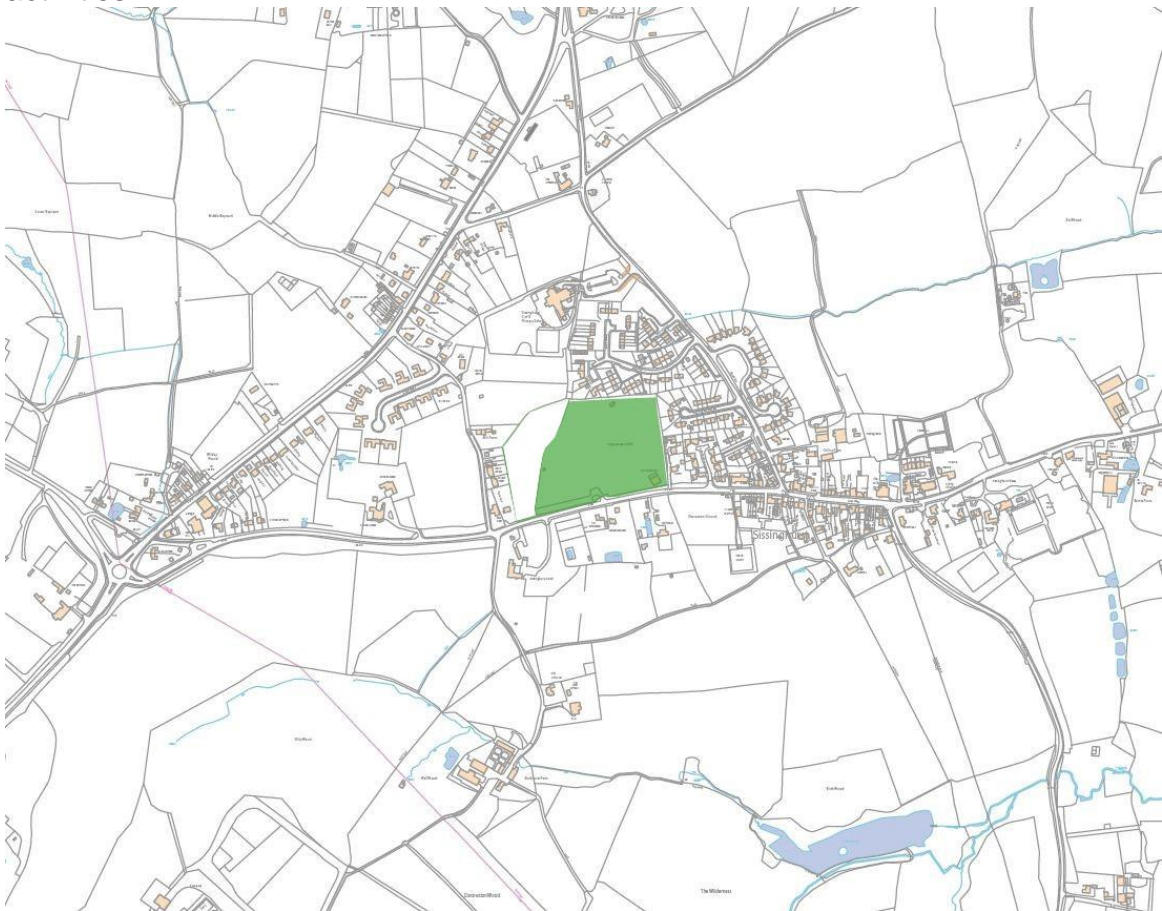
- Map reference TQ791376
- This site doesn't lie within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is an open recreational space used for a variety of community activities. It is the home of the Sissinghurst Cricket Club, a venue for boot fairs, used for overflow parking for village events and camping and caravan club events. There is space for football activities.



Site LGS 15

The Long Field

- Map reference TQ776367
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space for its recreational value as it is well used by the community. Two Public Rights of Way (WC97 and WC99) traverse the site and provide a valuable pedestrian connection between the town centre and residences along the Angley Road and Quaker Lane, as well as the High Weald Academy, the Weald Sports Centre, Cranbrook Sports Club and Angley Woods. These paths are valued by the community for both every day and recreational use. Its historic significance lies in the fact that it is the last remnant of the “Long Field”, the southern part of which was lost to development in the 1980s (the new primary school).

It also provides one of the last areas of open space between the Conservation Areas of Cranbrook and Wilsley Green (along with LGS 3 Big Side) and is vital to retain the historic character of the settlements. The field has been identified as being of local significance through being a priority habitat, “grassland of importance” (KCC Habitat Survey 2012), as well as acting as a vital wildlife corridor between the town centre and Angley Woods.



Site LGS 16

Rammell Field

- Map reference TQ780350
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because of its visual prominence and the contribution it makes to the character and setting of the settlement.

The northern part of the site lies in the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Rammell Field is also recognised for its historical significance through its association with the commemoration of lost WW1 soldiers who had attended Cranbrook School and is also now known as “Memorial Field”. It has been used as a school playing field for nearly one hundred years and is occasionally used by the wider community for events.



Site LGS 18

Sissinghurst Green at Cleavers

- Map reference TQ791377
- This site doesn't lie within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

	Beauty
	Historic Significance
	Recreational Value
	Tranquillity
	Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because it contributes to the character/setting of the housing development and is therefore demonstrably special to the local community.



Site LGS 19

Hovendens Green, Sissinghurst

- Map reference TQ792377
- This site doesn't lie within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

	Beauty
	Historic Significance
	Recreational Value
	Tranquillity
	Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is used for informal recreational activities by residents in the surrounding housing development. This area is therefore of local significance because of its recreational and amenity value.



Site LGS 20

St Dunstan's Churchyard

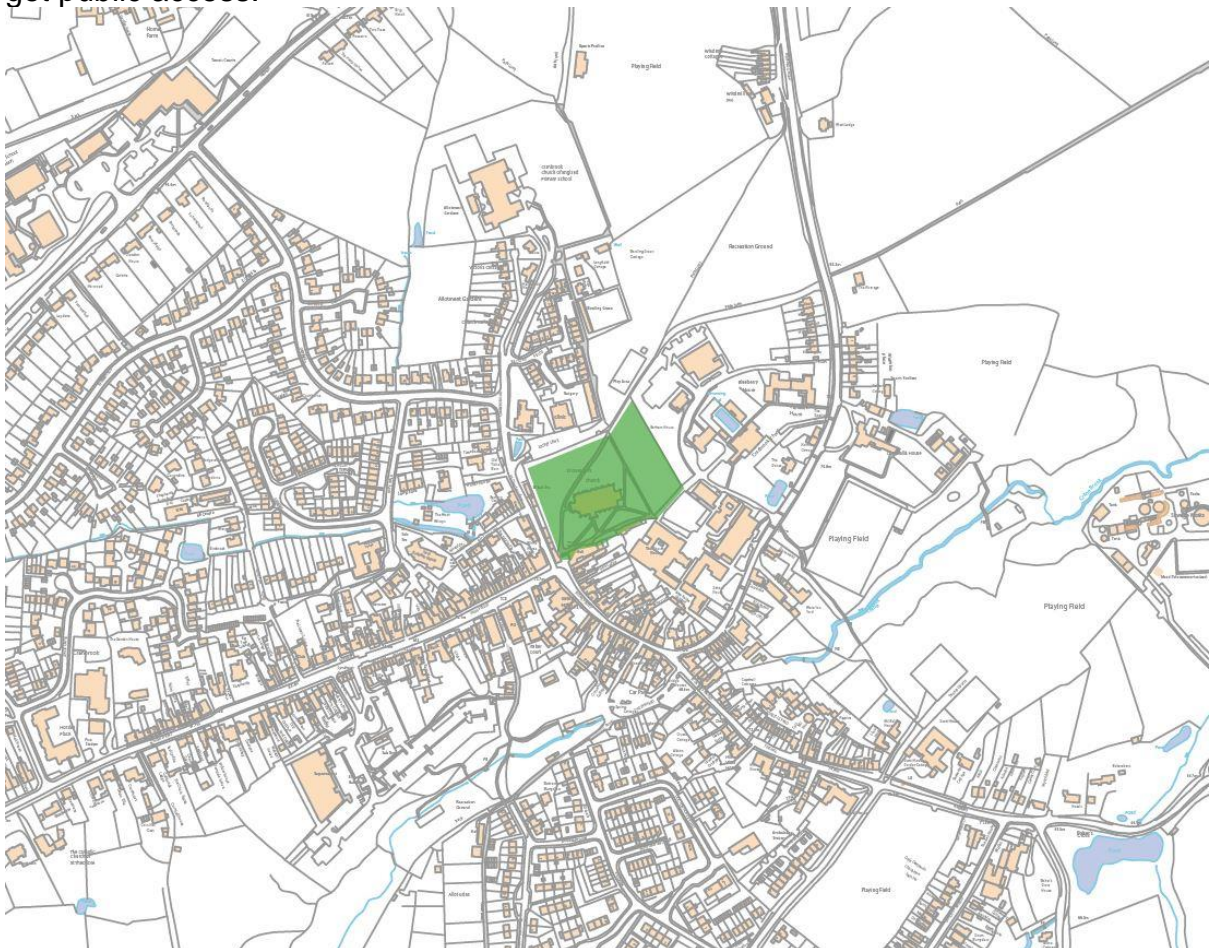
- Map reference TQ777362
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is an important open space that is of particular local historic significance. This area has got public access.



Site LGS 21

Tomlin Ground

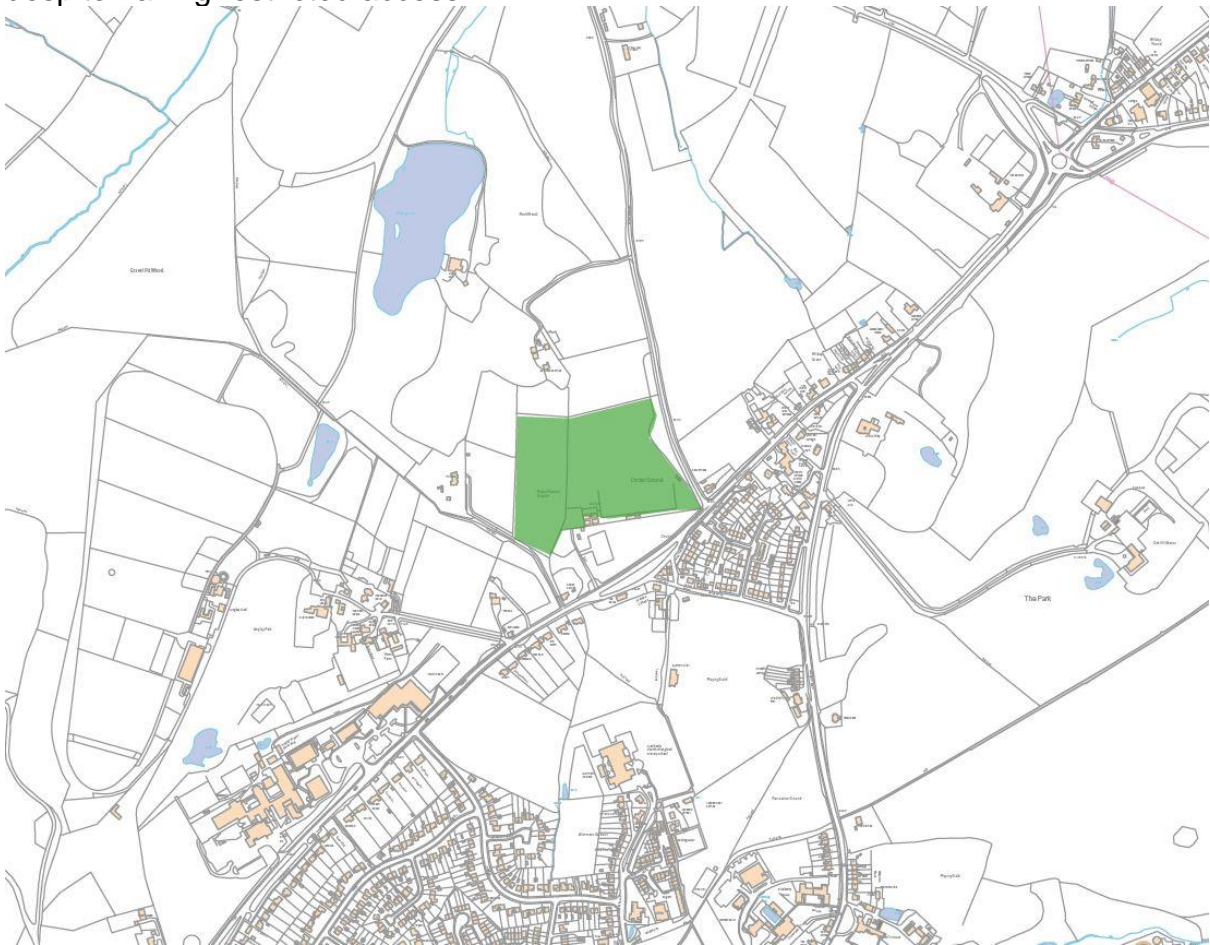
- Map reference TQ774367
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

	Beauty
	Historic Significance
	Recreational Value
	Tranquillity
	Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because this area is a recreational open space used privately by the local rugby and cricket clubs for formal recreational activities and is therefore demonstrably special to the local community despite having restricted access.



Site LGS 22

Turner Avenue Recreation Ground

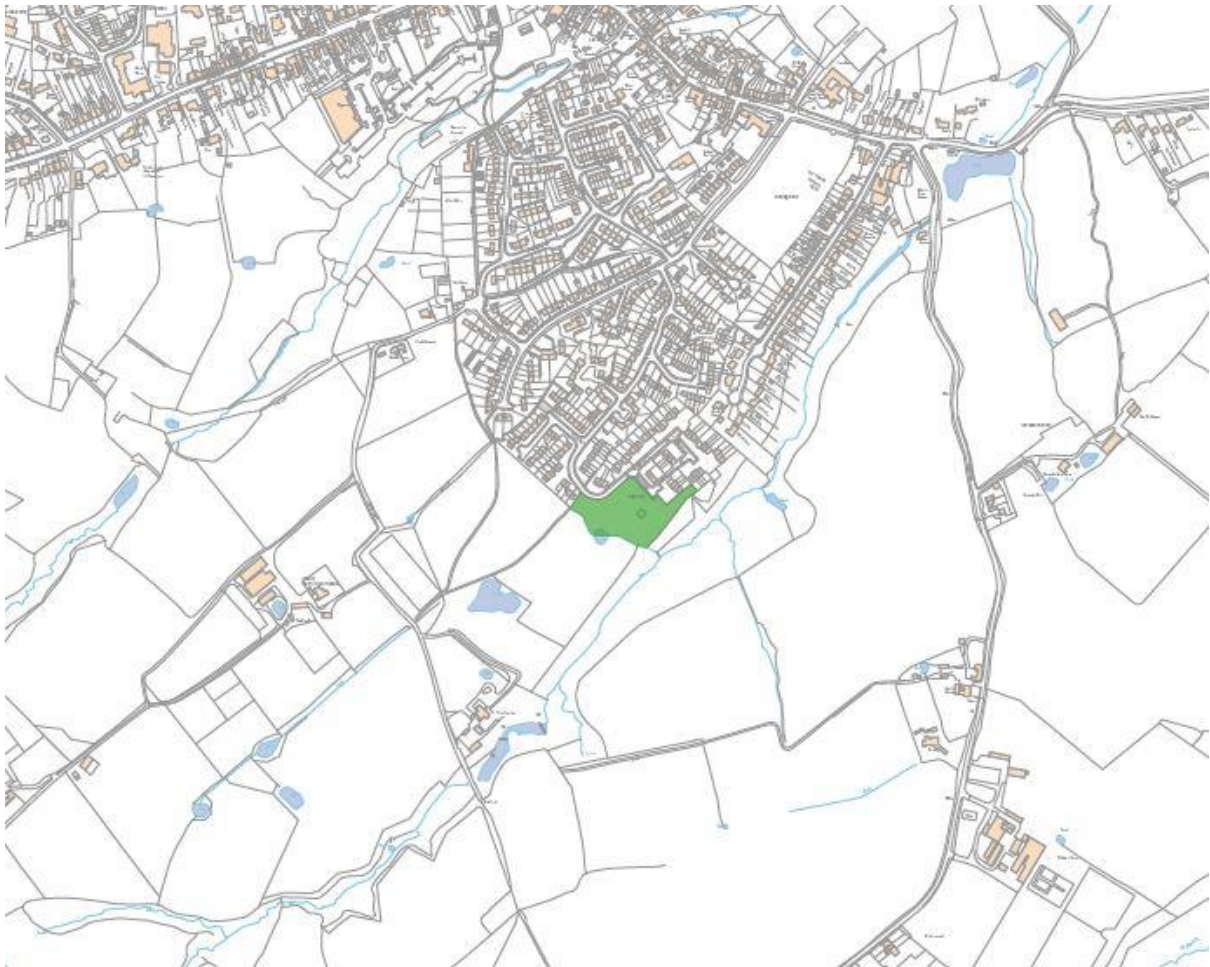
- Map reference TQ778354
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

	Beauty
	Historic Significance
	Recreational Value
	Tranquillity
	Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space because it is an area of open space for the adjacent housing development and is used by the residents for informal recreational activities.



Site LGS 23

Hennicker Pit and Woodland

- Map reference TQ765350
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This small area of ponds and woodland is close to the hamlet of Hartley and accessible by a PROW. It is of particular significance because of its historical association with marl, clay and iron-ore extraction. It is valued by the local community as a place of beauty and tranquillity, and a place to enjoy the abundant wildlife.



Site LGS 24

Bakers Cross Pond and Woodland Copse

- Map reference TQ782358
- This site lies within the AONB

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

Beauty
Historic Significance
Recreational Value
Tranquillity
Richness of Wildlife

Supporting Text

This space has been designated as a local green space as it provides a tranquil, beautiful site which is abundant in wildlife. It contains a large ornamental pond or small lake within a mixed woodland copse on the Eastern edge of the built-up area of Cranbrook. It provides valuable habitat for a range of wildlife species, including birds (including owls), bats, invertebrates, amphibians, and mammals. It is appreciated for its beauty and tranquillity by those passing on nearby footpaths.

Lying close to the edge of the Cranbrook Conservation Area and originally thought to be used as a felling pond it is considered to be of local historical significance.





4. Heritage & Design

Introduction

Historical Perspective

- 4.1 The parish's heritage is above all a Kentish Wealden one. It includes the great Wealden forest, the Anglo-Saxon 'dens' recalled in names such as Swattenden and Turnden, centuries of agriculture including hop growing, fruit orchards and a surviving traditional High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) setting as described in the Landscape & Natural Environment section of this plan.
- 4.2 Numerous Mesolithic and Neolithic flint artefacts have been found across Cranbrook reflecting the use of the Weald by hunter gatherer populations for thousands of years. The present Cranbrook parish was, so far as we know, a nameless and undeveloped small piece of the mighty Weald forest when the Romans successfully invaded Britain in 43AD. The Rochester to Hastings Roman road runs through the parish, and Cranbrook's Little Farningham Farm may be the best example of a Roman iron working site in Kent. The Roman Channel Fleet (Classis Britannica) was in charge of the iron production at the western edge of Little Farningham Wood.
- 4.3 Limited Wealden development during the Anglo-Saxon period took place in 'dens' – originally mainly stopping places for the herds of pigs driven annually from the more developed east and south for into the Wealden forest for feeding on acorns and beech mast. The name of one such small den was 'Cranbroca', first recorded in a 1070 document. With its own church, at or near the later St Dunstan's Church, it was at a significant meeting point of ancient droveways through the Weald. As the settlement flourished, the parish of Cranbrook became established, covering a considerably wider area than the original den.
- 4.4 Under feudal authority of Christ Church Canterbury monks, who controlled the market economy and appointed the vicar, the Cranbrook settlement expanded in the early Middle Ages, obtaining from Edward I in 1290 the right to hold a market and annual fairs. Despite the Black Death, a remarkable rise of population and prosperity began in the 14th century, culminating at the end of the 16th, when Canterbury was the only Kent town to have more inhabitants than Cranbrook's approximately 3,500. The reason for Cranbrook's no less

than national significance was the great broadcloth industry, its clothiers, originally including Flemings, employing abundant cheap but skilled rural labour for spinning, weaving and other processes, and exporting to Flanders and elsewhere. The very high number of listed buildings in today's central Cranbrook, as well as elsewhere in the parish, reflect the importance and wealth of the Tudor town.

- 4.5 Cranbrook's fame and wealth diminished as its broadcloth industry gradually collapsed in the 17th century. It became a small, more, or less self-sufficient, rural town, focus of adjacent villages, with its income and employment mainly from agriculture, including hops, at their peak in mid-late 19th century after Staplehurst's railway connection was established in 1842. New central government controls and structures of local government subsequently reduced Cranbrook's self-governing powers, but a remarkable 19th century cultural vigour is reflected in the many good buildings of Thomas Dearn and, later, the Arts and Crafts architects including William West Neve and Norman Shaw, as well as the nationally famous Victorian 'Cranbrook Colony' of painters. Hardly any of the fine Victorian buildings are listed, other than T. G. Jackson's splendid Cranbrook 'Big School'. Very many of the Cranbrook area's much older listed buildings stand within the Conservation Areas of Cranbrook, Wilsley and Sissinghurst, but they also include former cloth halls throughout the modern parish, which is still surrounded by its historic farmsteads and farmyards (History of Cranbrook, Peter Allen, 2008).

Protect, Conserve & Enhance the Conservation Areas

- 4.6 All designated and non-designated heritage assets referred to in the Cranbrook Conservation Area Appraisal (CCAA) 2010, Wilsley Green Conservation Area Appraisal (WGCAA) 2012 and Sissinghurst Conservation Area Appraisal (SCAA) 2012 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework, the Historic England list of buildings of historic interest, and the Kent Historic Buildings Index should be protected, conserved, and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 4.7 Cranbrook has grown organically since medieval times and its many listed buildings contribute to the unique identity of the town. The historic centre is attractive and important to residents and visitors alike, particularly the long steep High Street and unusual L-shaped design, with views towards St Dunstan's Church on the corner running down to Stone Street and leading up the Hill to the historic windmill.
- 4.8 Its distinctive design and architectural influences should be protected. The dispersed rural settlement of Wilsley Green, with its cluster of late 16th and 17th Century houses and cottages, has attractive wooded surroundings which should also be protected. Two surviving oast houses, now converted into homes, are valuable reminders of the importance of hop growing in the area in the late 19th century.

- 4.9 From medieval times, until relatively recently, Sissinghurst has expanded slowly, and its conservation area, at the heart of the village, greatly contributes to its identity. The wide and straight aspect of The Street with its historic buildings on both sides is the core of Sissinghurst. It is identified as an area of particular sensitivity to change, due to its distinctive local character and medieval settlement pattern.
- 4.10 Sissinghurst village has many listed buildings with interesting architectural features. The Street is fortunate that over the years it has not been visually spoilt with yellow parking lines or pedestrian crossing markings and street furniture. Other than the occasional rebuild, the village buildings have changed little in appearance over the decades. There is widespread local support to maintain the status quo, as evidenced at public engagements throughout the process.
- 4.11 There are many buildings that have been identified as being appropriate to add to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Heritage Asset List, but which are still awaiting assessment through the Borough Council's Local Heritage Asset review process. The historic built environment in the parish is already safeguarded by national and local planning policies. The Parish Council is confident that this policy framework will ensure that well-informed decisions are made on planning applications within the Plan period. The Parish Council will comment on planning applications and applications for listed building consent which may have a detrimental effect on heritage assets.
- 4.12 Consideration should be given to the effects of pollution on the Conservation Areas, particularly in relation to the increase in number, size, weight, and speed of vehicles travelling through them, often in close proximity to buildings. This should include the damaging effects of vibration including that caused by sound.

Listed Buildings in Cranbrook, Wilsley and Sissinghurst Conservation Areas (Revision A Design Guidance Group)

- 4.13 There are a total of 318 listed buildings within the three Conservation Areas and the immediate surrounding countryside. Of these, 131 are within the Cranbrook area, 15 in the Wilsley area and 20 within the Sissinghurst area and their locations are highlighted in red on the Conservation Area map. There are also 7 listed buildings in Cranbrook but outside the Conservation Area, whilst the remaining 115 are located in the immediate surrounding countryside and these mostly comprise farmhouses and associated farm buildings.
- 4.14 Most of these buildings are listed Grade II but there a number of very important Grade I buildings including St Dunstan's church, which also has 30

Grade II listed memorials in the churchyard, the Union Mill, and Old Wilsley as well as Sissinghurst Castle which is outside the Conservation Area.

- 4.15 Within Cranbrook, significant Grade II* buildings include the group comprising the corner of the south side of the High Street/Stone Street junctions with the George Hotel, Andersons Butchers and the Estate Agents, the group comprising Happy & Glorious (the former Banghams), Vegetare and uberSports (the former Jeneleen) shops. Other grade II* buildings are Cranbrook School House, Hill House, Providence Chapel, Shepherds and Wilsley Hotel as well as Goddards Green farmhouse, which is just outside the Conservation Area. In Sissinghurst, Bell Cottage and King's Head House are also Grade II* listed.
- 4.16 The sheer numbers of listed buildings in such a tight geographical area demonstrates the high historical and architectural significance of these Conservation Areas as well as their immediate surroundings, most of which lie within or on the periphery of the High Weald AONB. Further details can be read in the Conservation Area Appraisal 2010.

Overall Policy Aims

- To protect, conserve and enhance the historic and architectural character and interest of historic buildings and other heritage assets, listed or unlisted, throughout the Parish. (CCAAC)
- To retain the local historic settlement pattern.
- To protect, conserve and enhance the historic Conservation Areas of Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Wilsley. (PA)
- To maintain and enhance the townscape setting of Cranbrook town centre, its roofscape, landmark buildings and views.
- To maintain and enhance the surrounding setting of Sissinghurst village centre, its roofscape, landmark buildings and views.
- To maintain and enhance the surrounding historic farmsteads and farmyards.
- To ensure that any new development should have regard for the rich heritage within the parish.
- To create living and working environments that complement the rich heritage.
- To prioritise and optimise the use of previously developed land ("brownfield sites") for new housing development which will (PA) enhance and improve these areas.
- To promote the highest quality of design, resource efficiency, and appearance
- To encourage good innovative design (PA) respecting the context in which it sits. (CCAAC consultation response suggested edit)
- To ensure development does not increase the levels of light pollution
- To protect the Dark Skies and reduce levels of light pollution across the parish.

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- HD4.2 Protect & Enhance Shopfronts
- HD4.3 Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets Outside the Conservation Areas
- HD4.4 Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of Agricultural Heritage Assets
- HD4.5 Cranbrook Windmill
- HD4.6 Retention and Restoration of the Providence Chapel
- HD4.7a Small-Scale Sustainable Development Sites & Design Criteria
- HD4.7b Exceptions for Large-Scale Developments & Community Involvement
- HD4.8 The Design of New Buildings within or within the setting of the Conservation Areas
- HD4.9 Making Efficient Use of Land through Appropriate Densities
- HD4.10 Avoidance of Light Pollution

Policy HD4.1

Protect, Conserve & Enhance the Historic Public Realm

- a) The historic features of the public realm identified as making a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation areas in the appropriate appraisal document, should be protected and maintained.**
- b) Any development that has a harmful effect on any historic features of the public realm or harms their contribution to the conservation areas' character will not be permitted. The context of the conservation areas should be protected, to ensure that any new adjacent development does not detract from it.**
- c) Development proposals that would enhance the architectural interest of Cranbrook town centre and demonstrate a sensitive and appropriate approach which respects local materials, the site concerned, and its context and setting, will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.17 “The Public Realm embraces the external places in our towns and cities that are accessible to all. These are the everyday spaces that we move through and linger within, the places where we live, work and play” (Public Realm Design, Atkins).
- 4.18 The quality of public realm provision makes an important contribution to the character of the conservation areas, especially its open spaces. In Cranbrook, the York stone paving and double height pavement in the High Street, stone marks, church steps and the iron railings in the town centre are all worthy of protection. The network of twittens that typifies the historic core of Cranbrook is identified as an area of particular sensitivity to change, due to its distinctive local character and the town’s medieval settlement pattern. In Sissinghurst, the York stone paving outside the church, the brick paving along the street, and the many traditional iron railings to properties should, likewise, not be removed. The absence of yellow-line parking restrictions also contribute to the essential character of Sissinghurst village.
- 4.19 Consideration should be given to the impact that artificial lighting has within the historic public realm. When introducing new or replacement lighting, including street lighting, into these areas, the position, design of fittings, brightness and colour temperature should form part of the consideration.
- 4.20 As stated in the CCAA 2010, “The heart of the conservation area was badly served by architects, designers, developers and planners in the 1960s”. In

order to prevent such mistakes from occurring again, the highest quality of design, materials and planning will be essential when considering any development within the historic Cranbrook town centre. Contemporary additions to the area can be designed in a sympathetic manner while still providing for the needs of the present day. The High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide (2019) and High Weald Guidance on the selection and use of colour in development (2017) provide further details.

Policy HD4.2

Protect & Enhance Shopfronts

- a) Insofar as planning permission is required proposals to maintain shop fronts that contribute to historic or architectural character, and improve those which do not, will be supported. Where an existing shopfront contributes to the special historic or architectural interest of a listed building or the character or appearance of a conservation area, great weight should be given to its conservation and sympathetic repair, including reinstatement of lost elements.**
- b) The promotion of traditional, non-illuminated shopfronts, compatible in size and style with the building in which they are located, and the inclusion of features such as signage, painted lettering on wooden fascia boards, stall risers and fascia mounted pull-down awnings, will be supported.**
- c) Proposals for new shopfronts, or alterations to existing shopfronts will be supported where they respond positively to the High Weald AONB Colour Study and Policy ENV6 (Shopfronts) of the TWBC Local Plan 2006.**

Policy Supporting Text

4.21 Cranbrook has many independent shops with varied shopfronts which contribute to the vitality and uniqueness of the town. The few shopfronts in The Street in Sissinghurst, along with other former shopfronts, contribute to the interest of the village scene. However, not all shopfronts are attractive – some have been marred by large plastic fascia boards, inappropriate windows, or overuse of company logos. Some make use of Dutch blinds which are not traditional and can detract from historic shop front detailing including cornices, original blind boxes and fascias. This should be discouraged, and shopkeepers should be guided in the use of appropriate signage and fascia.

Policy HD4.3

Protection, Conservation & Enhancement of Heritage Assets Outside the Conservation Areas

- a) Buildings, structures, features, and archaeology identified as designated or non-designated heritage assets nationally or locally which are outside of the Conservation Areas should be protected, conserved, and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.**
- b) Development proposals in the High Weald AONB should protect, conserve, and enhance the historic buildings and heritage assets within the parish in accordance with the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-24.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.22 Although many buildings and other heritage assets in the parish are protected within the conservation areas, there are many that are outside of these designated areas. These include buildings such as cloth halls, and other assets related to past industries.
- 4.23 The NDP recognises that buildings from the 20th century have yet to be formally acknowledged for their architectural merit and functional significance to the Parish. These are the legacy of recent times, and there is a need to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance (HE & History Society).

Policy HD4.4

Protection, Conservation & Enhancement of Agricultural Heritage Assets

- a) Designated and non-designated agricultural heritage assets should be protected, conserved, and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.**
- b) Development proposals should protect, conserve, and enhance the historic buildings, structures, and agricultural areas within the parish in accordance with the High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024**
- c) Proposals that protect the built agricultural heritage (historic farmsteads) by the avoidance of division of the farmyard curtilage around which the buildings stand will be supported.**
- d) Proposals that will preserve the relationship between the farmyard space and the buildings surrounding it will be supported.**
- e) Development proposals that would protect, conserve, and enhance small agricultural buildings, especially cattle sheds and unconverted barns, will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.24 There is an opportunity to protect, conserve and enhance the significant agricultural heritage within the parish and create interesting development with real character. However, there is concern over the threat to historic farmsteads through insensitive over-development without due attention to the underlying archaeology. Through preserving the medieval field patterns and the space of farmyards themselves in relation to the buildings around them, the local area will retain its pockets of unique interventions within the landscape.
- 4.25 Within the parish there are many designated and non-designated heritage assets related to agriculture. These include historic farmsteads, farmhouses, and other agricultural buildings. Oast houses and hoppers' huts are reminders of the historic importance of hop growing in the Parish, and images of the houses are strong identifiers of the area. There are also small-scale structures such as cow byres and pig sties. The High Weald AONB unit is particularly concerned about smaller agricultural structures (pre-1950) as these are becoming increasingly rare, through conversion, replacement, or demolition.

- 4.26 Development centred on historic farmsteads should be sympathetic to their heritage and character. Contemporary additions should be designed in a way that draws out the best qualities of the site while adding something new for the 21st century, retaining small buildings which may otherwise be overlooked and demolished.

Policy HD4.5

Cranbrook Windmill

- a) **The character, operation and fabric of the windmill should be protected.**
- b) **The potential impact of any development on the mill's access to wind shall be determined using the Dutch mathematical model called 'Molen Biotoop' (windmill living space).**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.27 Possibly the 'finest windmill in the land', Union Mill was built in 1814 and is England's tallest working smock mill. Its white weatherboarded smock tower stands on a tall brick base of three storeys. Four 'patent' sweeps drive one of the two remaining pairs of millstones. The mill is a Grade I listed building and has been in the care of Kent County Council since its restoration in 1960. The mill is managed and operated by the Cranbrook Windmill Association. (KCC)
- 4.28 Cranbrook Windmill is a vital asset and iconic landmark within the town. Its authentic exterior design characteristics, internal milling machinery and records of its former internal layout along with the historic fabric of the building attract hundreds of visitors each year and it is still grinding corn for demonstration today (KCC). Visitors and residents alike love to see it 'come alive' with the sweeps turning by wind power, which is a rare sight in the modern day. Access to the wind is a vital part of the windmill's heritage value. Protecting the windmill and its surrounding area is essential for the local identity of the parish. To many outsiders the windmill is the feature that identifies Cranbrook. Its rarity as a type justifies extreme protection, and the fact that it is still working even more so.
- 4.29 The Molen Biotoop Model specifies that no development within 100m of the mill should be higher than the existing or adjacent buildings and no existing building should be extended upwards to be higher. At distances between 100m – 400m from the mill, development should not be allowed if it affects the wind speed at the mill by more than 5% in any direction, as calculated by the Molen Biotoop Model.

Policy HD4.6

Retention & Restoration of The Providence Chapel

Proposals for the sensitive restoration and re-use of the Providence Chapel will be supported where the intended uses respect the integrity of the building.

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.30 The Providence Chapel is in a central location in Cranbrook. It is an important historic building, listed Grade II* because of its significance as a very good example of an early 19th century non-conformist chapel, which retains almost all of its original liturgical fittings. The Chapel, and preachers associated with it such as Isaac Beeman and William Huntington, played a significant part in Cranbrook's history as a 'Dissenting' area, where many non-conformist sects have flourished. The Chapel is a landmark within the town centre and attracts tourist attention.
- 4.31 There is significant support to restore this iconic building. The Providence Chapel is listed on the 2020 'Heritage at Risk South East' register compiled by Historic England. Its condition is described as 'very bad' which threatens its historic character and detracts from the aesthetic appearance of the historic town centre. The dilapidated condition of the Providence Chapel has also been highlighted in CCAA 2010 and warrants immediate attention. In May 2023 the Borough Council published a Planning Brief for the restoration and re-use of the Chapel.

Policy HD4.7a

Small-Scale Sustainable Development Sites & Design Criteria

- a) Small scale, sustainable developments within rural and urban brownfield sites will be supported.**
- b) Any greenfield housing sites should be contiguous with existing limits of built development and provide for sites of approx. 1-10 dwellings, subject to the demonstration of effective physical integration with the existing settlement patterns within the historic landscape of the Parish**
- c) All proposals should meet the criteria outlined in the National Design Guide (2019), the Kent Design Guide, the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide (2019), the advice and recommendations within the High Weald Colour Study (2017), the Neighbourhood Plan Design Guidance (2021) and any successive or locally produced guidance adopted by the parish.**
- d) All planning applications should demonstrate how the advice and guidance contained within the Design Checklist (July 2022) prepared in support of the Neighbourhood Plan has been used to inform and influence development proposals.**

Policy HD4.7b

Exceptions For Large-Scale Developments & Community Involvement

- a) Proposals for larger developments of 10 or more houses will be supported if it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances as prescribed by the NPPF and it can be demonstrated that their impact on the sensitive AONB landscape setting and the considerable environmental constraints can be effectively mitigated.**
- b) Any such proposals should demonstrate effective physical integration with the existing settlement patterns within the historic landscape of the Parish.**
- c) The proposed development should contribute to sustainable development and should meet the place-shaping principles and design guidance of the National Design Guide (2019), The Kent Design Guide, the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide (2019), the High Weald Colour Study (2017), and any successive or locally produced guidance adopted by the parish and demonstrate how design requirements have been met.**
- d) All planning applications should demonstrate how the advice and guidance contained within the Design Checklist (July 2022) prepared in support of the Neighbourhood Plan has been used to inform and influence development proposals.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.32 The unique character and rich heritage of the parish's built environment developed in harmony with an historic landscape of the High Weald AONB characterised by dispersed historic settlements of farmsteads and hamlets, and late medieval villages needs to be protected and learnt from. It provides an important model for future development that has been lost in recent years. Developments over the past seven decades have not followed the model of organic growth nor paid any regards to heritage. Mass housing estates of often low quality and poor architectural merit will not be supported.
- 4.33 Focusing on small-scale developments provides opportunities to incorporate sustainable developments within rural and urban brownfield sites. The imposition of mass, executive housing estates of poor design and quality that exacerbate demographic extremes was not favoured during community consultations held throughout the plan process. It was felt that these would have an irreversible deleterious impact on the landscape and environment - specifically the incorporation of TWBC target of an additional 413-433 homes by 2038. The development of large-scale executive housing estates would

result in urban sprawl, loss of green space and the identity of historic settlements. (extracted from the Draft Housing and Design v 3 2018)

- 4.34 The community have expressed concerns that national housing targets and borough allocations threaten the further degradation of landscape and town settings if current planning and building trends are continued. Large-scale developments place an unsustainable impact on existing infrastructure, require considerable investment and master-planning and should only be given consideration where there is excess unproductive land and a strong demand for local housing and economic investment.
- 4.35 The Design Checklist and supporting policies seek to create future places which become good places to live, work, play and visit through the principles of sustainable place-making. Close attention should be paid to these design principles, including an understanding of:
- Context - the relationship between the historic landscape and built form.
 - The typical historic street pattern and street hierarchy, with a diverse typology of built forms interspersed with narrow twittens.
 - The existing trees and hedges on and around the site and ensure any development integrates these.
 - Building form, layout, mass, proportions and framing of spaces between buildings.
 - The relationship between private and public spaces.
 - The distinctive and varied local vernacular and architectural details.
 - The characteristic green feel to the street scape and abundance of green spaces.
- 4.36 Applicants for larger sites will be expected to work closely with the community throughout all stages of the design evolution. The National Design Guide (2019) states that community involvement is considered vital in achieving well designed places and buildings and this can be through co-design, design workshops and other engagement techniques. This is especially important on the larger strategic sites, where the principles of good place-making and master planning should be adopted. The NPPF 2019 endorses the early engagement with the community.
- 4.37 Applicants should demonstrate their design process, from inception to first iteration. Close attention should be paid to local design character and the heritage design policies in this chapter. The plan would also encourage innovation in design, modern or contemporary architecture. Such designs are applicable across the parish on individual sites for single dwellings, small scale and large-scale developments when done in sympathy with their town and/or landscape setting.
- 4.38 To address the global climate emergency and the motion passed by TWBC in July 2019 to meet the Borough carbon-neutral target by 2030, development proposals should be in conformity with policies EN 2 and EN 3 of the TWBC

Pre-Submission Local Plan. The Parish Council promotes the highest standards of eco-design and construction in new developments in order to improve the energy efficiency of buildings and has produced a Design Checklist (see Appendix), which all applicants should adhere to in their proposals.

Policy HD4.8

The Design of New Buildings Within or Within the Setting of Conservation Areas

- a) New buildings within or within the setting the conservation areas in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish should respect local styles and where practicable, use vernacular materials as detailed in Cranbrook Conservation Area Appraisal (CCAA) 2010, Sissinghurst Conservation Area Appraisal (SCAA) 2012 and Wilsley Green Conservation Area Appraisal (WGCAA) 2012.**
- b) Development that would rise above the roofline of existing buildings or contrast negatively in terms of form and choice of materials with the existing roofscape will not be supported.**
- c) Any new development or alteration to an existing structure that affects or has potential to affect a heritage asset (whether designated or undesignated) will be required to have regard to the Design Guidance within this neighbourhood plan**
- d) All applications for development proposals which have an impact on either individual listed buildings of any grade, or their setting and/or on the designated Conservation Areas must provide adequate and relevant supporting statements that demonstrate a proper understanding of the significance of existing buildings and their context in order to address and mitigate the potential harm caused by the development. (Design Guidance Group).**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.39 This policy does not require repetitive, 'pattern book' copies of existing buildings. Innovative design that respects Cranbrook and Sissinghurst's sense of place, with appropriate materials, will be welcomed. Imaginative layouts, using terraces, courtyards, and varied height buildings, as appropriate to the site and location, will be essential to replicate the current diversity and densities of dwellings.
- 4.40 Cranbrook and Sissinghurst's attractiveness as town and village is in large part due to their gradual development since the Middle Ages and to the diversity and quality of their buildings particularly in the conservation areas. Although there are buildings of many ages, they are linked by common materials drawn from the local countryside, such as bricks, clay tiles and weather boarding. There are other common features, such as: gables, dormer windows, timber frames, and most buildings are 2-3 storeys high. Together these different styles and ages of building form a harmonious whole.

- 4.41 The roofs and roofscapes within the Conservation areas are intrinsic to their attractiveness and the views of them should not be obscured by developments which rise above the roofline of existing buildings or contrast negatively with them in any way.
- 4.42 The quality, type and colour of materials used for new buildings play a major part in whether they sit happily alongside what came before. The success of new buildings, whether innovative in design, copying existing styles, or adopting some of the features in order to blend in, will depend on the quality of each individual design/build. What is important is that all buildings should sit harmoniously together. Such considerations should apply not only within and adjacent to the Conservation Areas, but also to the vistas as they are approached.
- 4.43 Reappraisals of buildings and structures within the Parish by the CCAAC Local Listings Group have been submitted to TWBC to be designated or added to local heritage asset listings. An addendum to the Conservation Area Appraisals listing the applications awaiting decision by the Borough Council is available.

Policy HD4.9

Making Efficient Use of Land Through Appropriate Densities

- a) New development should reflect the historic density and grain of the area in which it is being proposed so that the distribution of buildings supports the existing pattern of the settlement. Grain and density should closely relate to the street pattern so that the way buildings are distributed relates to movement.**
- b) A variation of density across the site, in all but the smallest of schemes, will help the character and place-making of the development, avoiding generic homogeneity. New development should be denser and tighter knit around key junctions, green spaces or towards the centre of the neighbouring settlement. Lower densities should be used to help make the transition to the edge of the site away from the core area.**
- c) The same standards for density and quality for proposals which seek to bring forward a higher proportion (over 50%; see AECOM Housing Needs Assessment 2017) to include a tenure blind mix of affordable housing throughout the parish will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 4.44 Cranbrook town centre and Sissinghurst village are both high-density settlements and derive much of their character from that feature. The settlements within the parish have developed over time to include a wide variety of homes to meet a wide variety of needs and these have contributed towards a pleasing aesthetic. If the development of greenfield sites cannot be avoided, the most efficient use of land should be made to limit urban/suburban sprawl and the area of countryside lost to development.
- 4.45 Concentrating activity at the heart of settlements creates more opportunity for walking and cycling, rather than relying on the car to travel longer distances. The social interaction made possible by high density is another important feature, as the opportunity for informal conversations increases as people pass by one another, therefore enhancing the community spirit of the parish as a whole. In areas of higher density homes there should be outside space for the wellbeing of residents.

Policy HD4.10

Avoidance of Light Pollution

Development proposals should respond positively to the dark skies' environment.

- a) Outside lighting should be at the lowest level to achieve its intended purpose and use dark sky-friendly lighting.**
- b) Any exterior, street, and public lighting in the High Weald AONB should follow the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance (AONB) for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**
- c) The impacts of any lighting proposed on biodiversity should be identified and considered. Lighting design should be bat sensitive. Any negative impact should be mitigated through appropriate site and lighting design.**

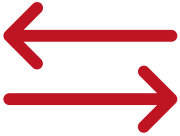
Policy Supporting Text

- 4.46 Measures should be taken to lessen the current levels of light pollution. It should be recognised that light pollution affects not only the local area, but also surrounding areas, and the darkness of the skies in the region. This pollution not only arises from outdoor lighting installations, but also from internal light spill. The foreword to the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Dark Skies states that 'Bad lighting, new development and horizon light pollution are a constant threat' to Dark Skies.
- 4.47 Dark skies are an important feature of the High Weald AONB. (AONB) The High Weald has some of the darkest skies in the South East, which have been identified as worthy of conservation by the International Dark Sky Association (IDSA). However, light pollution is rapidly increasing, and our dark skies may not exist for much longer.
- 4.48 Lighting can have an adverse impact on species, disrupting natural behaviour and reducing fitness, particularly for nocturnal invertebrates and mammals. This includes bats, which are abundant in the parish. Potential impacts include roost/flight path/foraging area abandonment, later roost emergence time, impacts on habitat connectivity and increased risk of predation from avian predators. Lighting can draw insect prey away from dark areas if it has an ultra-violet component or high blue spectral content, reducing prey availability for rarer, light-avoiding species. Lighting design should comply with The Bat Conservation Trust/ILP Guidance.
- 4.49 Lighting must either be avoided altogether, or measures applied to eliminate impacts and protect important habitats. The principles that should be applied

are as follows, and should be updated in accordance with any changes in best practice:

- Avoid lighting important habitats through sensitive site configuration
- Design in dark buffers and lighting zonation
- Establish and maintain appropriate lux limits
- Avoid UV lighting
- Specify LED where possible (this has a sharp cut off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability)
- Use recessed, bollard or low-level luminaires
- Use baffles and cowls to reduce light spill
- Use glazing treatments if light spill is likely from windows onto sensitive habitats
- Apply dimming or part-night lighting

- 4.50 Lighting should be designed and maintained to light only the area needed. The problem of light spill into adjacent properties and gardens should be addressed. Policy HD4.10 addresses these important issues. Where necessary a suitably qualified ecologist should work alongside a lighting engineer to produce an appropriate solution and evidence of this input should be provided. Where necessary, planning conditions and obligations will be applied to secure such avoidance measures and ensure appropriate lighting management in perpetuity.
- 4.51 High Weald AONB, and CSPC are working to improve the knowledge of, and understanding about the effects of light pollution, and ways of lessening it.
- 4.52 The Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015 ‘recognises the importance of averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change.’ In 2019, TWBC resolved to become carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. The avoidance of unnecessary lighting will contribute towards these aims.



5. Access & Movement

Introduction

- 5.1 During public consultations, where there was a postcard response, the Access and Movement draft policies received most comments. Concerns were raised that the impact of further housing developments included risking pedestrian safety, significant increases in all vehicular traffic, the possibility of losing the historic lanes and public rights of ways (PROWs), and the potential loss of the rural character of the parish. Conversely, aspirations were expressed for improvements in sustainable transport, with recognition of the importance of access and movement to green infrastructure, recreation, tourism, health, and general well-being.
- 5.2 When considering the movement of people across the parish, it is important that a balanced and sustainable approach can be developed, creating interlinking routes that are safe for all. New development should be master planned to provide for access for emergency and service vehicles (e.g., waste and recycling), disabled users, pedestrians, cyclists, users of public transport (e.g., buses and taxis), and finally other motor traffic. A hierarchical approach will ensure that appropriate priority is given during the formulation, planning, design, and construction phases.
- 5.3 The Covid-19 pandemic will have many, and far reaching, consequences, including an increase in the number of online purchases leading to a rise in the number of journeys made by (possibly higher emission) delivery vehicles. It is unlikely that this trend will reverse. In the short term, there may be a shift away from public transport towards using private vehicles, thereby avoiding coming into close contact with others. However, if Cranbrook is to thrive as a local centre, it must draw in visitors from the surrounding area, to shop, eat, drink, and visit place of interest in the town. Convenience of access will be an important factor whether people choose Cranbrook over a longer journey to a larger centre. The longer journey will create higher emissions, which is to be discouraged.

Overall Policy Aims

- To ensure that the neighbourhood area is a safe and pleasant place to move around.
- To provide a range of interlinked movement choices that are convenient, sustainable, and safe and which facilitate healthy lifestyles and well-being.
- To support changes to streets, spaces and the public realm that can deliver lasting benefits for the local economy, the local environment, and local communities.

Contents

AM5.1	The Pedestrian Environment
AM5.2	Pedestrian Priority & Public Rights of Way
AM5.3	Public Transport & Access to Amenities
AM5.4	Cycle Storage & Cycle Parking
AM5.5	Safer Road Conditions
AM5.6	Rural Lanes
AM5.7	Car Parking Provision

Policy AM5.1

The Pedestrian Environment

- a) As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should provide safe access to local facilities and public transport links. Safe and convenient access routes should avoid using existing main roads, be of an appropriate width, and use a suitable surface material for all users, including:
- those pushing a pushchair
 - those of restricted mobility, for example in a wheelchair, walking with a stick or frame, or using a mobility scooter,
 - assistance dog users.
- b) The provision of additional pedestrian crossings points, or other viable alternatives, will be supported. The precise design and type of crossing facility to be provided will be subject to a detailed design and feasibility process, whilst remaining mindful of the historic nature of the built environment, the Conservation Areas, and the policies of the AONB.

Policy Supporting Text

- 5.4 Parishioners' comments from public engagement events support policies to preserve, improve and maintain pavements throughout the parish to make walking safer and more enjoyable. There is particular conflict between larger vehicles and pedestrians in the narrow sections of Stone Street, Cranbrook, and The Street, Sissinghurst. Non-motorised users require sufficient access to move across the parish, comprised of ground surfaces which allow the easy use of mobility aids. In addition, residents identified issues about the speed of passing traffic on the A229, Common Road and The Street, directly adjacent to frequently used pedestrian paths.
- 5.5 Both residents and visitors alike should be able to move throughout the parish without threat to their safety, instead enjoying the experience and forming a positive outlook on their surroundings.
- 5.6 Throughout the engagement process, several sites were identified by residents as areas of concern to provide safer crossings for pedestrians. Places where residents have identified a need to cross include, but are not limited to:
- High Street by Lloyds Chemist
 - Entrance to Jockey Lane car park
 - Hartley from Champion Crescent to farm shop
 - Hartley from Glassenbury Road junction across the A229
 - Sissinghurst High Street from village shop to antique shop
 - Common Road in the vicinity of Sissinghurst Primary School

- A229 Orchard Way, Brick Kiln
- Opposite the rugby club
- Across The Hill beside the windmill
- Waterloo Road in the vicinity of Cranbrook School
- Sissinghurst Road near Wilsley Pound
- Angley Road near Wilsley Green
- Across Golford Road near sewage works

See indicative location maps on the following pages.



FIGURE 06 – Location for new, safer crossing points in Cranbrook



FIGURE 07 – Location for new, safer crossing points in Sissinghurst



FIGURE 08 – Location for new, safer crossing points in Hartley

Policy AM5.2

Pedestrian Priority & Public Rights of Way

- a) As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should contribute towards creating or enhancing existing streets and thoroughfares with an emphasis on pedestrian safety and priority parish wide.
- b) As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should seek to protect and enhance PROWs across the parish. Where appropriate developer contributions will be sought to promote active travel networks for the benefit of public health and well-being, environmental protection, and local economic resilience.

Policy Supporting Text

- 5.7 Roads are a shared space which require mutual respect between all users (cyclists, walkers, horses, drivers of vehicles including mobility scooters) and a balance should be achieved to enhance the attractiveness of the town and village centres. A desire to create greater pedestrian priority throughout the parish, e.g., wider pavements, build outs, passing places, crossing points, paths away from roads and pedestrianised areas, was expressed during public engagement with parishioners. It is hoped this will lead to a reduction in collisions, a greater sense of safety for users of these streets and higher footfall, leading to more support for local shops and services.
- 5.8 Parishioners' comments from public engagement events support policies to preserve, improve and maintain routeways and bridleways connecting Sissinghurst and Cranbrook and their surroundings without the need to endure busy roads. Using non-motorised travel is proven to promote health and well-being, free up spaces in the congested car parks, reduce the impact of increased traffic on the main road due to development, preserve the historic feel of the parish, and encourage community well-being and social interaction. Key areas for pedestrian safety include:
- Stone Street, Cranbrook
 - High Street, Cranbrook
 - Common Road, Sissinghurst
 - The Street, Sissinghurst
 - A229
 - Other rural lanes.

Where appropriate developer contributions will be sought to the following projects:

- Creating a traffic-free bridle and cycle path between Sissinghurst village and Bedgebury Forest, via Cranbrook town centre
- Connecting the green spaces throughout the parish

- Safeguarding and enhancing the hop pickers line
- Pedestrian passing places should be created where it is not possible or appropriate to have wider paths
- New developments will be expected to demonstrate permeability and safe and secure walking routes to the centre of the nearest settlement

- 5.9 All applications should refer to the Kent County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This is a statutory policy document setting out a strategic approach for the protection and enhancement of PROW, which will enable successful partnership working to continue, helping to deliver improvements to the PROW network in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. Given the value of the PROW network to the local community, development applications should show recorded PROW on their plans. Where PROW would be directly affected by new development, proposals should illustrate how the PROW network will be positively accommodated within the site. Applicants for new developments will engage with the KCC PROW and Access Service at the earliest opportunity. (This will allow the County Council to review proposals for access improvements and consider appropriate developer contributions for PROW network enhancements, which would ensure there are sustainable transport choices available that provide realistic alternatives to short distance car journeys.) The development of schemes and improvements should take a collaborative approach with the relevant agencies.
- 5.10 Kent County Council's (KCC) Active Travel Strategy endorses active travel. It encourages communities to seek financial support from developers to achieve these goals, with the ROWIP 2018-2028 estimating that 143 million annual leisure walking trips bring £2.7billion to the South East Region.
- 5.11 Access to green space is a significant factor in enabling people to improve their health and well-being, and countryside recreation is a fundamental pillar supporting Kent tourism through its 'Garden of England' brand. This is also a strategic priority in the Kent Nature Action Plan 2018 – 2023.

Policy AM5.3

Public Transport & Access to Amenities

As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, development proposals should incorporate sustainable access modes and/or provide convenient access to footpaths and cycleways in the immediate vicinity of the site

Policy Supporting Text

- 5.12 Parishioners' comments from public engagement events support policies to improve bus services within the parish or supplement existing public services with private minibus services. A master planning approach among these different parties will be essential to create a connected parish with links to local areas.
- 5.13 Both residents and visitors will benefit from an improved public transport service, providing a more sustainable way to travel for all and supporting those who are unable to drive. Developers should invest and liaise with stakeholders (including Kent County Council, the Borough Council and the Parish Council) to improve public transport services within the parish, especially for the elderly and less mobile, workers, commuters and school children.
- 5.14 The Parish has schools, shops, post offices, public houses, community halls, places of worship, green spaces, and recreation grounds. These facilities are central to parish life and local people wish to see them retained and prosper. In addition, there are children's playgrounds, a sports centre, allotment sites. The community wishes to see these amenities well used, protected from the impact of development, and accessible using sustainable access modes. The renowned Sissinghurst Castle would benefit from non-vehicular access routes.
- 5.15 The parish would benefit from a more frequent and extended schedule of public transport links to the commuter stations and major county towns, as identified at public consultation. The buses which currently serve Cranbrook are No. 5, Maidstone to Sandhurst (hourly); No. 297, Tenterden to Tunbridge Wells; No. 267/268, School bus to Tunbridge Wells; and No. 349, Sunday service to Hastings. Sissinghurst is only served by the No. 5.
- 5.16 Parishioners' comments from public engagement events support policies which enable active travel to schools within the parish. KCC Active Travel Strategy endorse these and other enabling active travel measures. This would promote health and well-being, improve the uptake of active travel to school and reduce congested parking on school approach roads within the parish. Development applications likely to lead to a significant increase of pupils at any school within the parish should be accompanied by proposals to implement the suggestions outlined in the Sustrans document "Increasing

Active Travel to School 2018". This includes measures such as traffic-calming, introducing new cycle-paths and pedestrian and cycle training in the school travel plan.

- 5.17 Measures suggested at public events to achieve safer movement for families to and from the local schools include speed control and traffic calming, which can be found within the Projects List section of this Plan.

Policy AM5.4

Cycle Storage & Cycle Parking

- a) New residential and commercial developments, or conversions, should provide secure cycle storage.**
- b) As appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development concerned, contributions to secure on-street cycle parking provision will be sought.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 5.18 Cycling offers a sustainable alternative to vehicular transport, particularly over shorter distances. In the interests of sustainability, new developments should make high quality provision for cyclists. This includes provision of appropriate cycle parking and supporting facilities, as a vital companion to the provision and enhancement of cycle paths.
- 5.19 A factor which often dissuades people from choosing to cycle is the inadequate facilities upon arrival at their destination. Cycling should be encouraged for obvious health reasons, but Cranbrook should be promoting itself as a cycle friendly destination. Increasing cycle storage and parking provision will make cycling a more attractive option which can be easily integrated into daily life. A comprehensive strategy of active travel will encourage people to swap their routine for a more sustainable option.

Policy AM5.5

Safer Road Conditions

Applications for development should demonstrate provision for improving the network of roads, streets and lanes related to that development, including:

- **Using different road surfaces, textures, colours to indicate shared space**
- **Installing speed control measures such as ramps and build outs and extending the pavements in Sissinghurst**
- **Reducing speed and congestion on Common Road and The Street, Sissinghurst, and The High Street Cranbrook by using appropriate measures, which may include “Village Gateway” signage.**

Policy Supporting Text

5.20 Data from www.crashmap.co.uk shows over 100 incidents in the Parish reported between 2014 and 2020, including many on the short stretch of the A229 between Cranbrook War Memorial and the junction with Glassenbury Lane. Sadly, this included two fatalities. Many more incidents have gone unreported. The safety of all road users is vital to create a parish in which people feel at home

5.21 With an increase in traffic flow on key routes emanating from new areas of housing growth across the parish, and from adjacent parishes, the safety of key roads and junctions must be improved to ensure they are adequate and fit for purpose, and able to cope with the impact of development on traffic flow within the parish. Local residents have identified road safety as a major and key concern, affecting drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, not only for all new developments, but also, existing junctions, for example:

- Wilsley Green junction
- Golford crossroads
- Swattenden Lane with A229
- High Street Cranbrook with A229
- Orchard Way with A229
- Turnden Road with A229
- Common Road with A229

Policy AM5.6

Rural Lanes

Development proposals should take account of the rural character of the parish and its historic rural lanes.

Policy Supporting Text

- 5.22 Research amongst Parishioners underscores the value residents and visitors place upon these features as characteristics of the AONB and its setting. The rural streets and lanes are a key visual feature of the parish and make an especially important contribution to amenity, ecological quality, and historic character. Many lanes retain valuable features, including wide road verges and boundary banks, wildflower-rich hedgerows and hedgerow trees creating picturesque arches from one verge to the other as well as creating routeways for wildlife.
- 5.23 The AONB Management Policy 2019-2024 vision is ‘to protect the landscape, its character of distinctive lanes and PROWs whilst achieving a balance between the comparative quietness and rurality of the roads of the High Weald and their function as means of communication central to the economic and social well-being of the area. As custodians of these outstanding examples of historic routeways for people, produce and wildlife, we expect such policies to be observed during development.

Policy AM5.7

Car Parking Provision

The design and layout of car parks in the AONB and the Conservation Areas should respond positively to their locations in terms of the use of surface materials and landscaping.

Policy Supporting Text

5.24 The character of the parish is largely defined by its conservations areas and the High Weald AONB. In this context Policy AM5.7 sets out requirements for the design and layout of car parks. The policy will apply to proposals for new car parks and for the reconfiguration of existing car parks. Adopted car park design standards and best-practice (including that provided by the High Weald AONB) should be used to influence car park designs in recognised environmentally sensitive areas.



6. Business & Employment

Introduction

- 6.1 The commerce of the historic market town of Cranbrook and village of Sissinghurst was founded on the use of local resources and labour, working in close relationship with the land. This relationship continues, with the farming sector remaining as a significant employer.
- 6.2 The education sector is also especially important to the economy of the area, with many excellent schools, centred around Cranbrook School, founded in 1518, being major employers.
- 6.3 We want to support the Parish being perceived as a destination in its own right. There is significant potential for growth in a sustainable tourism and hospitality industry.
- 6.4 However, many local jobs tend to be at the lower end of the pay spectrum. The TWBC Draft Local Plan 2019 identifying Cranbrook and Sissinghurst as an area of income deprivation. Over 20% of children living in the Cranbrook area live below the poverty line (Nourish Community Food Bank), a situation that may be getting worse with the current Coronavirus pandemic.
- 6.5 Nevertheless, the rise of the digital economy is providing local entrepreneurs with access to national and global markets through activities independent of locality.
- 6.6 Cranbrook and Sissinghurst is an attractive place for business in many respects with the Parish benefitting from a diverse range of sectors. A 2017 survey of local business showed the full spectrum of enterprises active within the parish, from traditional to digital. Most business surveyed had been operating locally for over 15 years, many much longer. A majority expected to be active in five years and most had strong ambitions to grow. However, there were recurrent factors cited that were limiting growth, that need to be addressed.
- 6.7 The challenge for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst is to provide an enabling environment for business of all types to flourish and continue to contribute to the heart and vibrancy of our community. The following policies aim to build a thriving and sustainable business sector, which leverages heritage and

tradition, is based on entrepreneurial diversity, capitalises on digital opportunities, and is integrated into the community. This should be accomplished without the need to utilise precious greenfield resources.

Overall Policy Aims

- To enable low wage employees to live and work in the Parish without commuting
- To provide space for IT and highly skilled businesses to create highly paid employment so the young do not need to leave the Parish once they are educated.
- To create office and production space for low risk start-ups and expansion of existing businesses.
- To prevent the loss of employment land to residential, particularly in the town centre
- To meet the growing need for health services and ensure sustainability of supply
- To leverage heritage and tradition to maximise tourism and related business opportunities in ways sensitive to the town and landscape
- To integrate business and community by developing shared retail and amenity spaces and services that meet the needs of the whole population.
- To reinvigorate the relationship between business and countryside through the innovative use of local resources, production, and marketing

Contents

BE6.1	Business & Employment Space
BE6.2	Tourism & Retail
BE6.3	Adult Education & Vocational Training
BE6.4	Protection, Conservation & Enhancement of The Rural Economy

Policy BE6.1

Business & Employment Space

- a) **The creation of new business opportunities will be supported, when designed in ways sensitive to the town and/or landscape setting. This includes:**
- **Small-scale business, residential and community mixed-use clusters**
 - **Flexible, multi-use workspaces, ‘hot desking’, digital hubs**
 - **Redevelopment of brown field sites and restoration of buildings for small-scale industrial use**
 - **Meeting sustainable travel principles**
- b) **Development proposals which would enhance the town centre business offer will be supported, where they complement the local context. The conversion of long-term vacant High Street spaces into business premises will also be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 6.8 This policy is based upon a survey of local businesses conducted in 2017. It is designed to support changing business requirements now and, in the future, given that 54% of the local businesses surveyed in 2017 were looking to expand over the following five years. There is a chronic shortage of small to medium sized business units which is limiting growth. A few businesses interviewed stated that there are insufficient estate agencies dealing with this sector.
- 6.9 Providing sufficient workspace for businesses within the parish will allow the local economy to thrive and prevent people from being forced to commute to outside areas. Active business spaces will foster a vibrant high street and transform otherwise lifeless brownfield sites, therefore benefiting local residents and attracting additional workers to the area. Working locally will improve both the environment and people’s own well-being, with time otherwise spent on commuting instead spent with family or other enjoyable activities.

Policy BE6.2

Tourism & Retail

- a) Proposals to increase the diversity of retail, hospitality, community, cultural and business activities, that reflect the market town character of Cranbrook and the village nature of Sissinghurst, will be supported. Potential improvements include, but are not limited to:**
- **Providing hotels, B&Bs, restaurants**
 - **Opening-up of heritage buildings to visitors**
 - **Providing new attractions**
 - **Enhancement and development of existing visitor attractions**
 - **Improving transport and access and public toilet facilities**
 - **Self-catering, camping or holiday accommodation**
- b) Proposals that promote sympathetic active ground floor uses, and flexible and multi-functional retail and outdoor spaces in the town and village centres will be supported.**
- c) Development proposals that can demonstrate a positive impact on tourism across the parish will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 6.10 Local facilities are currently insufficient to encourage, sustain and expand tourism within the parish. The rich local heritage and tradition could be leveraged to maximise tourism and related business opportunities, providing new facilities and services within a characteristic setting. Cranbrook should celebrate its medieval history and present existence as a rural yet bustling market town, while Sissinghurst can attract visitors as a picturesque village, with the smaller settlements each possessing their own unique character.
- 6.11 Potential improvements include the provision of shared retail and amenity spaces and services that meet the needs of the whole parish, the creation of shared open spaces for retail, farmers' market, and daytime and night-time entertainment in the centre of Cranbrook. Active ground floor use along the shopping streets will create vibrancy and invite interest from passing pedestrians and visitors.
- 6.12 A significant number of visitors are attracted to the area by the built heritage and the Wealden landscape, with approximately 200,000 people visiting Sissinghurst Castle every year (National Trust, Tower conservation at Sissinghurst Castle Garden). Further attractions in the form of Cranbrook Museum, St. Dunstan's Church and the Windmill create opportunities for tourism in the wider parish. Feedback from the public at consultation events

provided a list of potential improvements which could enhance the tourist economy, including low-cost changes and more substantial interventions.

- 6.13 At the lower end of the scale, members of the public requested improved signage to events and heritage assets, designed in keeping with the historic setting and which do not clutter the high street. Volunteer-run tours and heritage trails were also suggested, with potential links to geocaching and other similar activities.
- 6.14 More substantially, people felt the need for a staffed tourist office and a variety of visitor accommodation. All such measures would have a positive impact on tourism and enhance the parish for residents and visitors alike.

Policy BE6.3

Adult Education & Vocational Training

Development proposals for new buildings, change of use, extensions or new facilities that seek to address lack of adult education and vocational training opportunities, and which can demonstrate that they are designed in ways sensitive to their town and/or landscape settings, will be supported.

Policy Supporting Text

- 6.15 This policy aims to meet the need for skills through adult education and vocational training. Whilst the quality of our existing secondary education establishments has been recognised, there are few opportunities for young people to obtain tertiary and vocational skills. In the Business and Employment Survey, 37% of businesses surveyed cited lack of core skills is limiting business growth. This policy aims to enable local education resources to connect with business needs and expand their offerings to provide adult and vocational training for existing and emerging sectors.
- 6.16 Education is essential to allow people to reach their full potential, and in turn allow the wider parish to flourish. Providing learning opportunities later in life allow individuals the freedom to explore other areas previously inaccessible to them, with greater choice of employment and an enhanced understanding of the world. The local area and beyond will benefit from an educated workforce and the multitude of skills which are then made available as services to all parish residents.

Policy BE6.4

Protection, Conservation & Enhancement of the Rural Economy

Proposals linked to farms and farmsteads, which promote economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and which meet the following criteria, will be supported.

They should:

- **be sensitive to landscape settings**
- **protect and enhance the environment**
- **provide local employment opportunities**
- **make use of local resources**

They will also be required to demonstrate one, or more, of the following:

- **enhance the productivity of the area**
- **contribute to the local economy**
- **provide educational opportunities/resources**

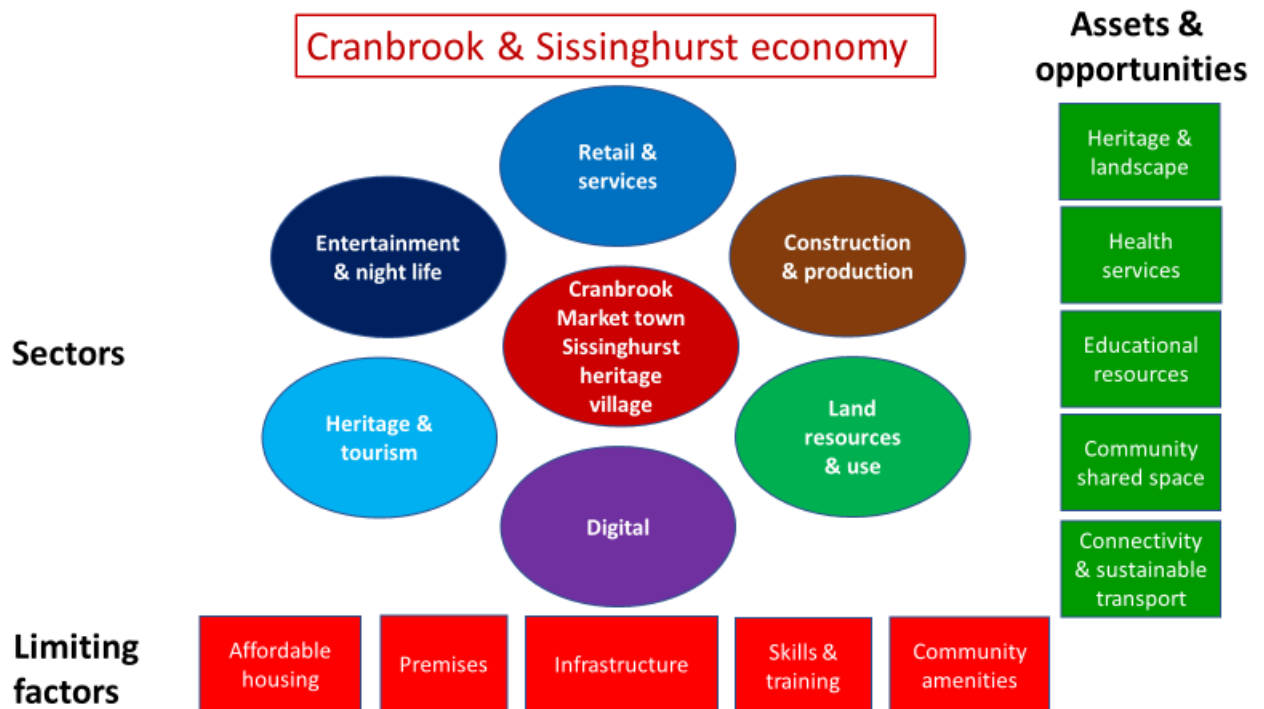
Policy Supporting Text

- 6.17 There has been some successful re-development of redundant farm buildings within the parish. Any future proposals should be of good design and identify, preserve, and enhance the built, rural and landscape setting. Vision 2034, by the AONB partnership, sets out aspirations for the High Weald AONB for the next 20 years – a landscape adapting well to changing economic and climatic conditions; and embracing a low-carbon future, with green technologies underpinning a strong rural economy and thriving communities.
- 6.18 Producing food to consume in the local area using less carbon will positively impact the people, employment, well-being and management of the land. The parish will retain its remarkable character and scenic beauty and will function as an attractive place to live and work. Agriculture and farming have a vital role in the management of the countryside and landscape, and in producing high quality products and services for consumers and the public. Developments must be sensitive to the landscape and should seek to promote and enable local employment and the use of local resources, which positively enhance the relationship between people and the countryside.
- 6.19 In order to survive, farmers need to be able to diversify and make best use of local resources, making improvements which are suitable to the surroundings and providing a benefit both to themselves and to the parish, whilst respecting the landscape setting.

6.20 Disused farm buildings can provide the space necessary for the potential new facilities outlined in other policies, such as adult education provision, and accommodation to support sustainable rural tourism. Other appropriate uses might include local food production, small scale equestrian, retailing, hospitality, food and land-based arts and crafts, environmental education, professional and business services Reusing such brownfield spaces makes more intelligent use of the land supply, rather than unnecessarily encroaching on green spaces and, although they may be outside the town or village centres, such usage locally would lessen the need to travel further afield. Sensitive changes to farmsteads can enhance their historic presence within the parish and take them into the 21st century.

BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT APPENDIX

Business & Employment Survey Autumn 2017



Factors Limiting Growth

Lack of affordable housing

- 65% of enterprises surveyed said their staff need affordable housing
- 82% of employees travel into the parish to work because they cannot afford to live locally, some from as far away as Gillingham and Bexhill.

Recent studies show that the Parish has one of the highest ratios between income and average house prices nationally at 1:15. There is a shortage of rental accommodation at affordable rates. This makes living and working in the Parish impossible for most people who wish to do so. Major consequences include increased traffic, parking shortages, work-life balance stress and difficulties in staff recruitment and retention.

Poor infrastructure

- Parking: 53% cited insufficient parking for customers and staff.
- Transport

- 25% of businesses surveyed cited lack of public transport as growth limiting
- 93% of employees drive to work
- 5% walk/cycle
- 2% use public transport
- Internet speed and reliability
 - 35% cited poor internet speeds and reliability limiting growth
- Mobile phone coverage
 - 100% complained of patchy coverage in the parish
 - 40% cited poor mobile phone limiting their business growth

Shortage of premises

- 54% of business are looking to expand over the next five years
- chronic shortage of small to medium sized business units limiting growth

Lack of skills and training

- 37% of enterprises says lack of core skills is limiting business growth

Assets & Opportunities

The NDP Design Forum identified a range of under exploited opportunities for growth. These included making the most of the area's:

- rich heritage and landscape to revitalise the use of local resources as a source of enterprise and boost tourism and related services
- well-established health provision sector that needs to expand to meet growing demand and ensure continuity of provision
- outstanding education resources to meet the skills gap
- need for community shared spaces and entertainment
- public rights of way to provide greater connectivity and sustainable transport options



7. Housing

Introduction

- 7.1 The UK population is growing, and, with it, there is a growing need for suitable housing. Successive governments have failed to build enough homes to meet this need. The current government has set a target for 300,000 new homes each year.
- 7.2 The latest census data published for 2011 showed the parish had a population of 6,717. Demographic projections for the whole borough, using data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that the population is likely to increase at a rate of 0.28% per annum. This would mean that the parish's population would increase to about 7,223 for 2037.
- 7.3 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council published a Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan (PSLP) in February 2021. The borough housing target was reduced to 12,200, and the allocation for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish was significantly lowered to 453-467, compared to figures published in the Regulation 18 draft Local Plan (DLP) which were 818-918. Public consultation on the DLP was undertaken in the Autumn of 2019.
- 7.4 The PSLP recognised that large-scale growth in the parish would be inappropriate, particularly in terms of the impacts of development of individual sites, and cumulatively upon the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 7.5 Once adopted, the Local Plan policies and housing allocations will supersede those in the current Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (adopted 2006) the Core Strategy (adopted 2010) and the Site Allocations Local Plan (adopted 2016).
- 7.6 The PSLP Strategy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish Policy STR/CRS1 details the delivery of approximately 415-429 new dwellings in Cranbrook and 38 in Sissinghurst, over 5 sites.

- 7.7 Of these draft allocation sites, planning permission has already been granted for:
- Policy AL/CRS1 Brick Kiln Farm, Cranbrook; 180 dwellings with 35% affordable housing
 - Policy AL/CRS3 Turnden Farm, Cranbrook: 36 dwellings with 35% shared ownership
 - Policy AL/CRS7: Land at the corner Frittenden Road and Common Road: 18 dwellings with 40% affordable.
- 7.8 The remaining draft housing allocations in the PSLP, include:
- Policy AL/CRS2 Corn Hall Farm, Cranbrook: 35-45 dwellings, with 40% affordable
 - Policy AL/CRS6 Land South of the Street, Sissinghurst: 20 dwellings, with 30% affordable plus a new village hall.
- 7.9 Policy AL/CRS3 Turnden, Cranbrook would see a further 164-168 dwellings on this site (200-204 in total). In January 2021, TWBC granted planning permission for this proposal. However, Natural England, the government's advisory body on the natural environment, requested that this decision be called in for determination by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (SoS). The SoS has now decided that an Inquiry will be held by the Planning Inspectorate. This is due to take place between September and November 2021.
- 7.10 Until the outcome of the Inquiry is known, the TWBC draft Policy AL/CRS3 is in doubt.
- 7.11 The strength of support for the neighbourhood plan policy "Local Protection and Enhancement of the Crane Valley" (Landscape & Natural Environment) and robust evidence provided by Kent County Council during the Regulation 14 Consultation of the NDP, meant that the policy remained in the Regulation 16 Consultation version of the plan. In order to pass Examination, the Examiner asked for the policy to be deleted, however he was happy for the supporting text to be retained, in a slightly amended version, as part of revised Policy LN3.1, Biodiversity and Ecology. Furthermore, he also took account of the inclusion of a specific policy element about the Crane Valley in Policy IN9.4, Sustainable Drainage.
- 7.12 The Neighbourhood Plan group and Parish Council are willing to undertake further discussions with TWBC to find an alternative strategy for smaller more appropriate sites, as recognised in the PSLP, should the need arise.

Affordable Homes in Sustainable Locations

- 7.13 According to the 2011 Census, there were 2,623 households in the Parish, of which 65% were owned, 20% were social rented and 11% private rented. The housing stock comprised 33% detached, 35% semi-detached, 21% terraced and 12% flats/maisonettes/apartments. According to Right Move, in 2017, the average cost of a detached house is £816,000, semi-detached, £435,000 and terraced, £308,000. The average house price in 2017 was £534,000, whereas the average earnings for workers in the Parish was £28.2k per annum (a ratio of 19:1 compared to the national figure of 12:1), making the Parish one of the most unaffordable areas in the country for local people. This is a situation which may have got worse because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.14 An independent Housing Needs Assessment by AECOM in 2018 recommended that 50% of new houses built should be 1 and 2-bedroom homes as the demand for 4-bedroom houses and larger is already well catered for in the parish, whereas there is a high demand for affordable homes.
- 7.15 A similar conclusion was reached from the NDP Business & Employment questionnaire, where 65% of enterprises surveyed said their staff needed affordable housing, as 82% of employees travelled into the parish to work because they cannot afford to live locally, some from as far away as Gillingham and Bexhill. Affordable housing in sustainable locations will reduce the reliance on cars, as supported throughout the rest of this Plan.
- 7.16 Visioning events were held in 2017 to explore the main challenges and opportunities within the parish. The results of these events provided a key ingredient to the emerging CSNP. From the comments received from this and other public exhibitions there was a clear demand for a range of local housing types and tenures to meet the needs of the population from first home to downsizing and for affordable homes for those who work in the parish.
- 7.17 Throughout the public engagements, residents reported a high incidence of young adults still living with their parents as they were unable to afford their own accommodation. Affordable housing should be made available to those with a local connection, registered with the Parish Council.
- 7.18 The options available for families and individuals on low to no income are limited due to the high cost of both market and rented housing and where demand exceeds supply. Generally, low-income households are living in social rented housing owned by housing associations, or on waiting lists. The parish has a significant stock of social housing representing 20 percent of total households. Of this 77 percent is for 1 and 2-bedroom properties and 23 percent for 3 to 4-bedrooms.
- 7.19 Those on relatively higher incomes are renting from the private rented sector, which varies in quality and cost. The demand for 1-bedroom social housing is highest by single people over the age of 65 and for 2-bedrooms by young

adults aged 18-24. The availability of 3 to 4-bedroom social housing is very limited representing only 6 percent of total social housing stock serving some 1,000 applicants (TWBC Housing Officer 2018). The number registered for social housing appears to have dropped slightly in recent years.

- 7.20 Those on relatively higher incomes are renting from the private rented sector, which varies in quality and cost.
- 7.21 Further information on Affordable Housing, including definitions, can be found in the Appendix to this chapter. The delivery of affordable housing throughout the Plan period will be controlled by the Borough Council through the development management process. The Parish Council will continue to work with the Borough Council and other relevant agencies to secure the best outcomes for local people in the challenging conditions presented by the local housing market.

Overall Policy Aims

- To provide a range of housing types and tenures to meet the needs of a growing population
- To deliver the housing needs of the parish in ways that respect heritage and tradition
- To encourage innovative design fit for the future
- To meet the demand for affordable housing to enable all who work in the parish, and wish to live here, but who are unable to afford to do so, to live locally
- To ensure the design of new housing schemes maintain the historic farmstead model of development by being small scale, sensitive and dispersed on the landscape.
- To ensure the needs of all people across all ages are provided for.

Contents

- HO7.1 Accessible Intergenerational Living
- HO7.2 Innovative Construction Solutions

Policy HO7.1

Accessible Intergenerational Living

- a) Development proposals for accessible homes, including single storey dwellings, suitable for the elderly and/or those with a disability (seen or unseen), which can demonstrate that they are of a high design standard in keeping with town and/or landscape settings, will be supported.**
- b) Development proposals that enable inter-generational living will be supported.**
- c) Development proposals for specialist housing which enable independent living for young adults with special needs will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 7.22 As previously stated, the housing needs assessment by AECOM recommended that 50% should be 1 and 2-bedroom homes. This concurs with evidence gathered throughout public engagements which highlighted the shortage of suitable housing supply for both older people wanting to downsize and those with a disability requiring additional space allowance for accessibility.
- 7.23 In some cases, this has meant that people have moved out of the area and away from the family support they rely on. This has been highlighted as a particular issue for young adults who have special needs but wish to live independently. Older residents also reported that they would like to release family-sized houses onto the market and to move to accommodation more appropriate for their needs, yet remain within the parish, but recognised the shortage of supply, particularly of bungalows.
- 7.24 It is envisaged this can be achieved in several ways, either through including accessible homes as part of new developments, or through the development of flexible spaces which enable multiple generations to live closer together yet retain their own private spaces. As appropriate to their scale and nature new housing designed for the elderly and those with a disability should comply with Sections 4(2) or Part 4(3) of Part M of the Building Regulations.
- 7.25 These policies seek to address this shortage of suitable accommodation for those wishing to stay near to their families to enable greater social sustainability.
- 7.26 Good design extends to considering the additional needs of those with disabilities, such as wider parking spaces to allow for wheelchairs.

Policy HO7.2

Innovative Construction Solutions

Alternative housing delivery solutions such as self-build, co-housing and other community-led housing schemes will be supported, if they:

- **can be demonstrated to comply with other plan policies**
- **are in response to a specified housing need in the parish**
- **are not in conflict with the local historic built environment.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 7.27 This policy is to support resident- and community-led initiatives to provide an alternative housing delivery mechanism to those of the major house-building companies.
- 7.28 Innovative construction methods such as off-site modular housing will be considered.
- 7.29 This policy is supported by the National Design Guide (2019) which recognises the important role the community can play in helping to deliver new housing.
- 7.30 The Crane Valley Land Trust (CVLT) is a Community Land Trust (CLT) set up by local volunteers in 2018 seeking to serve the Parish and the needs of its residents, by delivering affordable, innovative, and sustainable development, holding this at the forefront of everything it does and being not for profit.

HOUSING APPENDIX

Affordable Housing

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent meets all the following conditions:
 - the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including any service charges)
 - the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and
 - it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent)
- b) Starter homes is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute at the time of plan preparation or decision-making. Income restrictions should be used to limit a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those who have maximum household incomes of £80,000 a year or less
- c) Discounted market sales housing is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households
- d) Other affordable routes to home ownership is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement
- e) First Homes are a specific kind of discounted market sale housing units which:
 - must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value
 - are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria (see below)
 - on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value)

- and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000 (or £420,000 in Greater London).

Accessible & Lifetime Homes

Accessible homes, sometimes referred to as Lifetime homes, are ones that are designed with features that cater for young families with children, people with injuries as well as seniors and people living with disabilities. They incorporate design features to make homes easier to access, navigate and live in over the lifetimes of their occupants and include:

- a safe continuous and step-free path of travel from the street entrance and / or parking area to a dwelling entrance that is level
- at least one, level (step-free) entrance into the dwelling
- internal doors (870mm) and corridors (1000mm) that facilitate comfortable and unimpeded movement between spaces, including wheelchair access
- a toilet on the ground (or entry) level that provides easy access (1200mm clearance in front of WC)
- a bathroom and shower that provides easy access with a larger, 'step-free' shower recess
- reinforced walls around the toilet, shower, and bath to support the safe installation of grab rails at a later date.

Full details can be found in the Lifetime Homes Guide at:

www.habinteg.org.uk/lifetime-homes-design-guide.



8. Community & Culture

Introduction

- 8.1 The Parish of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst lies within and adjacent to the beautiful High Weald AONB. As such, it is appreciated by thousands of visitors from all over the world, passing through, or staying in the area. Community responses underline the value placed on the built heritage throughout the parish.
- 8.2 Culture is a positive force enriching people's lives and contributing to the economy. Cranbrook has a rich cultural history including the Cranbrook Colony of Artists and the prominent architect William West Neve who designed several significant houses in the town ('A History of Cranbrook, Peter Allen 2008). Sissinghurst has its world-renowned Castle and Gardens.
- 8.3 There are many active groups in the parish offering a variety of physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, and artistic opportunities. These groups need meeting spaces with appropriate facilities and enough capacity for growth. A variety of eagerly anticipated annual or regular events take place such as:
- Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May,
 - Family Fun Day,
 - Apple Fair,
 - Sissinghurst and Cranbrook Flower festivals,
 - Sissinghurst Fete and Boot Fairs,
 - Cranbrook Art Show
 - South East Open studios.
 - CODS plays and shows
 - Cranbrook Literature Festival
 - Many events in the churches of the Parish.

Overall Policy Aims

- Enhance a sense of community within the parish by encouraging local groups' activities
- Promoting a sense of belonging which contributes to all residents' health and well-being
- Support land allocations for a community space in Cranbrook and a new village hall in Sissinghurst
- To promote Cranbrook and Sissinghurst parish as a cultural destination
- Encourage a mindset of participation and volunteering
- Encourage organisations in the parish to reach out and engage with other communities.

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CC8.1	Community Facilities
CC8.2	Provision of Health & Well-Being Facilities
CC8.3	New Community Centre in Cranbrook
CC8.4	Creation of a New Outdoor Public Space in Cranbrook
CC8.5	New Village Hall for Sissinghurst
CC8.6	Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Library
CC8.7	Performing Arts
CC8.8	Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Museum

Policy CC8.1

Community Facilities

- a) The development of new community facilities will be supported.**
- b) Enhancement of existing facilities to improve access and personal security will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.4 Although there are many groups within the parish that promote well-being, through participation and volunteering, the lack of suitable facilities for both young and older people within the parish is a recurrent theme in the evidence gathered through public consultation. School children have cited a lack of provision as a major factor contributing to persistent vandalism and anti-social behaviour, particularly in Cranbrook.
- 8.5 Currently, there is also no central flexible space, and few appropriate activities, where young people can meet safely. Any schemes brought forward to address this issue which seek to increase provision in children's play areas, youth activities and services would be welcomed.
- 8.6 It is recognised that groups such as Memory Lane Café and Well-being in the Weald are limited in their activities by lack of suitable space. Cranbrook and District Age Concern have been without a meeting place for over ten years.
- 8.7 A range of sports facilities and clubs already exists within the parish. However, it is recognised that many of them would benefit from updating and, in some cases, the provision of suitable sites may be required. Cranbrook Football Club do not have a club house or any changing facilities. Public comments were also made regarding the provision of a boxing club.
- 8.8 With a growing population there is a need to encourage provision of services that support all ages.
- 8.9 It is recognised that accessibility can be improved by changes to the slope and surface of paths, as well as by the addition of handrails and wide doors. The addition of a lift would greatly improve access to different floors or levels in some buildings. Good lighting, of appropriate design, can help people to feel significantly safer.
- 8.10 In order to support the needs of the local community, as well as to encourage people from further afield to stay in the town for longer, there need to be public toilets in Cranbrook, of a high standard and open for long hours. A Changing Places toilet would enable people living with disabilities to have much greater access to the Parish, and to the many things it has to offer.

Policy CC8.2

Provision of Health & Well-Being Facilities

- a) The provision of health, dental and well-being facilities will be supported where they can demonstrate that they are designed in ways sensitive to the parish and landscape setting and meet sustainable travel principles to access them, minimising the requirement for additional car parking.**
- b) The replacement of existing GP practices with a single larger centralised practice with additional medical facilities will be supported.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.11 With a growing and ageing population, the provision of local health services to all members of the community is essential. This is a concern repeated many times at public engagements and in national and local press, particularly as the needs of an increasingly elderly population become more apparent. In recent years, awareness of mental health has increased, and it is recognised that not enough has been done to support personal well-being. Both physical and mental health services are needed within the local community.
- 8.12 The location of services and their relationship with the existing parish is an important factor in their effectiveness. Placing services in central locations, to be accessed via walking and cycling, encourages active lifestyles, and promotes a wider strategy of health. Access to the facilities providing these much-needed services via public transport will also help alleviate the need for additional car journeys and car parking.

Policy CC8.3

New Community Centre in Cranbrook

- a) Proposals for a new community centre on Wilkes Field will be supported.**
- b) Proposals for the new building and associated community space and facilities should be sensitive to its built and landscape setting and meet sustainable travel principles to access the facilities, minimising the requirement for additional car parking.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.13 The availability of accessible and flexible public indoor space in Cranbrook has heretofore been limited. It is vital that the parish residents have access to such a facility in order to make the most of the local community spirit, keeping in mind the many groups which offer a variety of physical, mental, spiritual, cultural and artistic opportunities. Some local groups have indicated that they do not have the ability to grow due to their limited options for meeting space. Providing a new community centre would give these groups the facilities they need to survive and expand, while encouraging the formation of new groups which have previously been discouraged by the lack of facilities available to them.
- 8.14 A central community space will create a hub of activity within the town and wider parish, leading to enhanced social cohesion and improved mental and physical health. A revised plan for the already allocated site for a community centre in Cranbrook is being progressed in response to public consultation. Details of number of rooms, range of facilities, flexibility of indoor spaces, relationship to outdoor spaces, access arrangements, and likely number of storeys are to be determined by a separate consultation process outside of the NDP. Where appropriate, and in accordance with the national policy approach, developer contributions will be sought to assist with the development of this important initiative.
- 8.15 On 31st August 2016 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council granted planning permission on Wilkes Field and former Cranbrook Engineering Sites for the construction of a community centre and 28 dwellings.

Policy CC8.4

Creation of a New Outdoor Public Space in Cranbrook

Proposals to provide a new outdoor public realm space in Cranbrook will be supported. The space should be sensitive to its built and landscape setting and be in a location which relates well to other active frontages in the town centre.

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.16 An idea which emerged from the Visioning Events and Design Forum was to identify an outdoor public realm space which will act as a new civic focus for the town. For centuries Cranbrook undoubtedly had a central space large enough at least for a market cross and trading. Recent temporary revival of such space as an outdoor café on the south side of Stone Street was much appreciated by the community.
- 8.17 In addition to the wonderful facilities that Cranbrook has to offer the surrounding villages, the proposed outdoor public realm provision would provide the opportunity for a larger array of external events, catering for different tastes and benefitting residents, for example outdoors markets and live music. Local individuals and organisations could have the space to enjoy cultural activities and connect with other members of the community.
- 8.18 As an historic market town, a really good outdoor public realm space where a market could still be held would be an attraction for locals and tourists alike. A beautiful space where people could meet friends or just sit to watch the world go by, might help combat the loneliness felt by many. Such a space would need careful siting to ensure that it is respected, well looked after, secure by design and feels safe to use, including by the more vulnerable.

Policy CC8.5

New Village Hall for Sissinghurst

- a) Proposals for a new Sissinghurst village hall and linked outside space at land south of The Street will be supported.**
- b) Proposals for the new building and associated community space and facilities should be sensitive to its built and landscape setting and meet sustainable travel principles to access the facilities.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.19 The current village hall in Sissinghurst, St George's Institute, is old and no longer fit for purpose. The residents of Sissinghurst and the wider parish are in need of a community space to enhance their experience of living in the area, with potential for use by a wide variety of local groups. Development in the field behind the hall has provided an opportunity whereby the developer will provide and fully fund a village hall with associated parking. The trustees have considered this, and the plan will be progressed to provide an improved focal point for the community.
- 8.20 A contemporary indoor and outdoor space could be designed in an innovative and attractive manner, while remaining in keeping with the local character and environment. The well-used sports pitches and playing fields throughout Sissinghurst could be complemented by this new outdoor space, while its links to an indoor facility would allow flexibility for events all year round. This integrated addition to the village would enhance community spirit and provide for activities from a small to large scale. Details of number of rooms, range of facilities, flexibility of indoor spaces, relationship to outdoor spaces, access arrangements, and likely number of storeys are to be determined by a separate consultation process. Where appropriate, and in accordance with the national policy approach, developer contributions will be sought to assist with the development of this important initiative.

Policy CC8.6

Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Library

Development proposals which would maintain, enhance, and encourage the greater use of library facilities either in the existing building or as part of the new community centre will be supported.

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.21 Cranbrook Library is valued as a multifunctional place and service, providing for different demographics across the Parish, and beyond. It is a rare commodity - a safe warm space, where anyone can go just to look or sit, without cost or membership. For some people it may be one of the few places that they have social contact, for others it may be a precious quiet space to study, or to find a few minutes peace. It is also a public building with disabled access.
- 8.22 The library provides a safe place to learn, not only through books, but also through a wide range of information sources and, importantly, the guidance of a librarian. People in the community with hearing or sight impairment rely particularly on facilities within the local library.
- 8.23 The range of IT and technical facilities available in Cranbrook Library are often vital to the less advantaged in the community, enabling them to look for jobs and apply for housing, to arrange medical and other appointments, and to research the needs of everyday life. Some people still have their first experience of using a computer through those available in the library and are able to gain confidence using them.
- 8.24 Cranbrook Library fosters a love of reading for all ages through the groups that take place there and provides a town centre location for other social and support groups.
- 8.25 Literacy is a significant key to enabling education. Enhancing the library will help to boost the local economy by improving the skills of parish residents, encouraging social relations, and helping to connect communities. It could be a hub for the local area, a useful link to the proposed adult education facilities referred to elsewhere in the Plan, forming a network of learning across the Parish.
- 8.26 The existing relationship between the library and Cranbrook Museum should be maintained to preserve local historical knowledge, both written and oral. The Library provides a variety of accessible spaces for different types of exhibitions, including art and public information, and for meetings.

8.27 An important function of the existing library has been provision of space for the Citizens' Advice Bureau. The NDP recognises that due to the impact of the pandemic there is likely to be a greater need for this service in the future.

Policy CC8.7

Performing Arts

Development proposals to maintain and enhance premises and facilities which deliver performing arts will be supported.

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.28 Opportunities to participate in and attend performing arts events are valued as enriching experiences by the community. This is indicated in the public consultations and evidenced by good attendance at events such as those provided by Cranbrook Film Society, Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society (CODS), and many other live musical performances. There are also several thriving choirs and singing groups. These all enhance the cultural offer of the parish, while directly benefiting the participants and spectators through their chance for self-expression or immersion in art.
- 8.29 It is important that the arts are retained within the local area, to allow people to benefit from culture without the need to travel long distances. Through performing arts, people throughout the parish and from differing backgrounds can connect by sharing an experience, therefore promoting social cohesion, and an enhanced community spirit. The arts also support links with other local parishes.

Policy CC8.8

Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Museum

Development proposals to maintain and enhance the Cranbrook Museum for use by the community and for tourism including the sensitive expansion of the current site will be supported.

Policy Supporting Text

- 8.30 Cranbrook Museum is an outstanding and much-loved historic building, the oldest parts of which are believed to date from the late 15th century. It is located in the heart of the Cranbrook Conservation Area, on what was formerly known as 'The Green'. This space was associated with commerce, dating back to the markets granted by Edward 1 in 1289. The Museum contributes to the local tourism industry by attracting visitors, often from far away, and is part of 'The Wheels of Time' initiative which encourages children and families to visit museums and heritage sites to learn more about Kent's history.
- 8.31 The building itself makes people aware of the history of the area and enhances visitors' understanding of former times through such things as its construction methods and materials. It also contributes to an appreciation of social history, for example through its demonstration of how families lived in separate parts of the building, but with shared personal hygiene and laundry facilities, even in the fairly recent past.
- 8.32 The rich local heritage of the parish is celebrated in the Museum, with the help of the local experts who volunteer there. It contains many artefacts on free display to the public, a large number of which are specific to the local area, with some being unique. The Museum also holds a large archive of documents related to the area.
- 8.33 The Museum is a centre for the study of local history and welcomes visitors for this purpose. The archives hold a large collection of information on family history consulted on site, or through enquiries, by genealogists, locals, and visitors from around the world, including other places called Cranbrook. Knowledge is shared through regular publications.
- 8.34 The Museum is an important resource for schools, locally and further afield. Large and small groups of children visit, often for guided tours, and for the invaluable experiences of seeing artefacts in close-up, with the opportunity of being able to handle some of them. Loans boxes are available to schools and other organisations, for example the local 'Memory Lane Café' (for those living with dementia).

- 8.35 The Museum Garden is beautiful in its own right and of great historical significance. It is a vital outside area for the display of artefacts. The dye, physic and culinary herb gardens contribute to an understanding of local history. The garden is also an important Green Space, home to numerous creatures, including two species of bats. It is managed in a wildlife friendly way and appears on the B-Lines Map for the South of England.
- 8.36 The Museum and its garden, both free to visit, are important contributors to local Wellbeing, and organisations such as The Memory Lane Café and U3A have links. The many Museum and garden volunteers, mostly older people, value the opportunity to contribute their time and often great local knowledge. The Museum and garden are also used for small gatherings, for example hosting events for Cranbrook in Bloom.



9. Infrastructure

Introduction

- 9.1 The Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan encourages the delivery of infrastructure and essential services provided in a way which benefits the local community, whilst maintaining the AONB landscape characteristics that makes the parish unique.
- 9.2 Community engagement has highlighted the shortage of essential services throughout the parish, including water management, internet connectivity, mobile data coverage, and community energy and allotment gardens.

Overall Policy Aims

- To ensure that existing and new residents are adequately provided with the necessary improvements to infrastructure
- To create social connections between all demographics across the parish
- To ensure residents have their needs met throughout all stages of their lives
- To ensure facilities are sensitively designed in the context of the beautiful landscape
- To ensure that services and facilities are future proofed to meet the borough's target of being carbon neutral by 2030
- To attract businesses to the parish that require high connectivity
- To encourage and enable home working
- To enable telemedicine

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- IN9.1 Provision of Enhanced Broadband & Mobile Data
- IN9.2 Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- IN9.3 Low and Zero Carbon Energy Production
- IN9.4 Sustainable Drainage

Policy IN9.1

Provision of Enhanced Broadband & Mobile Data

Development proposals for the installation of poles or masts to support superfast broadband and/or mobile data coverage will be supported where the siting and character of the structure:

- **is of the minimum physical dimensions necessary to fulfil its function**
- **is located to minimise visual impact**
- **responds positively to the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB where proposed sites are within the AONB or visible from within the AONB**
- **does not require the removal of mature trees**
- **does not interfere with any other radio or microwave networks in the area**
- **provides access for multiple properties, where practicable, to reduce the number of installations required**

Policy Supporting Text

- 9.3 At community engagement events, the public have repeatedly conveyed that there is patchy mobile data coverage in the parish and very poor internet connectivity outside the centre of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. In the Business and Employment Survey, 35% cited poor internet speeds and reliability, limiting growth; 100% complained of patchy coverage in the parish; and 40% cited poor mobile phone limiting their business growth. From December 2022 Part R of the Building Regulations has addressed the provision of broadband connections within new developments.
- 9.4 The Design Forum identified the need and opportunity to enhance connectivity across the parish that is fit for the future. Enhanced connectivity would benefit individuals and businesses alike, allowing more people to work from home and fostering a culture that seeks the development of live/work units, which may include more isolated farmsteads, for example.

Policy IN9.2

Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points

- a) Vehicle charging points, accessible from each car parking facility, should be included in new development proposals.**
- b) Development proposals for charging points by new and existing businesses will be encouraged**
- c) Development proposals for re-charging points for dedicated public transport will be supported, where they can demonstrate that they are designed in ways sensitive to the town and landscape settings.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 9.5 In the Business and Employment Survey, 25% of businesses surveyed cited lack of public transport as growth limiting. Community engagement showed a need for greater public transport to allow residents to access services which lie outside the parish.
- 9.6 Applications that support environmentally friendly public transport and electric vehicle charging points would help alleviate this, while also making electric cars a more attractive option.
- 9.7 Encouraging use of electric cars will help improve the carbon footprint of the parish as it moves towards the government target of no petrol and diesel car sales after 2030, and the borough's target of carbon neutrality by 2030.
- 9.8 This policy is in line with TWBC draft Local Plan policy STR6, 'Transport and Parking.'

Policy IN9.3

Low & Zero Carbon Energy Production

Proposals for individual and community-scale renewable energy projects (including, but not limited to solar panels, local biomass facilities and anaerobic digesters, ground and air source heat pumps, hydroelectricity) either as stand-alone proposals or within the design of new developments will be supported subject to the following criteria:

- **The siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting within the wider landscape**
- **The proposed development does not adversely impact on the amenities and environment of residents**
- **The proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on any feature of natural or biodiversity importance**

Policy Supporting Text

- 9.9 In July 2019, TWBC resolved to become carbon neutral in its operations by 2030. This policy aims to support this ambition through the encouragement of small scale low and zero carbon energy production where appropriate.
- 9.10 Vision 2034, published by the AONB partnership, sets out policy aspirations for the High Weald AONB for the next 20 years, aiming for a landscape embracing a low-carbon future with green technologies underpinning a strong rural economy and thriving communities. The parish recognises its responsibility to the landscape and environment, whilst supporting development that meets the needs of residents.

Policy IN9.4

Sustainable Drainage

- a) Developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to reduce the run-off of surface water. The systems should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property, and the ecological value of the local environment.**
- b) Development proposals in the upper Crane Valley should demonstrate effective water management measures, which include an assessment of the impact of the development on known pinch points for flooding in Cranbrook town centre and provide a water management plan for mitigation.**
- c) Development proposals should demonstrate that they include a broad range of mitigation measures to manage the risk of flooding within their boundary and elsewhere in the parish, including, but not limited to:**
 - Permeable driveways and parking areas**
 - Water harvesting and storage features**
 - Green roofs**
 - Soakaways**
 - Swales**
 - Planting of trees and hedges**
- d) Attenuation Basins should be designed in keeping with the surrounding environment and planted with the intention of improving water quality and biodiversity.**

Policy Supporting Text

- 9.11 The parish recognises its responsibility to the landscape and environment and meeting the guidelines from the High Weald AONB geology and water objectives document, whilst supporting development that meets the needs of the residents. Given that the settlements are mostly located along the course of the Crane Valley, management of, and the effects on, this key aspect of the landscape are crucial to the parish. Applications that meet both requirements are preferred.
- 9.12 Sustainable drainage is essential to alleviate the impact of new development on the environment, preventing the occurrence of flooding. As witnessed across the UK, the effects of flooding can be devastating and measures should be taken to ensure problems do not arise in the parish. Such measures can be attractively designed and add character to a new development.



10. Projects List

The list of projects has been identified by the community during the series of public engagement events held over the past few years. They are intended to support the plan's policies and are broadly split under the policy chapter headings, although it is recognised that a number of these projects would help to deliver policy aspirations which encompass multiple policies.

Ranging in scale and cost, further work is required by the Parish Council to prioritise these projects to enable both small-scale improvements to social infrastructure and larger-scale provision of community space, Contributions from developers will be sought in order to deliver these projects.

It is recognised that a number of projects are beyond the scope of the Parish Council and will require collaboration with borough and county councillors and other agencies in order to deliver them.

Heritage & Design

- Supporting the use of heritage assets for a variety of uses
- Aspirations of significant heritage buildings
- Historically related tours and heritage trail, engaging with geocaching etc
- Tourist office
- Variety of visitor accommodation
- Visitor facilities, e.g. coach and taxi parking
- Fostering international links with other Cranbrooks around the world and through connections with the Cranbrook families who established early settlements in Massachusetts and Connecticut
- Volunteer tour guides

Landscape & The Natural Environment

- Extend the Crane Valley Local Nature Reserve
- Signposted nature walks
- Forest schools and other natural environment education opportunities
- Promote the creation of additional allotments to reflect the increasing demand for such facilities and the enhanced well-being such facilities can provide

Community & Culture

- Community centre Cranbrook
- Village Hall, Sissinghurst
- Community outdoor space
- Providence Chapel
- Public toilets in Cranbrook

- Improve playground facilities in the parish
- Support St Dunstan's aspirations for flexible use of space
- Boxing Club
- Register of artists and makers etc. in the parish
- Rugby Club new facilities
- Cranbrook Football Club – new facilities
- Sissinghurst Cricket Club – new facilities
- CODS
- Cranbrook in Bloom
- Well-being in the Weald Community Allotment
- Improved signage to events and heritage assets (sensitively designed)
- Preventing vandalism & anti-social behaviour in following places: toilets at Crane Lane; Crane Valley Nature Reserve; Co-op car park; Ball Field play equipment; streetlights in outlying areas

Access & Movement

Cycling & Pedestrian (Active Travel)

- Form project group to achieve Sissinghurst to Bedgebury cycle way, investigate route options,
- Identify key connections
- Identify new pedestrian and cycle routes
- Safer crossing within the vicinity of all schools in the parish

Traffic

- Identify and consult the interested groups
- Identify best locations for interventions

- Identify preferred measures – see toolkit of Community Approaches to reducing traffic speed
- Restrict HGV access along Common Road
- Speed control, traffic-calming, and enforcement on speed limits on the A262 through Sissinghurst and along the Angley Road section of A229 in Cranbrook
- Extend pavement from 30mph sign on Golford Road to Dulwich College and cemetery
- Reduce speed limit to 30mph on the A229 in its entirety
- Address HGVs, speed limit (20mph) on Common Road from Frittenden Road crossroads down to Sissinghurst village centre
- Address parking in Sissinghurst
- Address HGV access from Stone Street. Include priority directional signage, remove on-street parking at any time and limit delivery times
- Address HGV access from High Street
- Create 30mph speed limit on the Hartley Road / Angley Road along A229 from Wilsley Green to Glassenbury Road
- Create a parish wide maximum speed limit of 40mph

Mobility

- Micro interventions to pavements
- Mobility audit across the parish

11 Objectives & Policies Tables

These tables relate the various neighbourhood plan objectives with the planning policies. This helps to demonstrate how the objectives will be delivered through the planning policy framework contained within the neighbourhood plan.



Landscape & Natural Environment

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
LN3.1 Biodiversity & Ecology	2, 3 and 6
LN3.2 Protection of Geodiversity	1, 2, 3 and 6
LN3.3 Protecting the Historic Landscape Character	1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
LN3.4 Green Gaps & Preventing Settlement Coalescence	1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
LN3.5 Protection of the High Weald AONB & its Setting	1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
LN3.6 Protection & Enhancement of Sissinghurst Castle Garden	1, 2, 3, 4 and 6
LN3.7 Local Green Space Designations	1, 2, 3, 4 and 6



Heritage & Design

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
HD4.1 Protect, Conserve and Enhance the Historic Public Realm	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
HD4.2 Protect & Enhance Shopfronts	1, 3, and 4
HD4.3 Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets Outside the Conservation Areas	1, 2, 3 and 4
HD4.4 Protection, Conservation and Enhancement of Agricultural Heritage Assets	1, 2, 3, and 4
HD4.5 Cranbrook Windmill	1, 4 and 6
HD4.6 Retention & Restoration of the Providence Chapel	1, 4 and 6
HD4.7a Small-Scale Sustainable Development sites & Design Criteria	1, 2, 3, and 6
HD4.7b Exceptions for Large-Scale Developments & Community Involvement	1, 2, 3 and 6
HD4.8 The Design of New Buildings within or within the setting of the Conservation Areas	1, 3, and 4
HD4.9 Making Efficient Use of Land through Appropriate Densities	1, 2, 3 and 4
HD4.10 Avoidance of Light Pollution	1, 2, and 3



Access & Movement

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
AM5.1 The Pedestrian Environment	2, 5 and 6
AM5.2 Pedestrian Priority & Public Rights of Way	2, 5 and 6
AM5.3 Public Transport & Access to Amenities	2, 5 and 6
AM5.4 Cycle Storage & Cycle Parking	2, 3, 5 and 6
AM5.5 Safer Road Conditions	2, 5 and 6
AM5.6 Rural Lanes	2, 5 and 6
AM5.7 Car Parking Provision	2, 3, 5 and 6



Business & Employment

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
BE6.1 Business & Employment Space	1, 3, 4 and 6
BE6.2 Tourism & Retail	1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7
BE6.3 Adult Education & Vocational Training	3, 4, and 6
BE6.4 Protection, Conservation & Enhancement of The Rural Economy	1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7



Housing

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
HO7.1 Accessible Intergenerational Living	3, 4 and 6
HO7.2 Innovative Construction Solutions	2, 4, 6 and 7



Community & Culture

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
CC8.1 Community Facilities	6 and 7
CC8.2 Provision of Health & Well-Being Facilities	6 and 7
CC8.3 New Community Centre in Cranbrook	6 and 7
CC8.4 Creation of a New Outdoor Public Space in Cranbrook	6 and 7
CC8.5 New Village Hall for Sissinghurst	6 and 7
CC8.6 Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Library	6 and 7
CC8.7 Performing Arts	6 and 7
CC8.8 Preserve & Enhance Cranbrook Museum	6 and 7



Infrastructure

Chapter & Policy	Neighbourhood Plan Objectives
IN9.1 Provision of Enhanced Broadband & Mobile Data	4 and 7
IN9.2 Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points	2, 3, 4, 5, and 7
IN9.3 Low and Zero Carbon Energy Production	2, 3, 4, and 7
IN9.4 Sustainable Drainage	2,4, and 7

Total policies = 43, plus 24 Local Green Space Designations

12. Glossary of Terms

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Access Points	Relates to points of access to a property or development
Active Travel Networks	Networks of pathways, cycle routes etc designed to increase physical activity
AECOM (Architecture, Engineering, Consulting, Operations, And Maintenance)	A multinational company that provides site assessment and other planning technical assistance
Anaerobic Digesters	Break down organic material to provide energy
AONB (Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	Area of countryside which has been designated for conservation due to its significant landscape value.
AONB Colouration Study Chart	Document that provides direction and guidance on the selection and use of colour in development within the High Weald AONB
Attenuation Basins	Surface storage basins or facilities that provide flow control through attenuation of stormwater runoff. They also facilitate some settling of particulate pollutants. Basins are normally dry and in certain situations the land may also function as a recreational facility. However, basins can also be mixed, including both a permanently wet area for wildlife or treatment of the runoff and an area that is usually dry to cater for flood attenuation.
Balanced Flue Chimney	Chimney for fire appliance where air for combustion is drawn in via outer pipe and inner pipe removes smoke
Biodiversity Impact Calculator	Tool used to measure the biodiversity value of a site
Biomass Facility	Facility used to manage energy or heat production from plant and animal material

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Blue Infrastructure	Landscape elements that are linked to water, such as pools, ponds etc
Braided Routes	A braided route is one where, instead of a single large route, there are several smaller ones meandering around obstacles. These are created over years of use. Usually applied to footpaths.
Brown Field Site	Previously developed sites that are not currently in use.
Build Outs	Work done to bring a construction or development project to completion
C&SPC (Cranbrook And Sissinghurst Parish Council)	
Ca (Conservation Area)	An area considered worthy of preservation or enhancement, protected by law
Ccaa (Cranbrook Conservation Area Appraisal)	Supplementary planning document prepared by TWBC in partnership with local people to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development in the Cranbrook Conservation Area can be assessed.
Ccaac (Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee)	The committee, made up of local people including parish councillors and experts, that advise interested parties regarding the Conservation Area
Coalescence	Relating to planning, this refers to two or more built areas merging
Cods (Cranbrook Operatic & Dramatic Society)	A local amateur theatre group that put on local drama shows
Community	A group of people that hold something in common – this could be a common place (e.g. individual neighbourhood), a common interest, (e.g. interest in the environment), a common identity (e.g. age) or a common need (e.g. a particular service focus).
CPRE (Campaign To Protect Rural England)	Organisation that works to protect, promote, and enhance our towns and countryside

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Cranbrook In Bloom	Volunteer group that work to beautify Cranbrook and regularly enter the town into Britain in Bloom and similar competitions
Crane Valley Re-Wilding Area	Area in Crane Valley that is being returned to a wild state
Cupola	Relatively small, most often dome-like, tall structure on top of a building.
Curtilage	In law, the curtilage of a house or dwelling is the land immediately surrounding it, including any strongly associated buildings and structures
Dark Buffers	A design requirement of the developer to allow protective buffers of land left without lighting (dark) to protect the biodiversity
DEFRA (Department For Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)	UK government department responsible for safeguarding our natural environment, supporting our world-leading food and farming industry, and sustaining a thriving rural economy
Design Code	A set of illustrated design rules and requirements which instruct and may advise on the physical development of a site or area. The graphic and written components of the code are detailed and precise and build upon a design vision such as a masterplan or other design and development framework for a site or area
Design Guide (Housing & Design)	A set of rules and requirements specifically for any new house, including building materials, design ideals etc
Discounted Purchase	An affordable housing model, the discount would come with conditions
District Level Licensing Scheme	To help support Greater Crested Newts habitats this scheme allows developers to pay into a central fund for regional mitigation as an alternative to funding their own individual mitigation measures
Drove Ways	A route that was used for driving livestock on foot from one place to another, such as to market or between summer and winter pasture

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Eco Design Guide	A set of rules and requirements to help make the design and building of a house as environmentally friendly as possible
Ecological Connectivity	The degree to which similar facets of the landscape such as habitats or vegetation patches are interconnected to facilitate movements of plants, animals, and the attendant ecological processes
Ecological Networks	Ecological networks are the basic, joined up infrastructure of existing and future habitat needed to allow populations of species and habitats to survive in fluctuating conditions
Ecological Resilience	In ecology, resilience is the capacity of an ecosystem to respond to a perturbation or disturbance by resisting damage and recovering quickly
Economical Critical Mass	Critical mass is the point at which a growing company becomes self-sustaining, and no longer needs additional investment to remain economically viable
Fascia	An architectural term for a vertical frieze or band under a roof edge, or which forms the outer surface of a cornice, visible to an observer
Forest Schools	<p>Forest Schools is a unique way of building independence, self-esteem, and a positive attitude towards learning in children and young people as they explore and experience the natural world for themselves.</p> <p>A combination of freedom and responsibility is beneficial to children with little confidence or challenging behaviour. Valuable life skills are learnt – communication, team working and responsibility. ukforestschools.com/about-us/</p>
Geocaching	Geocaching is an outdoor recreational activity, in which participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", at specific locations marked by coordinates all over the world
Gills	Generic term for a narrow valley
Grade 1 Listing	Buildings of exceptional interest
Grade 2	Buildings that are of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve them

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Grade 2 *	Particularly important buildings of more than special interest
Green Field Site	Previously undeveloped sites usually fields or woodland
Green Infrastructure	A network providing the “ingredients” for solving urban and climatic challenges by building with nature
Green Spaces	Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities
Grey Infrastructure	Grey infrastructure refers to the human-engineered infrastructure for water resources such as water and wastewater treatment plants, pipelines, and reservoirs. Grey infrastructure typically refers to components of a centralized approach to water management.
Hereditament	Any kind of property that can be inherited
Heritage Trail	A walking route which connects various sights of local interest
HGV (Heavy Goods Vehicle)	Larger vehicles used primarily for the transport of goods
Hierarchy Pattern	The pattern is the shape and form of fields delineated by their boundaries
High Density	In regard to housing; housing with a higher population density than the average
High Weald	The AONB. This is a medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops; small, irregular-shaped fields; scattered farmsteads; and ancient routeways. The 1461km ² area covers parts of Kent, Sussex, and Surrey at the heart of South East England
High Weald Colour Study	Document that provides direction and guidance on the selection and use of colour in development within the High Weald AONB
High Weald Landscape Trail	The High Weald Landscape Trail crosses the counties of West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent providing an opportunity to explore the heart of south-east England
High Weald Partnership	The team who work on behalf of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee along with partners that include the

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
	Heritage Lottery Fund, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, RSPB, and Environment Agency
Historic England	The public body that helps people care for, enjoy, and celebrate England's spectacular historic environment
Home Zones	A living street (or group of streets) as implemented in the United Kingdom, which are designed primarily to meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, children, and residents and where the speeds and dominance of the cars is reduced
Hop Pickers Line	The Paddock Wood to Hawkhurst branch railway, which was closed in 1961, used a lot to bring hop pickers to the area
Hopper Huts	Temporary accommodation provided for hop-pickers on English farms in the 19th and 20th centuries
Hybrid Housing	Intentionally designed to contain both residential and business space, and in which residents occupy and manage both spaces
IDSA (International Dark Sky Association)	The International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) is the recognized authority on light pollution and is the leading organization combating light pollution worldwide
Infill	Infill is the urban planning term for the rededication of land in an urban environment, usually open space, to new construction
Inned River Valley	In the High Weald context are anciently enclosed flood plains
Innovative	using new ideas or methods
KCC (Kent County Council)	Our local county council
KCC Highways (Kent County Council Highways)	The KCC body responsible for most roadways in Kent
Kent Highways	Another name for KCC Highways
Key Connections	Refers to transport connections of importance, train stations, motorway junctions etc

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
LBD (Limit Of Built Development)	Identifies the area within which development proposals would be acceptable, subject to complying with other policies contained in the Development Plan. They seek to prevent development from gradually extending into the surrounding countryside
Lighting Zonation	Details of lighting as part of developments
Live-Work Unit	A space that combines a workspace with living quarters
LNR (Local Nature Reserve)	A nature reserve that is of local importance, either to protect a site of special scientific interest, or specific species
Low Heat Transfer Glazing	A type of energy-efficient glass designed to prevent heat escaping out through your windows to the cold outdoors
Low Weald	A broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western, and southern edges of the High Weald
Lux Limits	The limit of how bright lighting should be
LWS (Local Wildlife Sites)	Simply a shortened version of this phrase
MAGIC (Map And Geographic Information Centre)	The MAGIC website provides geographic information about the natural environment from across government. The information covers rural, urban, coastal, and marine environments across Great Britain
Mags/Arcsec ²	This measurement relates to luminosity and brightness that an object gives off which is the measurement used by the Sky Quality Meter to register amount of light pollution at a specific place
Mb/S (Megabytes Per Second)	Units of data transfer speed
Micro Interventions To Pavements	Minor treatments to repair or maintain pavements designed to extend the life of the pavement
Mitigation Hierarchy	A tool that guides users towards limiting the negative impacts on biodiversity from development projects
Molen Biotoop	Windmill living space, the area around a windmill affected by and affecting the windmill

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Ndp (Neighbourhood Development Plan)	A document written by the local community that sets out planning policies for the area
NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework)	All national level planning laws etc that need to be adhered to
OFGEM (The Office Of Gas And Energy Markets)	The government regulator for the electricity and downstream natural gas markets in Great Britain
ONS (Office Of National Statistics)	The national statistical service of the United Kingdom
Opaque Envelope	The physical separator between the conditioned and unconditioned environment of a building including the resistance to air, water, heat, light, and noise transfer
Passivhaus Standard	Voluntary building performance standard that anyone setting out to build a low-energy home might be interested in
Permeable Layouts	Describes development layout the extent to which urban forms permit (or restrict) movement of people or vehicles in different directions
Prow (Public Right Of Way)	A way over which the public have a right to pass and repass, including Public Footpaths, Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic
Public Realm	The external places in our parish that are open to the public
Riparian Buffer Zone	A vegetated area (a "buffer strip") near a stream, usually forested, which helps shade and partially protect the stream from the impact of adjacent land uses
River Catchment	The area drained by a river or body of water. Also called catchment basin
RNR (Roadside Nature Reserve)	Our local RNR is the Kent and Medway Road Verge Project, established in 1994, works to identify, protect, and manage road verges which contain threatened habitats or wildlife. These are marked by special signs
Roofscape	A view of the rooftops of a town, city, etc

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
s106 (Section 106 Agreement)	This is a legal obligation entered into by developers to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal
SCAA (Sissinghurst Conservation Area Appraisal)	Supplementary planning document prepared by TWBC in partnership with local people to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development in the Sissinghurst Conservation Area can be assessed
Self-Build	A self-build is an individual house that has been commissioned by an individual homeowner to perfectly fit their exact requirements and tastes
Self-Completing	An affordable housing model, where legal processes complete automatically
Self-Finish	Like self-build, this allows a buyer to tailor a standard house to better match their own requirements
Shared Ownership	An affordable housing model where buyers can part own, and part rent a property
Shared Spaces	An urban design approach that minimises the segregation between modes of road user
Shaws	A strip of woodland usually between 5 and 15 metres (15 and 50 feet) wide. Shaws commonly form boundaries between fields or line a road
Shelter Belt Pattern	A planting usually made up of one or more rows of trees or shrubs planted in such a manner as to provide shelter from the wind and to protect soil from erosion
CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)	This is a legal obligation entered into by developers to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal and is a method of obtaining finance from developers for new 'local infrastructure'
Social Prescribing	Sometimes referred to as community referral, is a means of enabling GPs, nurses, and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services
Spatial Volume Marker	A marker erected by developers on in-fill sites to enable neighbours to understand and respond to spatial and visual impact

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
Sqm (Sky Quality Meter)	An instrument used to measure the luminance of the night sky
SSSI (Site Of Special Scientific Interest)	A conservation designation denoting a protected area in the United Kingdom. These are the basic building block of site-based nature conservation legislation and most other legal nature/geological conservation designations in the United Kingdom are based upon them, including national nature reserves
Stall Risers	On a shop front, this is the panel below the window which raises the window up from ground level
Suds (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems)	Sustainable drainage systems are designed to manage stormwater locally (as close to its source as possible), to mimic natural drainage and encourage its infiltration, attenuation, and passive treatment.
Superfast Broadband	Superfast broadband refers to broadband connections of at least 30Mbps in the UK, according to Ofcom. Superfast connections enable users to browse the internet, download music or video, and stream television at speeds that are massively higher than most internet users
Sustainable Housing	Housing that creates less waste, more re-use and recycling, together with lower life-cycle environmental impacts and costs, better reliability, less maintenance, and greater user satisfaction
Sustainable Transport/Travel Methods	Refers to the broad subject of transport that is sustainable in the senses of social, environmental and climate impacts
Sustrans Document (Sustainable Transport Document Prepared By The Sustrans Charity Organisation)	A reference document detailing sustainable transport options
Swales	Swales are shallow, broad, and vegetated channels designed to store and/or convey runoff and remove pollutants. They may be used as conveyance structures to pass the runoff to the next stage of the treatment train and

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
	can be designed to promote infiltration where soil and groundwater conditions allow.
Sweeps	Sails of windmill
Swiss Model	Alternative name of Passivhaus standard. A voluntary building performance standard that anyone setting out to build a low-energy home might be interested in
Telemedicine	The use of telecommunications technology to provide, enhance, or expedite health care services, as by accessing offsite databases, linking clinics or physicians' offices to central hospitals, or transmitting x-rays or other diagnostic images for examination at another site.
Tenure	Refers to the various ways that you can own or rent a property
Tenure Blind	A development where multiple tenure types are available but there is little difference in the size and style of housing
Thermal Bridges	Also called a cold bridge, heat bridge, or thermal bypass, is an area or component of an object which has higher thermal conductivity than the surrounding materials
TWBC (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)	Our local borough council, our primary planning authority
Twitten	A narrow alleyway, usually between building
Veteran Trees	Or legacy tree is a tree which, because of its great age, size or condition, is of exceptional cultural, landscape or nature conservation value.
Village Gateway Marking	Helps to create 'a sense of place' when drivers enter the village, and the physical measures are designed such that drivers are required to slow down before entry
Vision 2034	This is the AONB partnerships vision for the High Weald AONB in 20 years' time
Wellbeing In The Weald	Local volunteer group that organise new and promote existing wellbeing activities in the Weald including community walks, lunch clubs, choirs, volunteering, and

Word, Phrase or Abbreviation	Meaning
	other social activities that bring people together on a regular basis
WGCAA (Wilsley Green Conservation Area Appraisal)	Supplementary planning document prepared by TWBC in partnership with local people to provide a firm basis upon which proposals for development in the Wilsley Green Conservation Area can be assessed

back cover