



## Landscape and Environment

**6.100** Around 78% of the parish lies in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with its northern boundary running along the ridge of the High Weald escarpment. The northern area of the parish lies outside the HWAONB but within the High Weald National Character Area and defines the transition zone into the Low Weald Area.

**6.101** If the parish is to remain an attractive environment for living, working and visiting, it is essential to conserve and enhance the defining characteristics of its rural High Weald location, which are its landscape, heritage and biodiversity. New development should contribute to this aim. The High Weald AONB is celebrated for its scenery, tranquillity and wildlife and is recognised as one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe, having been a unique, distinct, and recognisable area for at least 700 years. Many of Brenchley and Matfield's landscape features reflect those highly valued in the AONB. They need to be conserved and enhanced when considering any potential development. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council [Landscape Character Assessment 2017](#) and the [Historic Landscape Characterisation 2020](#) for Brenchley Parish are key documents describing the landscape character of the parish.

### **LE1 Conserving and enhancing the AONB**

**Development within the High Weald AONB will be required to make a positive contribution towards achieving the objectives of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019-2024 (or successor versions) having regard for its associated guidance.**

**6.102** 78% of the Parish lies in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The National Planning Policy Framework July 2021 (paragraph 176) states that:

‘Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas...’.

The NPPF also states that: ‘The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited.’

**6.103** The [High Weald AONB Management Plan](#) sets out long term objectives for conserving this nationally important landscape, along with local authorities' ambitions for how the High Weald will be managed over the next five years. The HWAONB Management Plan will be supported by this Neighbourhood Plan.

### **LE2 Development affecting the AONB and its setting**

**Developments outside the boundary of the AONB but within the High Weald National Character Area must conserve and enhance the environment, character and landscape setting of the AONB. Where necessary, proposals will be required to demonstrate taking full account of the AONB Management Plan and its associated guidance.**

**6.104** The northern and north-eastern areas of the parish form part of the High Weald National Character Area (see Figure 3) and were formerly designated as part of a Kent Special Landscape Area. They include countryside of high landscape and biodiversity value, playing an important part as the setting of and approach to the High Weald AONB, as well as providing outstanding views across the Low Weald and Medway valley to the Greensand Ridge and the North Downs. The Tunbridge Wells Borough Council [Landscape Character Assessment 2017](#) explains the landscape importance of this part of the parish, which forms the transition zone between the High and Low Weald.

**6.105** The NPPF (paragraph 176) states that development within the setting of AONBs should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas. The associated Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 042) says 'Land within the setting of these areas often makes an important contribution to maintaining their natural beauty, and where poorly located or designed development can do significant harm. This is especially the case where long views from or to the designated landscape are identified as important, or where the landscape character of land within and adjoining the designated area is complementary. Development within the settings of these areas will therefore need sensitive handling that takes these potential impacts into account'.

### **LE3 Historic landscapes and heritage assets**

**New development proposals should conserve and, where possible, enhance the historic environment and assets of the parish. They should comply with the advice set out in current national and local historic environment policy and guidance.**

**6.106** The Parish benefits from important historic landscapes and heritage assets. Their conservation is essential to retaining the attractiveness and character of the Parish. As evidenced in the consultation events for the Neighbourhood Plan, such conservation is a major concern of residents.

**6.107** As well as referring to national policies and those in the Saved Policies of the TWBC Local Plan 2006 and Core Strategy 2010, applicants for development should refer to TWBC's '[Historic Environment Review](#)', '[TWBC Historic Landscape Characterisation](#)', the Kent '[Historic Environment](#)

Record', Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes and Historic Environment Advice notes. Applications for development should demonstrate how they comply with relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Supplementary Planning Guidance issued by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and with the TWBC PSLP policies EN4 and EN5.

**6.108** There are no Conservation Area Assessments for Matfield and Brenchley. As described in Chapter 2, both Conservation Areas are characterised by a high number of listed buildings, some wide grass verges, brick footways in the village centres, flower-filled front gardens behind low picket fences or low walls and railings. Both Conservation Areas would be enhanced by measures to resolve parking problems, limit speeds and create safe crossing places, without damaging the appearance of the Conservation Area. An extension of the areas of brick footway would also be welcome. Reducing the height of hedges obscuring front gardens would enhance the appearance of the Brenchley Conservation Area.

**6.109** The parish's non-designated heritage assets include, but are not limited to:

- Medieval and early post-medieval landscape features.
- Historic routeways including ironways such as Furnace Lane and drovers' routes, with characteristic sunken sections and woodland or wildflower-rich verges, such as Petteridge Lane, Hatmill Lane, Cryals Road, Knowle Road.
- Furnace Pond, its setting, pond bay and spillway (one of the three remaining furnace ponds in Kent and possibly the largest).
- Paygate Cottage, the only remaining turnpike toll cottage in the parish, which had three turnpikes running through it.
- The Castle Inn.
- 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses and farm buildings, such as those at Castle Hill, Knowle Road and Chantler's Hill.
- The gardens at Marle Place, Crittenden House, Brattles Grange and Brenchley Manor.

**6.110** Appendix 3 contains maps produced by the HWAONB Unit that show land utilisation features, ancient routeways and historic settlements within the High Weald area of the parish, but those outside the AONB are not shown.

#### **LE4 Valued Views**

**Development proposals within the parish must respect the significant views as shown in Appendix 4. Proposals should be accompanied by a proportionate visual impact statement, including winter and summer views where necessary, to demonstrate that their impact is acceptable.**

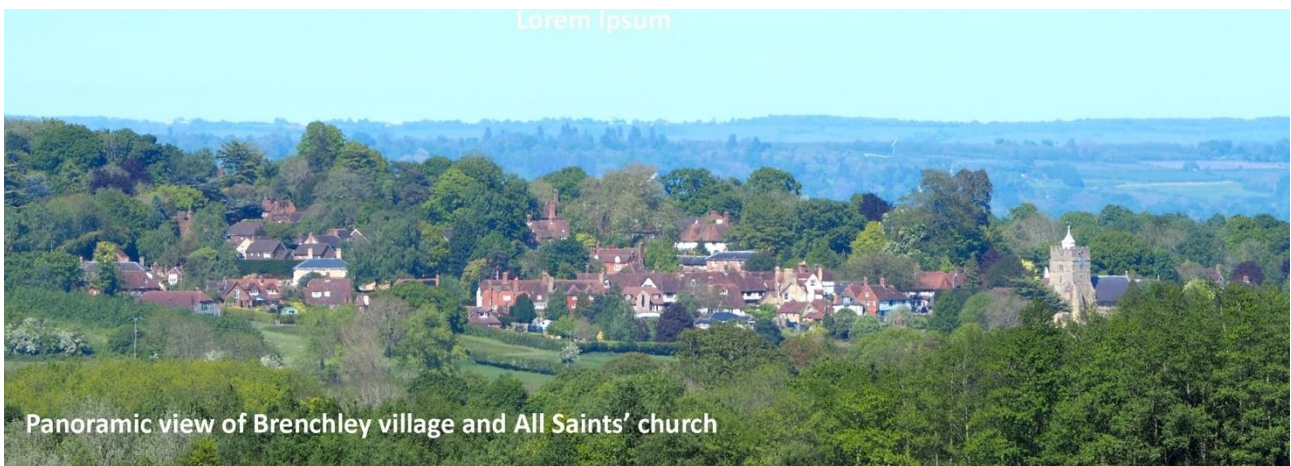
**6.111** Parishioners have identified views they regarded as important at various public consultations and have also submitted images. Their locations are shown in Figure 24 and are listed and illustrated in Appendix 4. The map is indicative only and should not be considered detailed regarding the extent of individual panoramic views.

**6.112** The parish's position on the High Weald escarpment means it enjoys panoramic views in many directions from roads and public footpaths. Many of the footpaths which link the various

villages and hamlets within the parish also offer superb views of the surrounding countryside and settlements, attracting many visitors to the area. The High Weald Landscape Trail is a 145km route that meanders through the HWAONB from east to west, linking ridge-top villages and historic gardens, and providing stunning views of the parish's landscape, its settlements and well beyond.



**6.113** The Grade 1 listed All Saints' Church and Matfield House and Stable Block are arguably the most iconic buildings in the parish, though others are also highly valued. There are important views of Matfield House and its distinctive Clock Tower from Matfield Green and Chestnut Lane. There are extensive views of All Saints' from many directions from footpaths and nearby housing developments. The map indicating the views of these important buildings from vantage points within the parish is shown in Figure 25 and the views are listed and illustrated in Appendix 4.



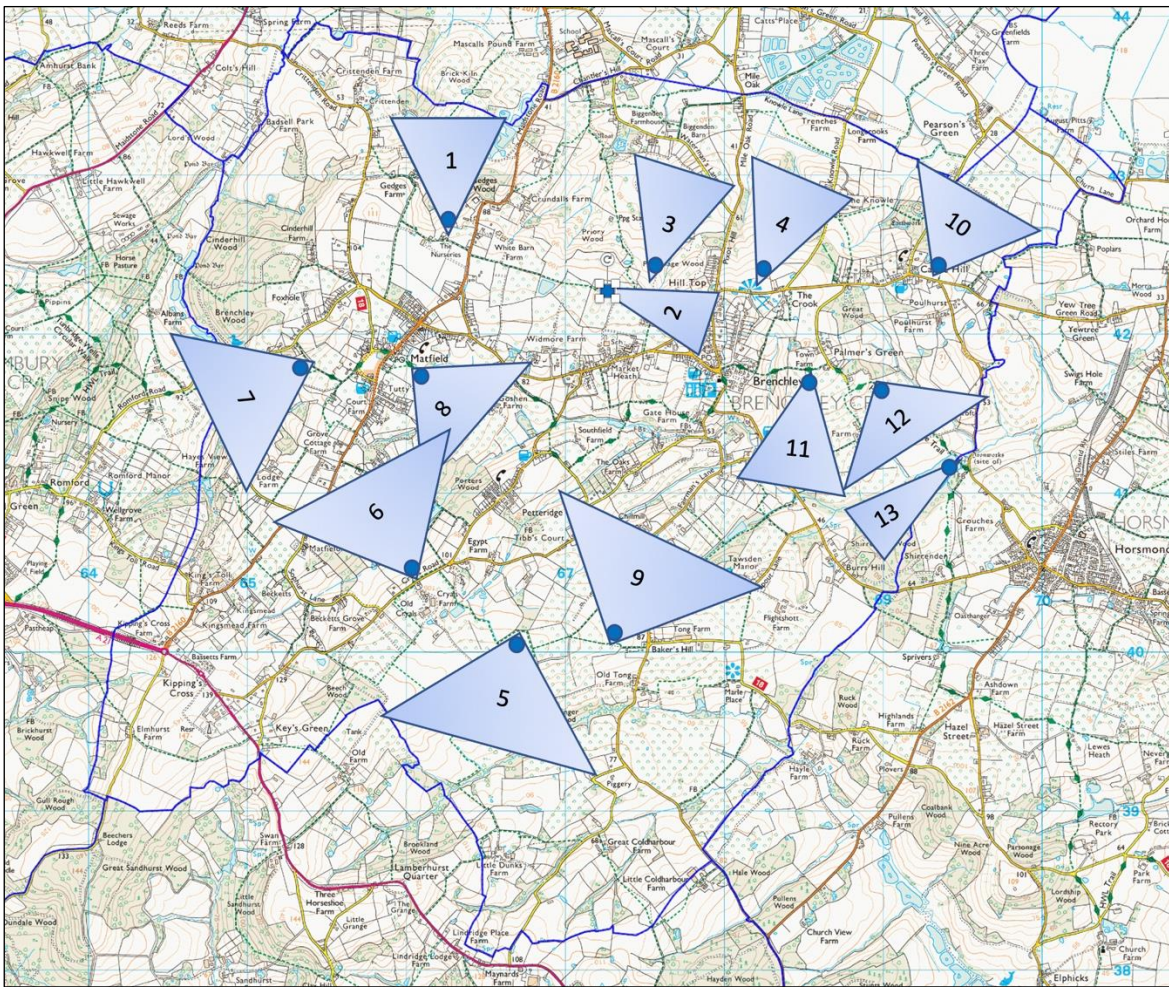


Figure 24: Panoramic views from footpaths and roads



Figure 25: Views of important buildings from within the parish

## LE5 Local Green Spaces

Public consultations have identified areas of particular importance to the community and the Neighbourhood Plan has designated them as Local Green Spaces to provide protection. Proposals for inappropriate development will only be allowed in very special circumstances as defined in the NPPF's policies for Green Belts.

**6.114** The proposed Local Green Spaces are tabulated in the Figure 26, identifying the criteria that they fulfil. Their locations are mapped in Figure 27 and the proposed Local Green Spaces are listed and illustrated in Appendix 5.

**6.115** The NPPF (paragraph 101) says 'The designation of land as Local Green Spaces through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.' A Local Green Space should fulfil all of the following criteria: it needs to be in close proximity to the community it serves; it can be shown to be special to a local community; it 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; it is local in character; and is not an extensive tract of land.

**6.116** The parish has areas of Common Land and several sites of Ancient Woodland, which the Government's guidance concerning Local Green Spaces considers to be sufficiently protected without having to be designated as Local Green Spaces. The Parish seeks to ensure that all green spaces, including some wide highway verges, which are important in the landscape or life of the settlements in the Parish, gain protection.



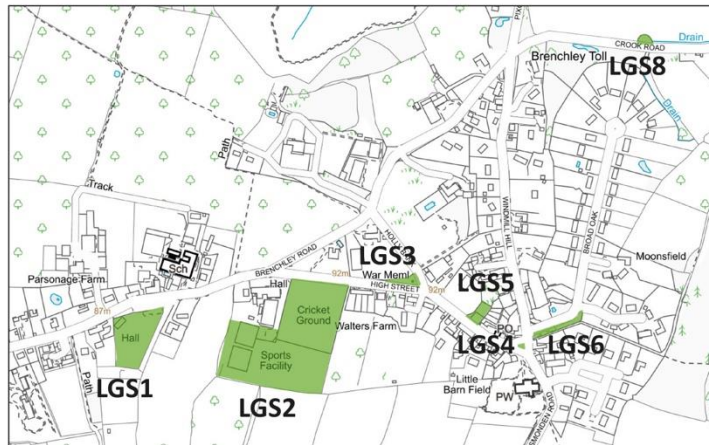
Local Green Space description Policies in the TWBC PSLP EN15 refers to Local Green spaces EN16 refers to landscape within the Built Environment OSSR1 refers to Open Spaces	Reasonably close	Local, not extensive	Beauty	History	Recreation	Tranquillity	Biodiversity	PSLP Designation
<b>LGS1:</b> Brenchley Recreation Ground, Market Heath	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	EN15/OSSR1
<b>LGS2:</b> Brenchley Memorial Hall Recreation Ground	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	EN15/OSSR1
<b>LGS3:</b> Brenchley War Memorial	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	EN15
<b>LGS4:</b> Oak Tree Green, Brenchley	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	
<b>LGS5:</b> Jack Verrall Memorial Garden, Brenchley	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	EN15/EN16/ OSSR1
<b>LGS6:</b> Broad Oak verges, Brenchley	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	EN16
<b>LGS7:</b> Mile Oak verge and Millennium Post	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	
<b>LGS8:</b> The Viewpoint, Crook Road	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	EN15
<b>LGS9:</b> The Clays Wood, Knowle Road	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	
<b>LGS10:</b> Matfield War Memorial	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	EN15
<b>LGS11:</b> Old Chapel graveyard, Matfield	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	
<b>LGS12:</b> Grass verge near Ebenezer Chapel, Matfield	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	
<b>LGS13:</b> Woodland to north of Wish Court, Matfield	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	EN15
<b>LGS14:</b> Grass verge, near Pralls Lane, Matfield	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	
<b>LGS15:</b> Porters Wood Recreation Ground	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	EN15/OSSR1
<b>LGS16:</b> Keys Green verges and pond, Beech Lane	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	

Figure 26: Local Green spaces



## Local Green Spaces

### Brenchley Centre



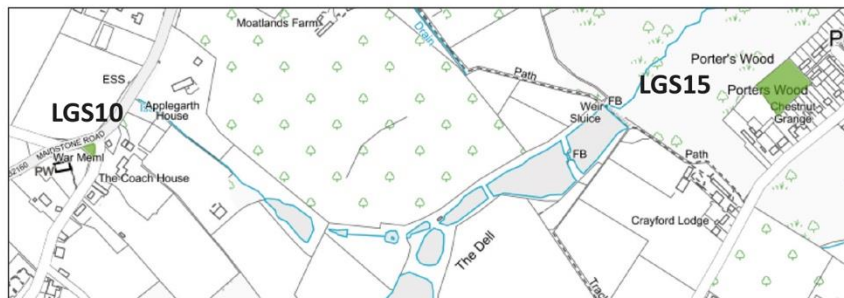
### Brenchley North



### Matfield Centre



### Matfield South



### Keys Green

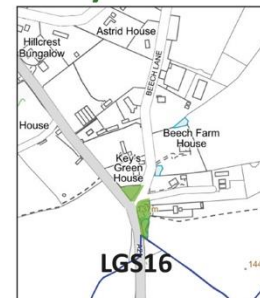


Figure 27: Location map for Local Green Spaces

## **LE6 Biodiversity**

**Proposals for new development must, as necessary, demonstrate how they will conserve and enhance biodiversity, including through habitat corridors between habitat areas and along historic routeways where these could be affected by development. A biodiversity net gain of at least 10% should be demonstrated. If this cannot be achieved on-site the proposal must demonstrate how it will be appropriately provided off-site, normally within the parish. Any recommended habitat management measures should be assessed and agreed by TWBC and then implemented through a planning condition or legal agreement, which should include monitoring measures.**

**6.117** There is a need not only to protect and enhance biodiversity on sites to be developed but also to protect and enhance the local habitat as a whole. Wildlife and native plant life corridors will be expected to be enhanced rather than disrupted by new development and resilience to climate change will be increased.

**6.118** Highway verges are one of the most important remaining reservoirs of wildflowers, particularly important for pollinating insects. This includes ecologically rich verges on historic routeways as well other highway verges in the parish, including new highways and public rights of way in new developments. Other important areas to protect and enhance include coppiced woodland and rare remaining areas of semi-improved grassland and lowland heathland.

## **LE7 Trees and hedges**

**Where there are existing trees on a site, development proposals should be accompanied by an arboricultural survey by a recognised professional that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees. Development proposals will be expected to retain existing mature trees, wherever possible, and incorporate a suitable landscape scheme with additional planting of native species, either in gardens or in a communal area. A minimum of two native species or fruit trees for every new dwelling or building is recommended and planting of trees along access streets will be supported.**

**Developments will be required to avoid damage to existing native species hedgerows as far as possible and to use native species hedging plants appropriate to the soil conditions for landscape proposals.**

**Tree and hedgerow planting should be designed to allow for growth and to minimise the risk of obstruction to pedestrians, vehicles or the views listed in Policy LE4, when it reaches maturity.**

**6.119** There is a need to preserve the ancient woodland and the existing mature trees in the parish which make a positive contribution to the landscape. Parish residents also wish new developments to include tree planting that will provide a new legacy for the future. Planting more

native and fruit trees throughout the parish will therefore be encouraged. This will be beneficial to the community by:

- contributing to the long-term conservation of the traditional High Weald landscape;
- compensating to a small extent for the loss of orchards in recent years;
- reducing run-off and flooding;
- enhancing biodiversity;
- improving air quality; and
- absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

**6.120** This policy complies with the new policy on trees in the revised NPPF (paragraph 131). The policy will promote biodiversity, help preserve the parish's rural character and provide room for hedges to grow without impeding pedestrians or other traffic. Hedging, once mature, is normally at least one metre deep and can grow up to one metre per year, for which allowance is made in this policy. Where necessary for security or to constrain movement of children or animals, hedges may be reinforced on the side away from the road or public right of way by fencing, which should be unobtrusive and preferably constructed using materials from local coppiced woodland.

**6.121** In the Neighbourhood Plan Visioning Events and Design Forum events the public expressed a particular desire to limit and reduce the amount of Cuprocyparis Leylandii in the villages. In several locations it has been allowed to grow unchecked or is poorly maintained by close cropping, after which the tree becomes vulnerable and may die.

#### **LE8 Dark skies**

**All development proposals will be required to provide an assessment of how the development may affect dark skies. New development should be designed to minimise the effect of light spillage, including from skylights and large windows.**

- a. External lighting in new development will only be permitted where:**
- b. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons;**
- c. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or minimised, by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing;**
- d. there is no unacceptable impact on nearby residential properties; and**
- e. the angle of light emitted is no more than 0° to 85°.**

**6.122** Dark skies are an important part of the rural nature of the Parish and of the beauty of the AONB. The CPRE 2016 map of light pollution is shown in Figure 28. This policy seeks to preserve this, for the benefit of residents and wildlife. It covers street lighting, security lighting, sports field lighting, temporary lighting, spot lighting, illuminated signage and advertisements and light spillage from windows. The provision of some mechanism for reducing light spillage from large windows, such as shutters, should be a planning condition.

**6.123** Detailed advice is provided by the Institute of Lighting Professionals in its guidance Note 9/19, Domestic Exterior Lighting: 'Getting it right'. This concerns security lights in houses as well as street lighting with low level bollard lighting or other low-level lighting. Reduced lighting cuts

energy consumption, costs less money, can contribute positively to human health, helps wild life and does not necessarily compromise safety or increase crime. The Commission for Dark Skies recommends that where lighting is essential, shielded lighting of minimum brightness and minimum duration should be used. They also argue that there is no proven link between lighting levels and crime. The Campaign to Protect Rural England 'Shedding Light' advises dimming of external lighting and part-night lighting will save energy and reduce both costs and light pollution.

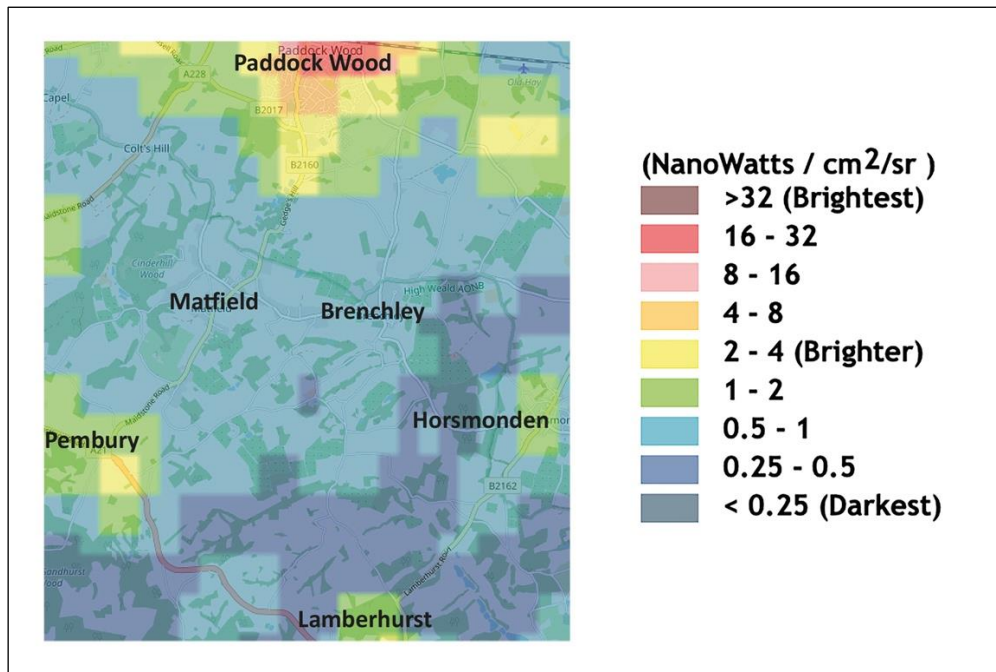


Figure 28: CPRE map of light pollution (2026)

### LE9 Advertising

Applications for advertisements will be required to demonstrate that they will not detract from the character of the village or rural landscape or from road or pedestrian safety. Visual clutter should be avoided and the cumulative effect of advertisements will be taken into account.

**6.124** There is a need to retain the character of the parish in its AONB setting so that it is not defaced by inappropriate or repeated advertisements. Verges and footways need to be kept clear for highway users.





## Access and Movement

**6.125** Access and Movement policies in the Neighbourhood Plan aim to ensure that all developments: consider their impact on local traffic; encourage and facilitate safe and connected walking, cycling and riding routes within the community; and seek to improve public transport links and other sustainable transport initiatives. Reduced use of private cars would provide important health benefits and contribute to tackling climate change.

**6.126** Parishioners at the visioning events and in other feedback have consistently highlighted the importance of public transport and improved access and safety for non-vehicular movement. Traffic was seen as the number one challenge, with the speed and volume of traffic, the incidence of large lorries and problems of parking being major concerns. Unless carefully designed, new developments risk aggravating the problems identified by residents.

**6.127** The Parish Council has, following community consultation, adopted a Highways Improvement Plan (HIP). The HIP project was initiated by KCC to liaise with Parish Councils to formulate a plan for highway improvements in a parish area. Changes to the HIP over time provide a framework for identifying and prioritising highways improvements for which contributions may be required from developers.

**6.128** New developments lead to additional traffic, adversely affecting road safety, pedestrian safety, air quality and road noise. To minimise these impacts, developments should prioritise sustainable travel over private vehicle use.

**6.129** Pedestrian safety is a significant problem within the parish, where there is a lack of footways and ever-increasing traffic. The contribution of through-traffic to this problem cannot be overlooked, with a large increase in dwellings expected in Capel, Paddock Wood, Pembury and Horsmonden. Speed reduction through an extension of 30mph speed limits or the introduction of 20mph limits should be considered. Contributions from developers, either within the parish or in adjacent parishes, should be sought to mitigate against the effects of increased traffic. These could include traffic calming measures, safe crossing points and improved signage.

## **AM1 Sustainable and active travel**

**Development-proposals that will generate additional travel movements will be expected to**

- a. ensure safe and easy non-vehicular access to community facilities and the countryside, with improvements to public rights of way and other footpaths, cycle paths and bridle paths where justified;**
- b. provide safe road crossing points close to development frontages where necessary;**
- c. support new or improved scheduled bus services and improved access to local bus stops, where relevant; and**
- d. provide storage facilities for bicycles.**

**Developments that do not enable easy access to a choice of safe, sustainable travel (including walking, cycling and public transport) will not be supported.**

**6.130** Walking and cycling would be encouraged by enabling safe and easy non-vehicular access to popular community facilities. Within the parish these include All Saints' and St Luke's Churches, Matfield Village Hall, Matfield Pavilion, Brenchley School, Brenchley Scout Hall and Recreation Ground, Howell Surgery (Brenchley), Brenchley Dental and Brenchley Memorial Hall. Increased walking and cycling would also help to limit the increase in road traffic. The creation of a non-vehicular access to Mascalls secondary school and Paddock Wood Station would be desirable.

**6.131** Kent County Council has published its 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 -2028', which sets out objectives for the county Public Right of Way (PROW) network (Figure 29) and wider public access . It highlights issues that have also been identified as important during neighbourhood plan consultations: the replacement of stiles with gates; better information on routes; good waymarking; better surfaces and effective maintenance. The extensive network of linked footpaths is well used by the community and ranges through farmland, orchards and woodland. The High Weald Landscape Trail meanders through the parish and enables walkers to enjoy the landscape, flora and fauna in all seasons.

**6.132** Public bridleways may legally be used by horse riders, cyclists and walkers but only 1.6 kilometres of bridleway exist in the parish, in four short sections widely separated from each other by busy roads. Nationally, bridleways constitute 20% of PROWs and in Kent they represent 10%, but in this parish, although horse riding is a popular pastime and equestrian establishments are an important part of the local economy, less than 2% of the PROWs are bridleways.

**6.133** There are three large liverys in the parish, at Lower Brenchley Farm, Woodlands Farm and Lower Dunks Farm, as well as a riding school at Lower Brenchley Farm and numerous private yards. The Matfield and District Riders' Association (MDRA) had around 45 members in February 2019 and estimated there were at least 300 horses in the parish, with around 200 adult riders and 100 children. Suitable horse riding and cycling riding routes are fragmented and the volume of motorised traffic raises safety concerns.

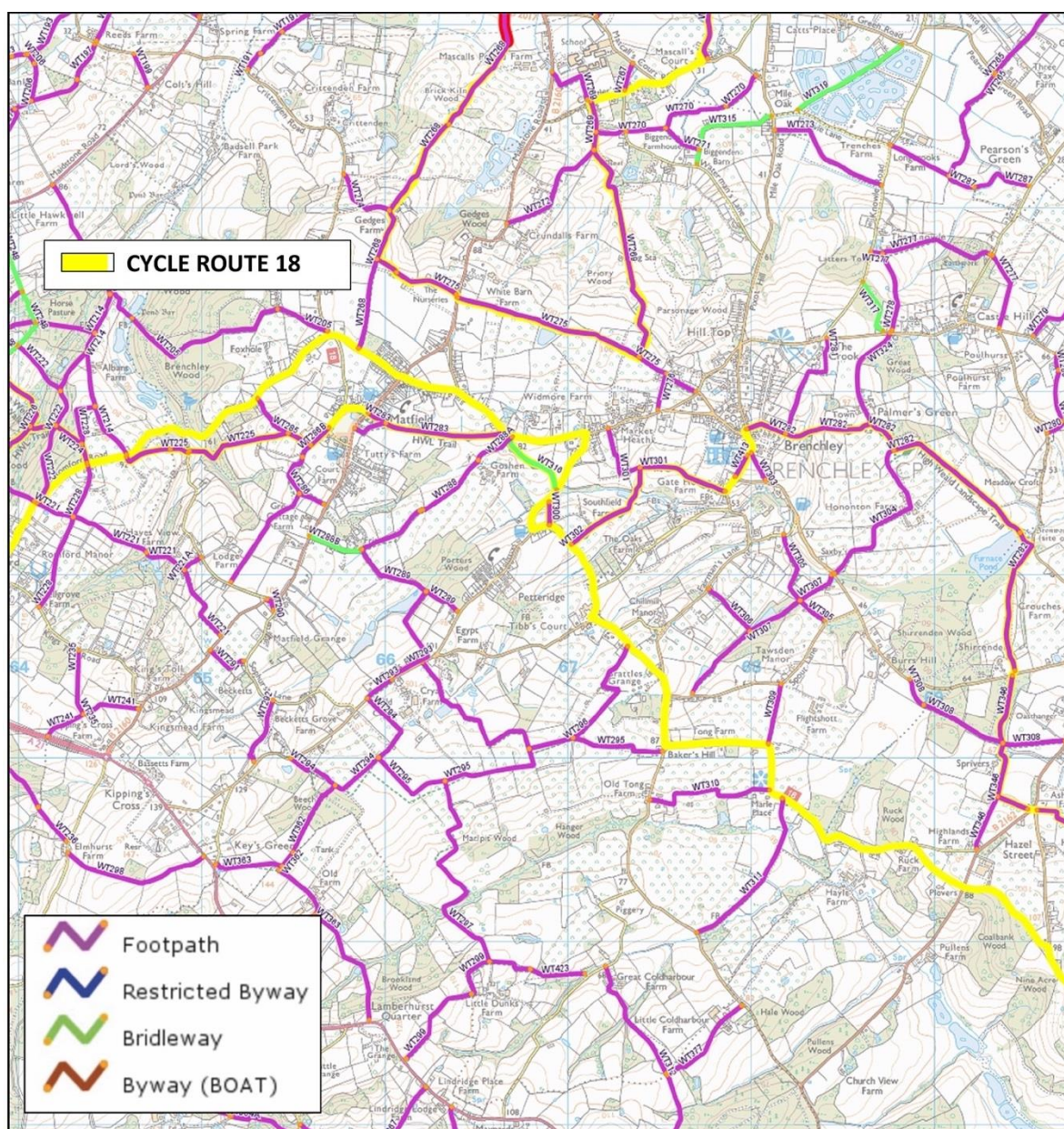


Figure 29: KCC public rights of way

#### 6.134 Measures should include:

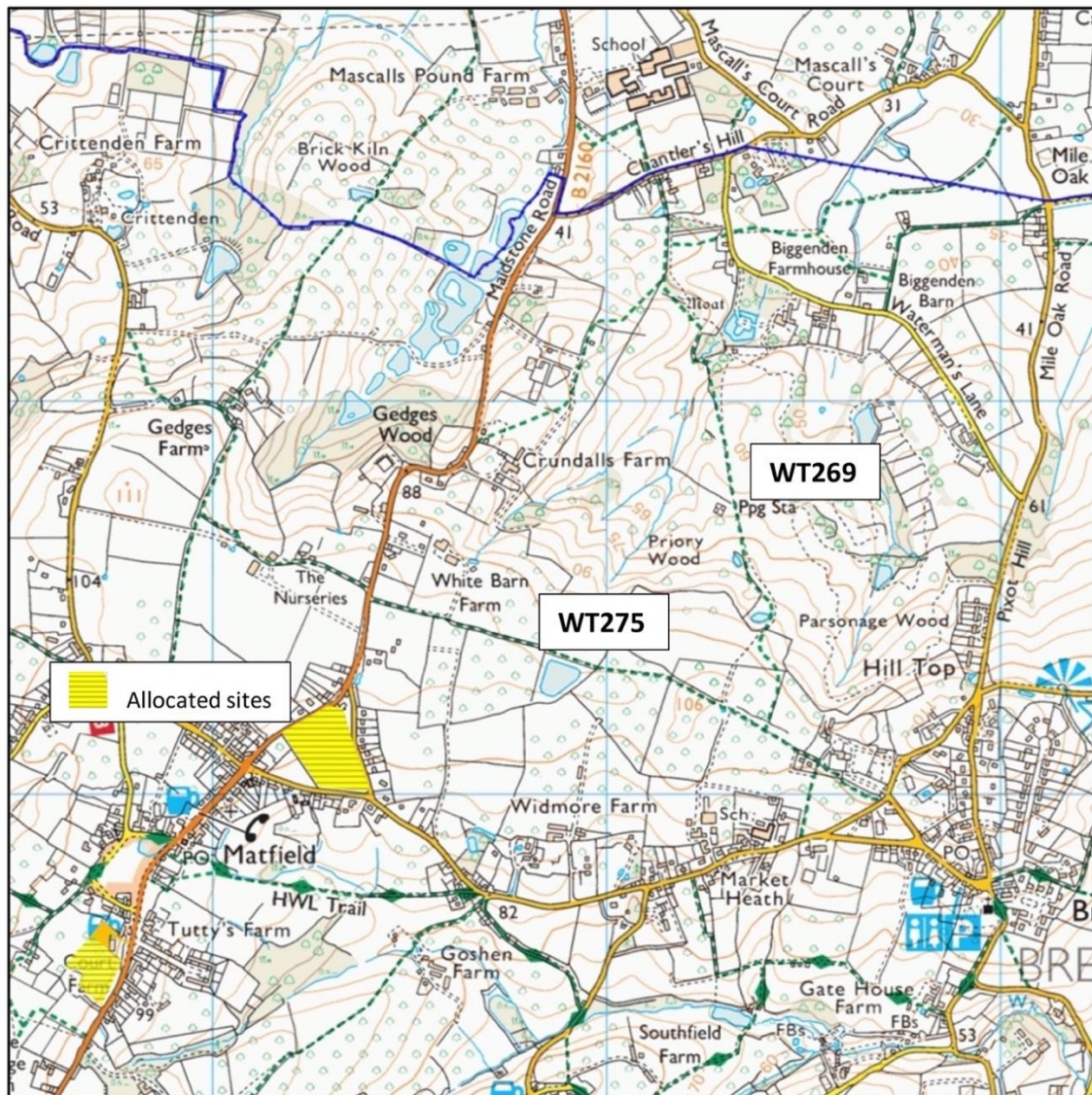
- improvements or additions to public footpaths or other rights of way.
- New developments with existing pavements should improve them if necessary and extend them where possible.
- New developments on sites with no current pavement on frontages should provide permeable, all-weather non-vehicular and multi-user rights of way within the development site.
- Where feasible, safe pedestrian crossing points should be provided on development frontages unless there is a nearby existing crossing to which safe access can be provided.

**6.135** Limited mobility is an important cause of social isolation and poor quality of life. Distances from essential services and railways make car use essential unless there are attractive public transport alternatives. Bus services have declined and do not meet the needs of those with significant mobility problems. Providing additional public transport options could help alleviate

these problems. It would also provide necessary transport for parishioners unwilling or unable to drive.

### **AM2 A non-motorised route between Brenchley and Matfield**

**Developments will be encouraged to provide a financial contribution towards the establishment of an all-weather non-motorised route between Brenchley and Matfield.**



*Figure 30: Footpath network between Brenchley, Matfield and Paddock Wood*

**6.136** The primary school, dental and doctors' surgeries are situated in Brenchley, while Mascalls secondary school and Paddock Wood station are two miles north of Matfield. The roads connecting settlements within the parish lack footways and suffer from heavy traffic, including large volumes of delivery vans and HGVs. Walking and cycling on these roads is hazardous but there is an existing footpath (WT275) in the north of the parish.

**6.137** The community would like to upgrade WT275 into a non-motorised route between Brenchley and Matfield, which could also connect to footpath WT269 to Paddock Wood (Figure 30). Permissions from landowners along the existing footpath will be sought and a safe route connecting Matfield to WT275 will be explored.

### **AM3 Enhancing the local highway network**

**Development proposals must have a demonstrably acceptable effect upon the highway network, using Transport Assessments/Statements where necessary. They should include necessary site-specific traffic management and speed calming measures.**

**6.138** Any developments affecting roads need to respect the historic character of the area. This particularly applies to any impact on the fabric and character of historic routeways in the parish.

Developments should improve road and pedestrian safety by designing traffic calming measures within new developments and in surrounding areas. Alternatively, arrangements for their provision could be made in legal agreements or by conditions on planning permission. All such measures should only be undertaken with the approval of the relevant authorities, namely Kent Highways and TWBC.

**6.139** Proposals which seek to increase the number of vehicular access points or which would involve an increase in traffic will need to demonstrate that they do not further inhibit the free flow of traffic, or exacerbate problems of pedestrian safety or parking stress, including conflict with larger vehicles.



New traffic signs at Blind Lane, Brenchley

## AM4 Parking

New developments, either residential, business or community, will be required to provide adequate cycle and vehicle parking for residents, visitors, business or community facility users, equipped with e-charging points. Other measures that would be supported include:

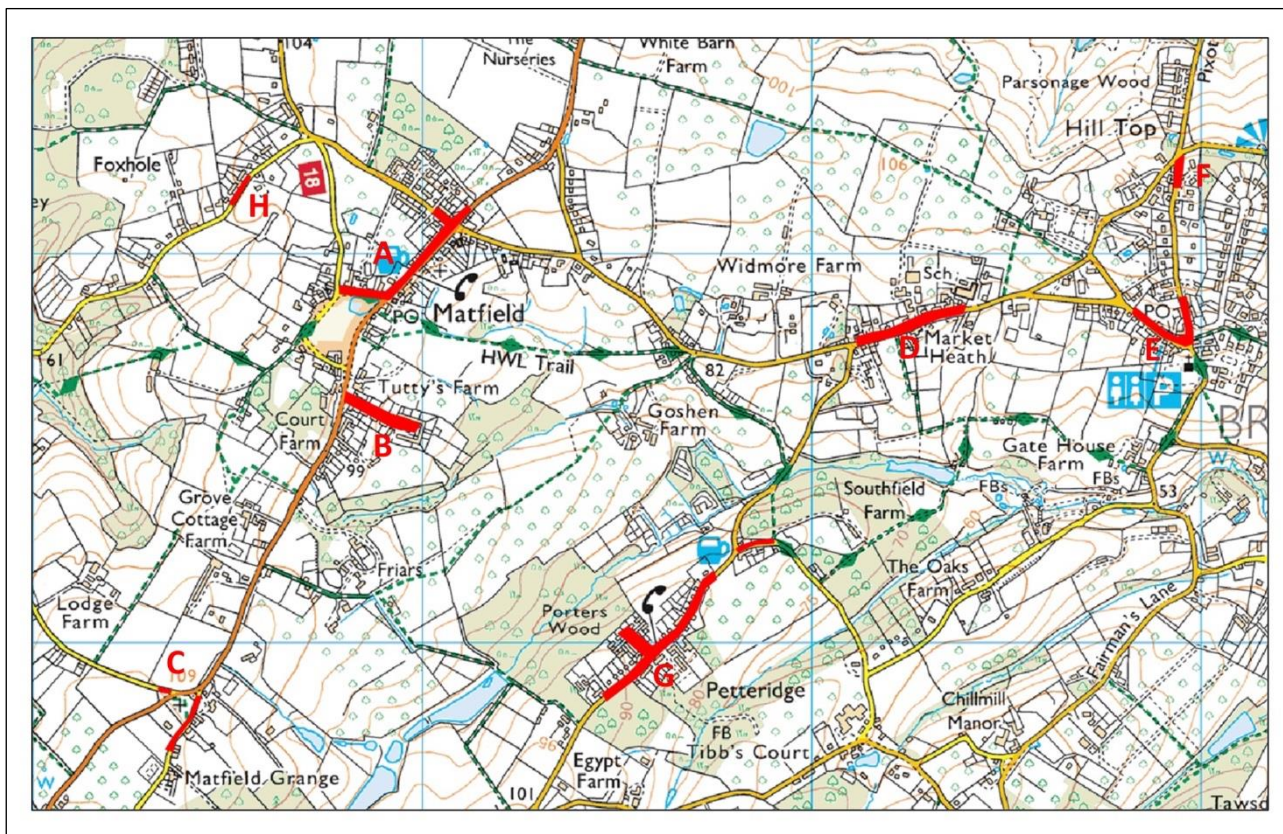
- a. provision of easily accessible but well landscaped parking areas that allow streets to be safe for all and operate as good social spaces;
- b. measures to deter on-street parking and on-pavement parking;
- c. parking solutions which minimise the impact on the AONB; and
- d. facilitating safer traffic movement and relieve parking problems in neighbouring roads.

Residential developments should satisfy the minimum parking standards set out in the Guidance Table in Figure 32.

**6.140** Kent Highways 'Current guidance (IGN3)' comments that 'Residential parking has frequently been the greatest source of dissatisfaction among the residents of new developments. Developments that would otherwise have been good have been blighted by inconsiderate, and sometimes dangerous, parking.' Developments should be designed with appropriate parking to reduce the likelihood of on-street parking on surrounding roads. The current parking problems most frequently raised by the community are shown in the Parking Stress Areas map in Figure 31.

- A. Maidstone Road between The Avenue, Hammonds Butchers and the Poet public house, where on-street parking disrupts traffic flow.
- B. Oakfield Road in Matfield, where many homes have no off-street parking.
- C. The area around St Luke's Church, where the limited parking for the congregation causes over-spill on-street parking in Bramble Reed Lane and Sophurst Lane.
- D. Brenchley Road between Market Heath and High Street, near Brenchley School, where on-street parking disrupts traffic flow, especially during school drop-off and pick-up.
- E. Brenchley High Street, especially near All Saints' Church, due to a lack of parking for the church and village shops.
- F. The junction of Windmill Hill with Blind Lane
- G. Petteridge, especially the area around Porters Wood and opposite the Hopbine Inn.
- H. The northern section of Foxhole Lane.





*Figure 31: Parking stress areas*

**6.141** The NPPF (paragraph 107) states that local parking standards should take into account the accessibility, type, mix and use of development, the availability of public transport, local car ownership levels and the need for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles. Bus services are very limited and footpaths between Brenchley and Matfield cross busy roads and are not all-weather. Most households are particularly dependent upon private transport for commuting, shopping and accessing community services. For example, there is no bus service from Paddock Wood railway station to the parish after 5.30pm. Brenchley has a bus service to Paddock Wood only on Mondays and Thursdays, with just three buses during the daytime. In the 2011 census, 95% of households in the Parish of Brenchley and Matfield had access to a car or van and 64% of households had two or more cars or vans. Car use was one of the highest among parishes in the borough, with 61% travelling to work by car or van, 14% by train (most probably using a car to a station) and only 1% by bus. Multiple car ownership is likely to increase unless there is an improvement in retail services, rural bus services for residents and an improvement in active transport infrastructure.

**6.142** Development proposals which would provide new access points or would generate increased traffic should demonstrate that the number of parking spaces to be provided will be sufficient to ensure the development will not further inhibit the free flow of traffic or exacerbate conditions of parking stress, particularly in the existing areas of parking stress. In some cases, a higher level of parking than the spaces recommended in TWBC 'Residential Parking Standards Topic Paper 2019' may be needed.

Property Type	TWBC Zone C Minimum parking spaces
1 bed flat	1
1 bed house	1
2 bed flat	1.5
1 bed house	1.5
3 bed flat	2
3 bed house	2
4 bed flat	2.5
Additional visitor Parking per unit	0.2

*Figure 32: Table of TWBC PSLP minimum parking standards*

**6.143** Parking areas should be as unobtrusive as possible, fitting into the rural character of the parish by using grass-permeable surfaces. Possible ways of achieving this could include shared parking areas that minimise the visual impact of the car from the houses and street, locating bays behind houses and using screening hedges. Underground parking, where feasible, is another creative option that could be considered. Secured by Design: 'Design Guide: Homes (2019) provides guidance concerning the parking options for all new dwellings.

**6.144** Parking solutions should allow the pavements and green spaces to be used more safely by children and older residents. Parking areas should be greened with planting that enhances the environment, such as wild flower verges (see also Policy LE7). New developments should seek to deter on-pavement parking, for example by access roads having planted areas between the kerb and any pavement/verge. Any on-street parking spaces should be in parking bays so that access is not obstructed.

**6.145** For developments that provide play spaces, we would support the provision of additional parking spaces in excess of those in the Kent guidance table. This would enable such facilities to benefit the wider community, who may only be able to access them by car, rather than for the use by the development alone.

**6.146** The provision of new or improved parking near to the parish's non-residential properties would help local businesses and encourage use of other local community assets.



## Community, Leisure and Recreation

**6.147** The parish needs a good range of high-quality facilities to support the well-being of the community. Robust policies are required to ensure that those facilities are located in the right places, cater for diverse needs and are supported by a broad community consensus.

### CLR1 Education, health and care services

**Development proposals that will demonstrably enhance community services in education, health and care will be permitted, provided that they comply with the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, including policies relating to access, parking, housing and design.**

**6.148** Maintenance and improvement of education, health and social care facilities and services are of the highest priority to the community. These include:

- **Primary education:** The community has indicated its strong support for maintaining a primary school in the parish. Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School is rated 'Good' by Ofsted and has the capacity to absorb an increase in the primary school age population in the parish. It will be important to maintain and improve facilities at the school.
- **Day care, pre-school and nursery facilities:** Brenchley Pre-School and Kinderversity provide day care in Brenchley but there is a shortage of capacity in the parish, including before and after school care and school holiday activities.
- **GP and dental services:** GP services are already stretched, with limited possibilities for expansion. Significant housing development, not only in the parish but also the 220 to 330 new homes proposed in Horsmonden, could worsen the problem and lead to a risk of poorer services.
- **Services for older residents:** The rise in the number of older residents will result an increasing need for social care, other forms of support and appropriate housing, especially for those with limited mobility. Alongside this will come an increasing need for activities to improve health and well-being, to provide opportunities for socialising and reducing loneliness.

### **CLR2 Sports and leisure**

**Proposals to provide and enhance social, sports, exercise and leisure activities that help improve the health and well-being of the community will be encouraged and supported providing they comply with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. Particular priority will be given to facilities that widen the range of local activities for children, teenagers and older residents.**

**Section 106 funding agreements should prioritise, where justified, new and improved facilities within the parish that have been identified by the community.**

**6.149** Sports, exercise and leisure facilities enhance health and the quality of life. Being physically active can help to prevent a number of chronic health conditions, reduce premature deaths, reduce levels of obesity and improve mental health. It is therefore essential that existing sports and leisure facilities are maintained and that opportunities for further improvement, to enhance the range and accessibility of facilities are taken.

**6.150** Proposals that help ensure the continuation and, as needs are identified, improvement of these facilities will be supported. Some of the activities are commercial but many, as with other community activities, depend on volunteers; the continuation of such activities will be dependent upon the availability of volunteers and available financing.

**6.151** The rural areas are disadvantaged as facilities provided and maintained by TWBC are only available in the larger settlements. Public transport is poor and, with the lack of pavements or cycle paths to nearby settlements, any new and improved facilities should be within the parish and prioritised in Section 106 funding agreements.

**6.152** Allotments provide a healthy leisure activity for those who do not have sufficiently large gardens. At present, the Parish has one allotment site, on Brenchley Road in Matfield, which is full and has a waiting list. In the interests of enabling anyone who wishes to have an allotment, a new allotment site will need to be funded and created, particularly if there is an increased demand from new build homes in the parish with smaller gardens.

### **CLR3 Natural and amenity greenspaces, play areas and playground facilities**

**New residential developments of 20 homes or more must provide natural and amenity green spaces within the development. These will preferably be dedicated as village greens and should be accompanied by a landscape and environmental management plan showing how their management and maintenance will be carried out and funded.**

**Inclusion of natural and amenity green space in smaller developments will be encouraged and supported. Play areas and/or contributions towards equipped playgrounds within the parish should be provided by the development, in line with the Fields in Trust guidelines.**

**6.153** Safe and inviting playground facilities are important for young families, providing opportunities for exercise, development and social interaction. Play facilities should be close to pedestrian routes and seating should be provided, together with litter bins.

**6.154** The dedication of new amenity green spaces as registered village greens is encouraged, ensuring public accessibility and providing an enhancement to village life. It also ensures that the green space benefits from maximum legal protection. Village green status does not require public ownership and, as is frequently the case with village greens, it is expected that the ownership and maintenance of new village greens will normally remain with the developers and their successors in title, unless a different agreement is made with the Parish Council.

**6.155** Fields in Trust's (formerly the National Playing Fields Association) benchmark standards (Figure 33) have been used by approximately 70% of planning authorities and other bodies, including Sport England, for many years. The Fields in Trust (FIT) 2008 guidelines 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' were updated in 2015 from survey evidence to produce 'Beyond the Six-Acre Standard'. The new recommendations will help to ensure that the provision of outdoor sport, play and informal open space is of a sufficient size to enable effective use; is located in an accessible location and in close proximity to dwellings; and of a quality to maintain longevity.

**6.156** The Fields in Trust guidelines suggest that:

A **Local Area of Play (LAP)** should be provided in any new development of more than 5 dwellings; this is a small area of open space, of a recommended minimum area of 100m<sup>2</sup>, primarily for children up to the age of six, within one minute walking time of where they live.

A **Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)** should be provided for developments of 10 or more dwellings; this is an area of open space, of a recommended minimum area of 400m<sup>2</sup>, intended for children who are beginning to go out and play independently close to where they live, usually within five minutes walking time. A LEAP should provide a stimulating and challenging play experience, with a minimum of six play experiences. An alternative to a LEAP would be the provision of a Local Landscaped Area for Play.

Scale of Development	Local Area for Play (LAP)	Locally Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)	Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA)
5-10 dwellings	Y			
10-200 dwellings	Y	Y		Contribution
201-500 dwellings	Y	Y	Contribution	Y
501+ dwellings	Y	Y	Y	Y

*Figure 33: Fields in Trust recommended play areas*

**6.157** These standards exceed those proposed for the borough as a whole in the PSLP. They are needed because the relatively small scale of developments would not otherwise trigger any

provision. The limitations of public transport and non-vehicular links also justify more localised play facilities to serve the community.

**6.158** In the parish there is only one equipped play area, at Market Heath in Brenchley, occupying a small area of 260m<sup>2</sup>. Improvements were made to the playground equipment in September 2019 but additional play equipment for older children would be welcomed. The shortage of play spaces and playgrounds in the Parish, particularly the lack of play space in Matfield, was recognised in the TWBC 2006 Local Plan. TWBC calculated the provision of play space as 0.32 hectares per 1,000 population in 2000, when the standard was 0.8 hectares, and there have been no additional play spaces created since that time. The idea of a playground in Matfield attracted significant support from the community in the Parish Plan Survey (2017), subject to finding an appropriate site. Further consultation is needed on the priorities for improved play facilities at Porters Field in Petteridge.

#### **CLR4 Facilities for young people and teenagers**

**Proposals for new housing developments must consider the needs of future occupants in terms of the existing provision of leisure facilities, including young people and teenagers. Where shortfalls are identified, for example in liaison with the Parish Council, justified financial contributions towards the provision of improved leisure facilities-within the parish will be required.**

**6.159** As they move towards their teenage years, young people increasingly seek out places to meet socially away from home. Facilities for them to meet and for healthy exercise in a safe and sociable environment are important. The inadequacy of public transport and cycle paths makes it difficult for local young people to access the swimming pools, gyms, skate-board parks and leisure centres provided by the borough council in the larger settlements. Bus services are very poor or non-existent, cycling on busy, often narrow, roads is hazardous and there are no pavements to enable pedestrian access to Paddock Wood. For sustainability, any facilities financed by Section 106 agreements should be created and accessible within the parish, as recommended by the Fields in Trust walking distances to playing pitches and play areas.

**6.160** Consultations with young people and teenagers during the preparation of the Parish Plan Survey (2017) highlighted the following priorities.

- a need for meeting places for young people, both indoors and outdoors;
- improvements to existing playgrounds and a playground in Matfield;
- clubs at weekends: cookery, film, book, Forest School, sports, art & craft;
- more social events for young people and better publicity;
- a safe footpath/cycle track between Matfield and Brenchley;
- safer walking by providing wider pavements, reducing the traffic speed and improving the safety of crossing points; and
- improved bus services between the villages and nearby towns and more bus stops in rural areas.

**6.161** The 2018 TWBC Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study (OSSRA) showed that the prime priority throughout the borough was the need to improve the provisions for teenagers: 59% of

households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The OSSRA identified a shortage of Multi User Game Areas (MUGA) and junior and mini-soccer pitches in the borough. FIT guidelines suggest that, along with other contributions, a contribution towards a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) should be made by developments of more than 10 dwellings.

**6.162** Due to privately owned facilities at the Brenchley Memorial Hall Recreation Ground and Castle Hill Cricket Club, the parish meets FIT guidelines for playing pitches and outdoor sports. All of the sports clubs have junior sections at affordable prices, which young people are welcome to join.

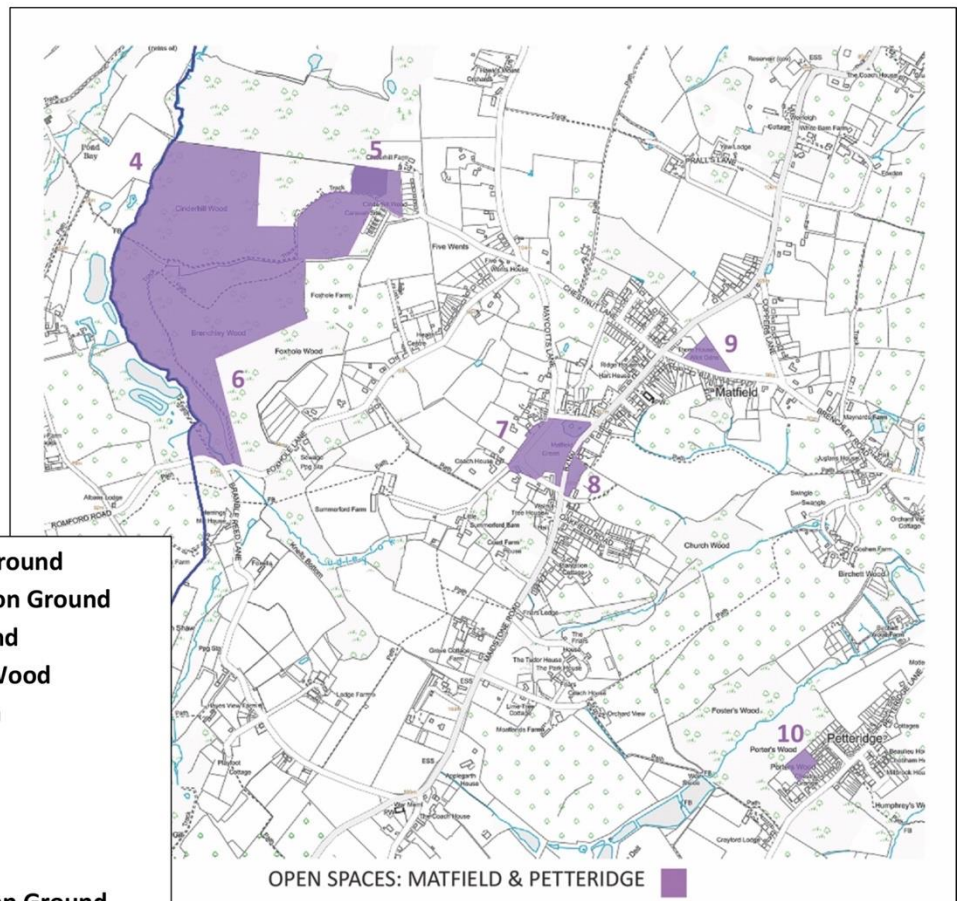
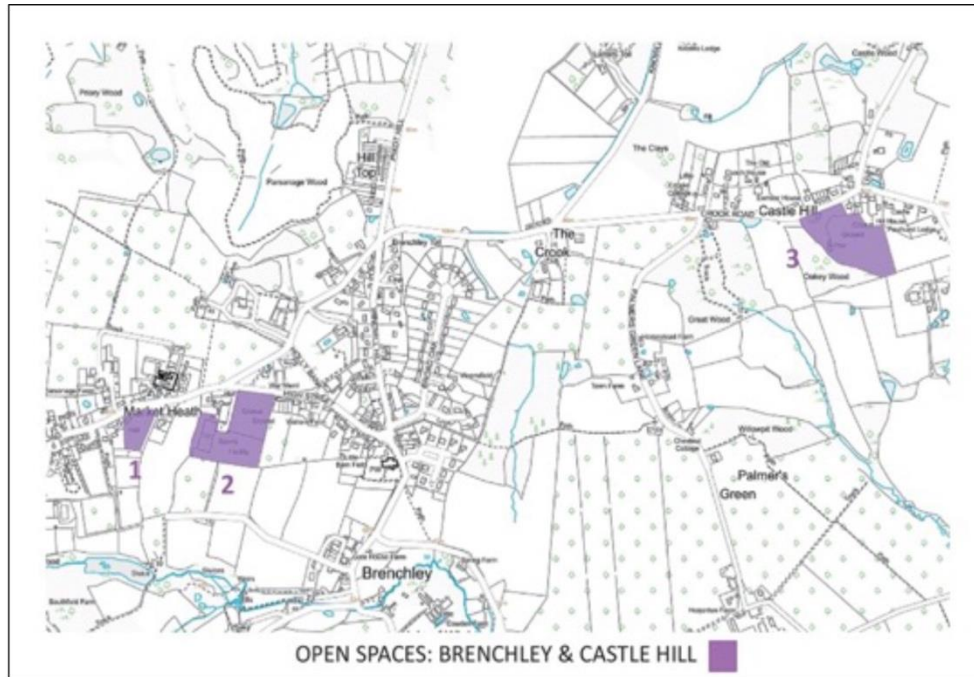
#### **CLR5 Open Spaces in the Parish**

**The open spaces and land in the parish that are currently used for sport and recreation will be designated as Open Spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan, shown in Figure 35. Development proposals which involve the loss of any area of Open Space will not be permitted unless the Open Space can be shown to be surplus to requirements or, if still in use, it must be replaced by the same or better facilities or result in alternative recreational provision whose benefits clearly outweigh the loss of any previous use.**

**6.163** There are several recreational sites and open spaces in the parish that are highly valued by the community and provide opportunities for sports, play, horse riding, walking and gardening ([Figure 34](#)). These activities have economic and social benefits, such as improvements in physical and mental health, enhancing community cohesion and providing a greater attraction for tourists. Open spaces allow activities that improve health and well-being, while providing an opportunity for people to socialize.

**6.164** NPPF (paragraph 98) states that ‘access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. [Figure 35](#) tabulates the FIT guidelines for areas of open spaces and walking distances.

Respondents to the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study indicated how open spaces were used each month throughout the borough. Local parks and recreation grounds were used by 85% of households; footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths by 80% of households; woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves by 75%. 52% of households indicated that better footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths were a high priority, followed by parks and local recreation grounds (46%). In the OSSRA a majority of households reported that they would not normally travel more than 10 minutes to visit open spaces, play areas, recreation grounds and village halls, with walking being the normal mode of transport.

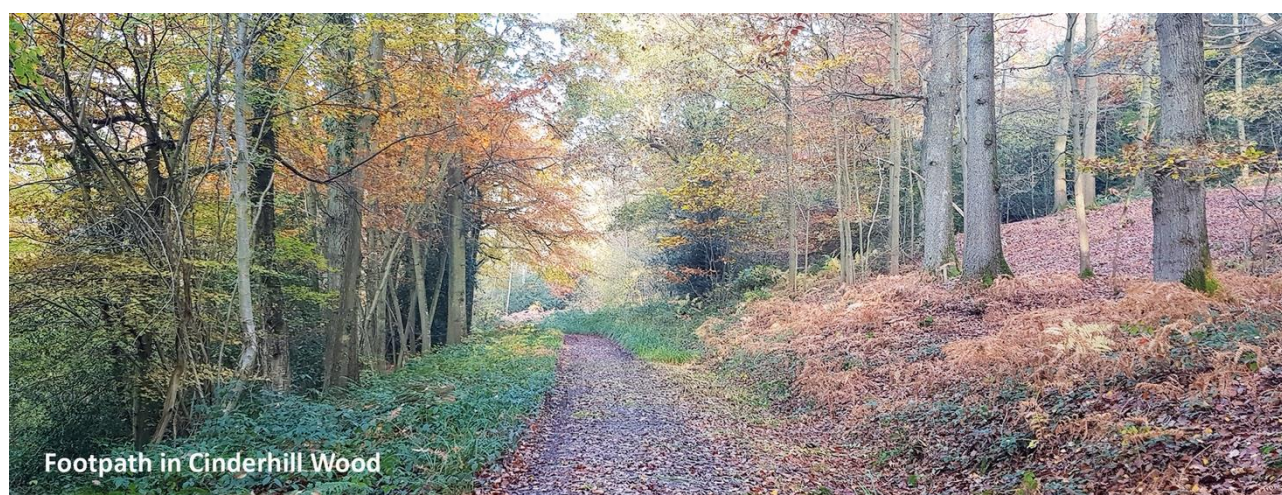


1. Brenchley Recreation Ground
2. Memorial Hall Recreation Ground
3. Castle Hill Cricket Ground
4. Cinderhill Community Wood
5. Cinderhill Football Pitch
6. Brenchley Wood
7. Matfield Green
8. Drying Ground
9. Parish Allotments
10. Porters Wood Recreation Ground

Figure 34: Open spaces within the parish

Open space typology	Quantity Guideline <sup>2</sup> (hectares per 1,000 population)	Walking Guideline (walking distance: metres from dwellings)
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m
All outdoor sports <sup>1</sup>	1.60	1,200m
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 See table 4 for recommended minimum sizes	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m

*Figure 35: FIT guidelines for open spaces and walking distances*



## Chapter 7 – Community Action Projects

**7.1** This Plan has set out policies that are important to the future well-being of the parish. Their effectiveness will depend in part on investments that go wider than the proposals made by developers. Ideas for projects to provide community improvements have emerged during consultations on the Neighbourhood Plan.

### Financing of Community Projects

**7.2** Where possible, support for projects will be sought through Section 106 funding or a Community Infrastructure Levy, if adopted, whereby developers are required to contribute towards projects of benefit to the community. The Parish Council will seek to ensure that, as far as possible, Section 106 contributions from larger developments, which are controlled by the Borough Council, are used on local priorities rather than funding inaccessible facilities outside the parish. Arrangements will be put in place for continuing review and consultation on the use of Section 106 funds in later years.

**7.3** Section 106 contributions can only be required to mitigate against the impact of a new development. The Neighbourhood Plan process has identified a wider range of needs for which funding would be needed. The Parish Council itself has neither the resources nor the mandate to fund all but the smallest initiatives. Funds may be sought from Kent County Council, for example for highways improvements under Section 278 of the Highways Act (1980), or from the Borough Council. Efforts to identify wider sources of finance for projects that would benefit the community will be supported.

### **Project Priorities**

These are set out below, in order of priority.

#### **Traffic Calming and Road Safety**

**7.4** Traffic speeds and road safety are major community concerns. They are likely to increase significantly in the next few years, given the extent of proposed development in neighbouring areas. This will generate considerable additional traffic seeking to access the A21 from Paddock Wood and Horsmonden. Proposed projects include:

- traffic surveys to provide evidence of the need for traffic-calming measures to discourage or prevent speeding;
- the installation of speed cameras and signs, with number plate recognition technology, where permitted, to discourage speeding;
- the provision of pedestrian crossings to improve safety on crossing roads, especially on Maidstone Road in Matfield;
- changes of surface on key roads and crossing points; and
- the provision of additional public parking spaces and parking control measures, to reduce the incidence of dangerous parking.

**7.5** Such measures should improve safety as would the reduction of speed limits on key rural roads, currently set at 50mph or 60mph, even then, are regularly ignored. Changes and improvements are largely the responsibility of Kent Highways, but local initiatives and projects can also play an important part.

#### **Non-Vehicular Access**

**7.6** Improvements and additions to non-vehicular movement, including the Public Rights of Way network, are important in the interests of road safety. They would also promote improved health through encouraging walking and cycling and help combat climate change through reduced car use. Proposed projects include:

- provision of additional or upgraded footpaths, adjacent to roads, to improve the safety of pedestrians;
- extension and upgrading of the network of public footpaths to provide safe access for pedestrians and cyclists between Brenchley and Matfield and to Paddock Wood;
- other improvements to footpaths and bridle ways in the parish, alongside landowners fulfilling their responsibilities for maintenance; and
- provision of bicycle racks at public buildings and green spaces that would encourage greater use of bicycles rather than cars.

## **Children's Playgrounds**

**7.7** Community projects have an important role in providing facilities for children to play. These have health and development benefits and encourage community interaction. Projects include:

- The provision of a new playground area and equipment close to the Village Centre in Matfield. This is a key priority of the community and will become even more so with further development in the village.
- Improvements to play areas in Brenchley and Petteridge.

## **Improvements to Bus Services**

**7.8** Current bus services are very limited, making it hard to rely on them and hence encouraging greater use of cars. Desirable improvements include:

- New, more frequent and later-running services linking Brenchley and Matfield with Paddock Wood and Tunbridge Wells.
- A Dial-a-Bus service to promote greater use of bus services.
- Provision of real time information to key bus stops.

## **A Community Bus**

**7.9** In some rural areas bus services are being supplemented by a Community Bus, with wheelchair access. This does not compete with scheduled services but organises trips to local towns and is available for hire by community groups, reducing the use of private cars. This can provide a valuable service for those with limited mobility and for existing community groups as well as a stimulus for new community activities. A Community Bus might also assist with School transport and journeys to and from the station in Paddock Wood. It would be critically dependent on volunteers to run the scheme and drive the buses, though the latter could be provided by hirers if they were given suitable training.

## **The environment and climate change**

**7.10** Community projects have a role to play in addressing the urgent need for action at all levels of society on climate change. Possible projects include:

- The provision of electric charging points on public buildings. This would support the Government's target of all cars being 'green' by 2030 and complement the policy of requiring charging points in private developments.
- Installation of solar panels on public buildings.
- Support for local, small-scale energy generation if this could be reconciled with the AONB setting of the parish.

## **Allotments**

**7.11** Given the recreational and health value of allotments, proposals for additional plots or improvements to the existing site will be supported as and when the need arises.

## **Sports, Fitness and Leisure Facilities**

**7.12** Sports and fitness facilities are important as a means of promoting improved health for children, young people and adults. Possible projects are:

- Levelling the sloping full size soccer pitch at Brenchley Memorial Hall, to expand facilities for junior soccer.
- Improving the changing facilities at Brenchley Memorial Hall.

- Support for improved storage and pavilion renovation at Castle Hill Cricket Club, which has a strong junior section.
- Outdoor adult fitness equipment, which could bring health benefits and be a focus for social interaction.
- Given their central importance to a wide range of community activities, further improvements that may be needed over time to Brenchley Memorial Hall, the Matfield Pavilion and Matfield Village Hall.

### **Cinderhill Wood**

**7.13** Cinderhill Wood is valued by both walkers and riders as well as being of environmental significance. Support for maintenance and improvement will be encouraged.

### **Other Community Initiatives**

**7.14** Community initiatives and activities are important in enriching the lives of residents, especially those who may be lonely or have restricted mobility, as well as promoting a sense of community. In some cases, they can complement services provided by public bodies, such as schools and health services. Funding may help with pump-priming such initiatives or meeting particular needs.

Examples might include:

- Initiatives that encourage interaction between older and younger residents, such as regular joint activities in community centres.
- Support for those with restricted mobility, such as provided by Brenchley and Matfield Ready Call.
- Support for school PTAs and similar bodies supporting extra-curricular activities.
- Additional defibrillators to improve coverage around the parish.



## Chapter 8 - Implementation and Monitoring

**8.1** The primary responsibility for controlling and shaping development rests with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority covering Brenchley and Matfield Parish. The emerging Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan, for the period up to 2038, will provide the strategic framework for its decisions, while the Neighbourhood Plan provides policies of more local relevance. The Parish Council will try, through its representations on all planning applications, to ensure that development proposals are consistent with the TWBC Local Plan and Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Plan.

**8.2** It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan delivers the vision and objectives set out for Brenchley and Matfield up until 2038 and this Plan will need to be reviewed to respond to changing social, economic and environmental conditions. The Parish Council will monitor and report to the community each year on the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. This is in addition to the more formal mechanisms that will be required for monitoring and updating the TWBC Local Plan.

**8.3** TWBC prepares an annual '[Authority Monitoring Report](#)' which gives a high-level report on changing conditions across the borough. This may need to be supplemented by some local work to get a more detailed picture for Brenchley and Matfield.

Amongst the things that will need to be monitored are:

- the pattern of planning applications submitted in Brenchley and Matfield and decisions on them;
- how housing needs in the parish are evolving and the extent to which they are being met;
- factors affecting the prosperity of the rural economy;
- maintenance of local community facilities; and
- whether the condition of key features of the historic and natural environments is stable, improving or declining.

## Appendix 1

### The Strategic Planning Context for the Neighbourhood Plan

This Appendix summarises the main elements of the context of policy and regulation within which Neighbourhood Plans are required to work.

#### The National Planning Policy Framework 2021

**9.1** The NPPF is the national planning policy framework for England, which was revised in July 2021. All local plans and neighbourhood plans are expected to have regard to it, and it also forms a basis for determining planning applications. At its core, the NPPF has a presumption in favour of sustainable development. One definition of sustainable development is ‘meeting today’s social and economic needs without narrowing the choices open to future generations.’ Sustainable development has three dimensions: social, economic and environmental. The national policy is to achieve sustainable development in rural areas such as Brenchley and Matfield by:

- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- promoting healthy and safe communities;
- promoting sustainable transport;
- supporting high quality communications;
- making effective use of land;
- achieving well-designed places;
- meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment; and
- facilitating the sustainable use of minerals.

Detailed guidance on application of the NPPF’s policies is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), which is available online.

#### Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (2006) – ‘Saved Policies’

**9.2** The TWBC 2006 Local Plan was produced under old legislation and has been superseded by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and more recent legislation. Some detailed policies in the plan were saved by approval of the Secretary of State in March 2009 (Local Plan 2006: Saved Policies 2016). Others were rendered obsolete by the adoption of newer planning policies in 2010 and 2016 (see below). However, some ‘Saved Policies’ are still used today in determining planning applications, although the weight attached to them has diminished over time with the introduction of newer national and local planning policies.

**9.3** These ‘Saved Policies’ include policies relating to development in villages and the surrounding countryside, particularly policy LBD1 which defines Limits to Built Development.

#### Tunbridge Wells Borough Core Strategy (2010)

**9.4** The Core Strategy comprises a long-term spatial vision and objectives for the Tunbridge Wells Borough area for the period 2006 to 2026, and a set of core planning policies by which they will be delivered. It is used in the determination of planning applications, along with some of the more detailed planning policies in the 2006 document above.

**9.5** The following Core Strategy policies are of particular relevance in Brenchley and Matfield Parish:

- Core Policy 1: Delivery of Development
- Core Policy 3: Transport Infrastructure
- Core Policy 4: Environment
- Core Policy 5: Sustainable Design and Construction
- Core Policy 6: Housing Provision
- Core Policy 7: Employment Provision
- Core Policy 8: Retail, Leisure and Community Facilities Provision
- Core Policy 14: Development in the Villages and Rural Areas

#### **Tunbridge Wells Borough Site Allocations Local Plan (2016)**

**9.6** The main purpose of the Site Allocations Local Plan is to allocate land for housing, employment, retail and other land uses to meet the identified needs of the communities within Tunbridge Wells Borough to 2026 and beyond. The plan follows the strategic objectives and sustainable development objectives set out within the Core Strategy. The document also identifies safeguarded land and areas requiring continued protection from development. Most of the plan's allocated development sites are in the larger towns and villages of the borough. There were no allocations made in Brenchley and Matfield Parish in 2016.

#### **Supplementary planning documents and guidance**

**9.7** Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) are non-statutory documents that are used to supplement policies and strategies set out in other statutorily produced documents, such as Local Plans. The Borough Council has produced a wide range of such documents, which are relevant to Brenchley and Matfield parish, and include the following:

- Affordable Housing SPD (October 2007)
- Alterations and Extensions SPD (June 2006)
- Contaminated Land SPD (September 2016)
- Farmsteads Assessment SPD (February 2016)
- Green Infrastructure SPD (August 2014)
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Landscape Character Assessment (December 2017)
- Noise and Vibration SPD (November 2014)
- Recreation and Open Space SPD (July 2006)<sup>1</sup>
- Renewable energy SPD (April 2007, updated 2016)
- Rural Lanes SPD (January 1998)
- Section 106 Planning Obligations Good Practice Guide (undated)

#### **The Draft Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan 2019**

**9.8** The new TWBC Local Plan looks forward to 2038 and seeks to apply the latest national planning policy to the Borough, including provision of a higher level of future housing development, as required by Government. A draft plan was published in August 2019 and was followed by a period of public consultation from 20 September to 15 November 2019. The Pre-Submission Local Plan was published in January 2021, followed by a ten week public consultation period ending on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

**9.9** The new plan will attract increasing weight in planning decisions as it proceeds towards examination by an independent inspector and formal adoption. In the event that the Brenchley and Matfield Neighbourhood Plan is approved before the Local Plan, its policies will come into effect until the Local Plan is approved.

**9.10** When adopted the new Local Plan will supersede the 'saved' policies of the Local Plan (1998), the policies contained within the Tunbridge Wells Core Strategy 2010, the Site Allocations Plan 2016 and the associated supplementary planning guidance. The current draft of the new Local Plan proposes a 'dispersed' development strategy which includes major development in and around Paddock Wood, a garden village at Tudeley, and development allocations in several of the smaller towns and villages across Tunbridge Wells Borough. Amongst these are two proposed housing allocations in Matfield, with one of those sites already gaining approval of its Outline and Reserved Matters planning applications.

### **The Kent Waste and Minerals Plan (2016)**

**9.11** The County Council is the local planning authority for development associated with waste disposal and processing, and with the extraction, processing and transportation of minerals in Kent. The plan, which was adopted in 2016, sets the overall planning strategy for these types of development up to 2030. A Kent Minerals Sites Plan, which details locations in Kent which are suitable for quarrying essential minerals needed to support growth and the economy, was adopted in September 2020. No such sites in Brenchley and Matfield Parish are under consideration in the plan.

### **Neighbourhood plans in adjacent parishes**

**9.12** The adjacent parishes of Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Paddock Wood and Pembury are also preparing neighbourhood plans, with Lamberhurst gaining community approval in the final referendum stage in September 2021.

### **Statutory designations**

**9.13 The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** covers some 560 square miles in the counties of Kent, East and West Sussex, and Surrey and includes three-quarters of Brenchley and Matfield Parish. The designation was confirmed by the Government in 1983, giving the HWAONB national recognition of the quality of the landscape. The importance of its conservation and enhancement should be considered in decision making by public bodies. The NPPF (paragraph 176) states that 'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in ... AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.' The HWAONB is overseen by a Joint Advisory Committee, which has produced an [HWAONB Management Plan](#), setting out a vision for the AONB and recommended actions for partner bodies, for the period 2019-2024. A [High Weald AONB Design Guide](#) for new housing development was published for public comments between June and August 2019

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)**

**9.14** SSSIs are the UK's most important sites for wildlife and geological interest. The designation identifies their special interest, gives statutory protection and lists a range of activities which need to be notified to Natural England (The Government agency responsible for nature conservation) prior to commencement. There are no SSSIs in Brenchley and Matfield Parish with the closest being Brookland Wood in Lamberhurst Parish, 0.4km from Brenchley and Matfield parish boundary.

### **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**

**9.15** TPOs give local planning authorities control over the felling, topping or lopping of designated trees, groups of trees, or woodlands without prior consent. There are a large number of TPOs in place to protect trees and woodlands throughout the parish. In addition, the designation of conservation areas (see below) confers interim protection on all trees within them, allowing the local planning authority to consider whether it should impose a formal TPO prior to any tree works

### **Conservation Areas**

**9.16** These are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Designation imposes a test on all new developments to 'conserve and enhance' the special character or appearance, as it is defined in the designation statement. Brenchley and Matfield Parish has two conservation areas, namely the centres of Brenchley and Matfield Villages.

### **Listed buildings**

**9.17** These buildings of special architectural or historical interest, listed by the Government on the basis of national selection criteria. Designation confers additional controls over demolition, alteration or extension, or works affecting their wider setting. There are 166 listed buildings in Brenchley and Matfield parish covering a wide range of the local built heritage including houses, barns, farmhouses, walls, bridges, pubs, oast houses and churches. Three buildings have the very highest (Grade 1) status, namely All Saints' Church in Brenchley and Matfield House and its Clock Tower on Matfield Green.

## Appendix 2

### The Government Definition of Affordable Housing

**10.1 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 of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) 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 (c) 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 and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

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 (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the 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.

### First Homes Scheme

**10.2** The First Homes Scheme was announced in June 2021 and aims to help first time buyers to purchase a new-build home. The government will require at least 25% of affordable housing in England to be sold with a First Homes discount of at least 30%, with discounts of 40% and 50% possible. The discount will be passed on at each subsequent title transfer. Outside London income must be less than £80,000 in the year preceding the purchase and the first sale price should be no higher than £250,000. The purchaser must have a 10% deposit and take out a mortgage covering at least 50% of the property's purchase price. Eligibility criteria can be applied for three months, including employment status or a local connection. There will be an exemption for development sites where outline/full planning permission is in place before 28<sup>th</sup> December 2021 or, if significant pre-application engagement has taken place, before 28<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

## Appendix 3

### High Weald AONB Landscape Character Maps for Brenchley & Matfield Parish

#### Field and Heath

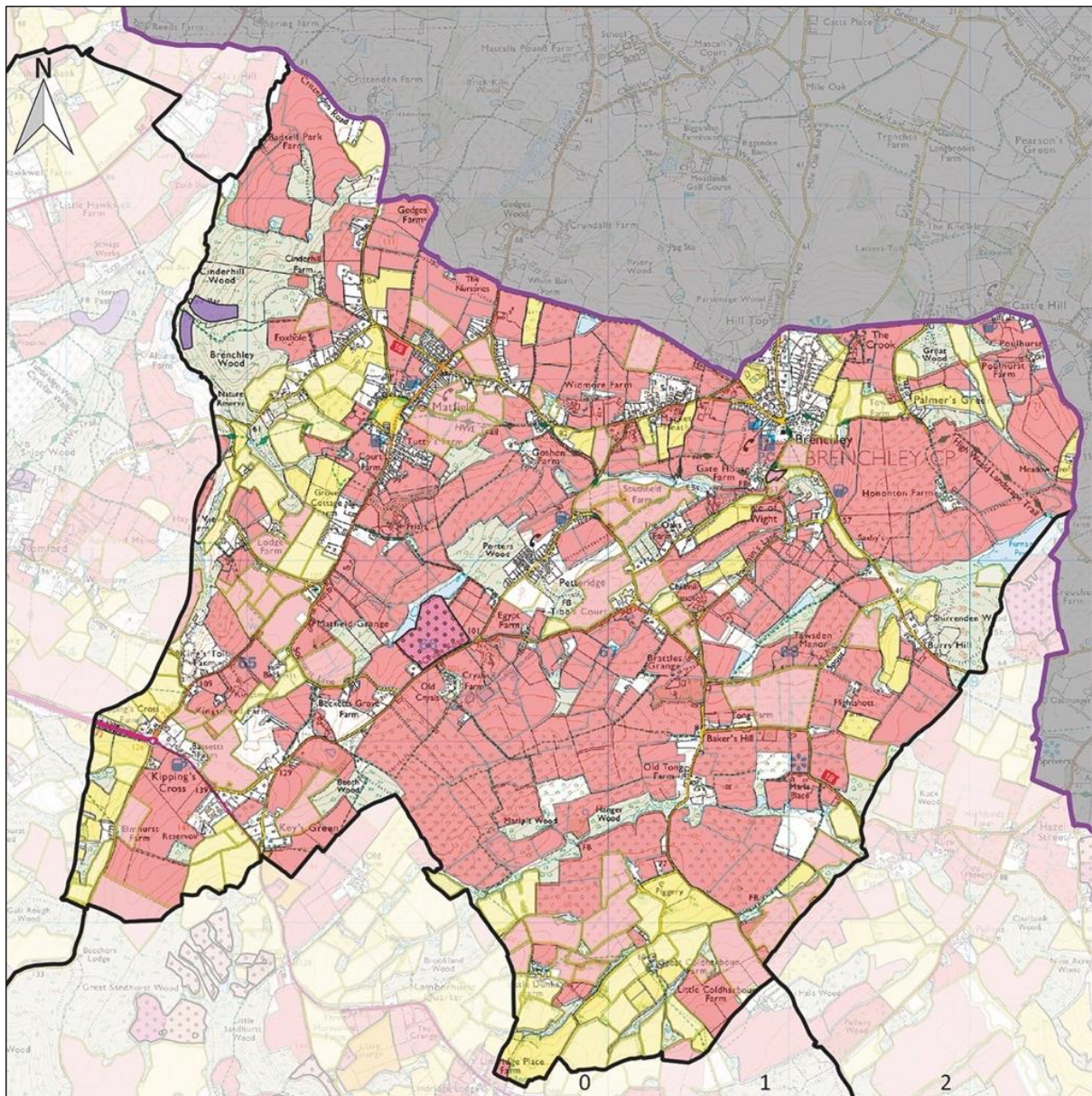
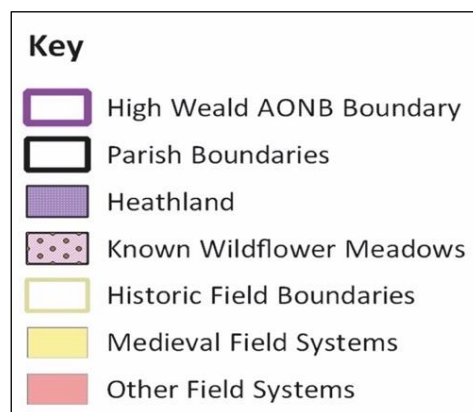


Figure 36: High Weald AONB map of field and heath areas in the parish



## Ancient Routeways

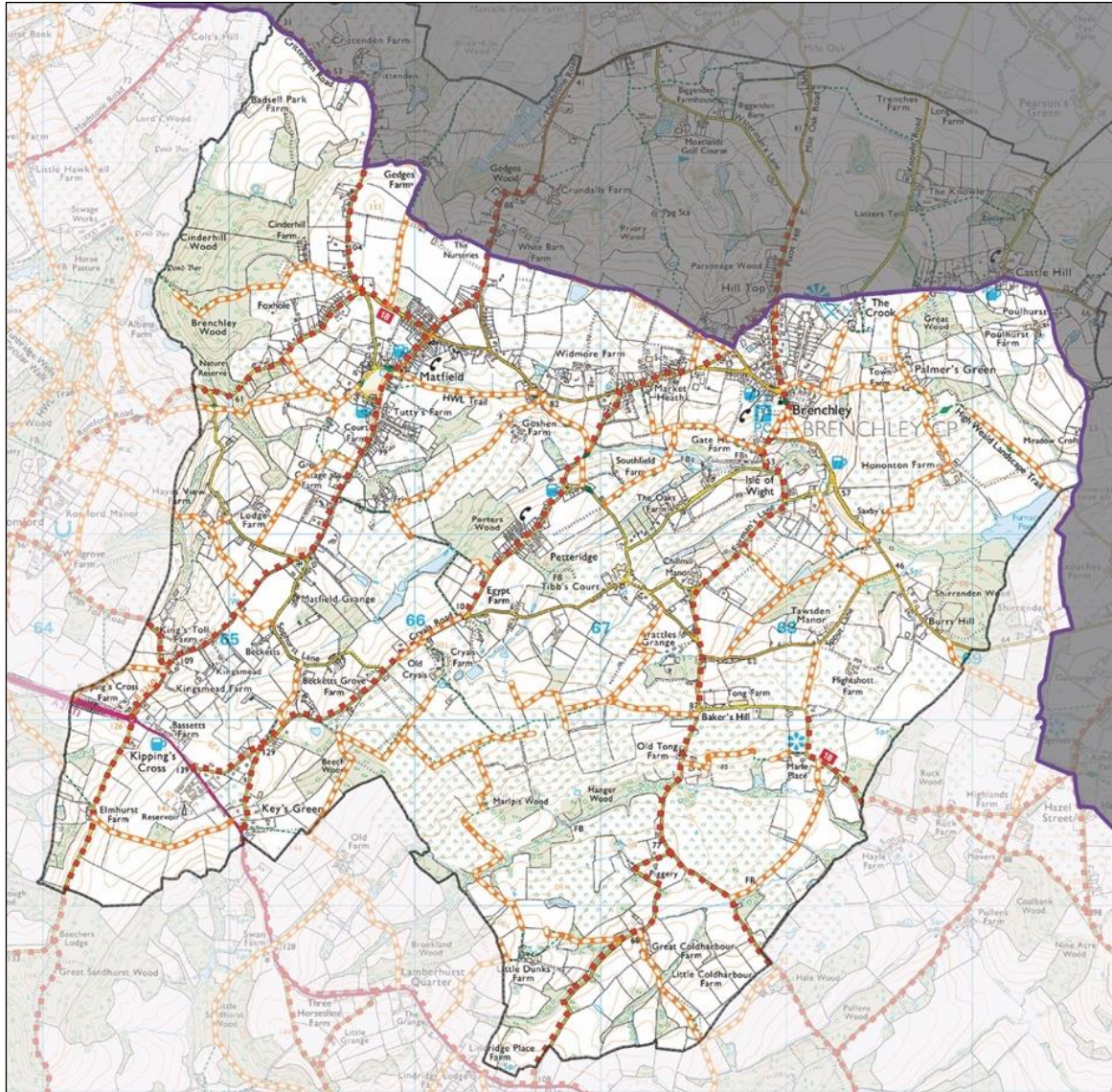
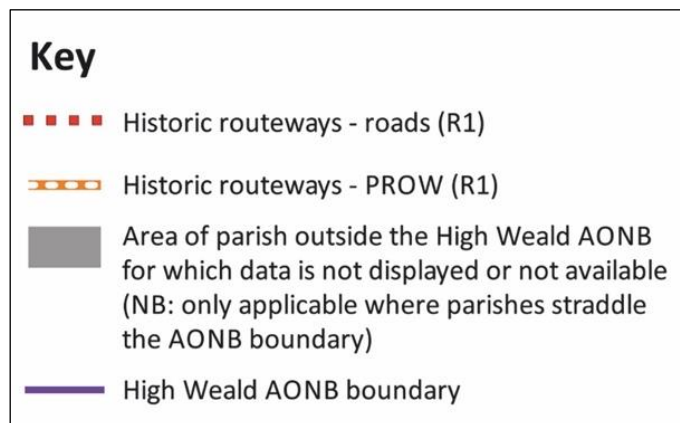


Figure 37: High Weald AOBK map of Ancient Routeways



## Historic Settlements

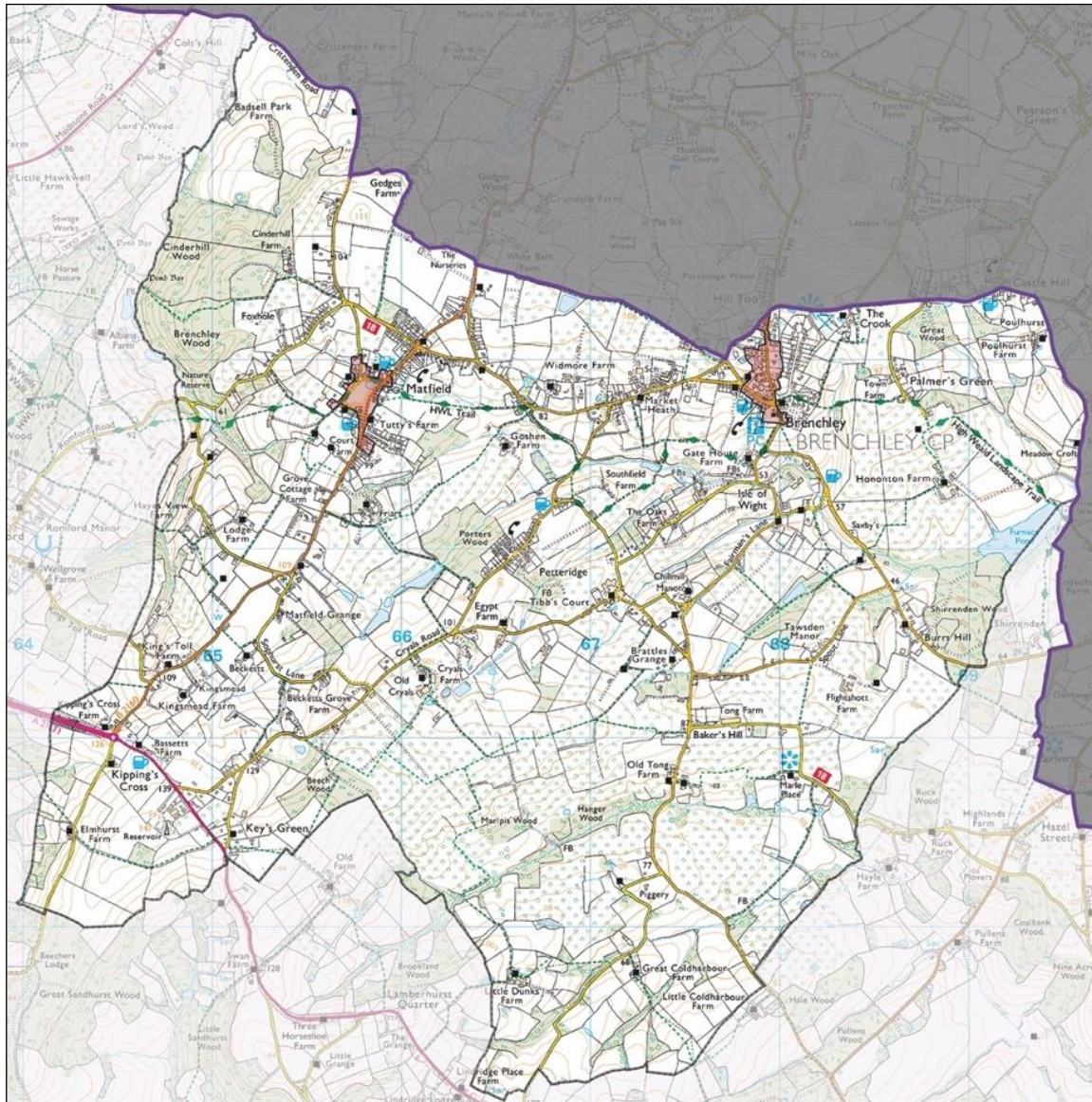


Figure 38: High Weald AONB map of historic settlements

### Key

- Historic farmsteads (S2)
- Historic settlement extent c.1860 (S2)  
(NB: This data is not available for every parish)
- Area of parish outside the High Weald AONB  
for which data is not displayed or not available  
(NB: only applicable where parishes straddle  
the AONB boundary)
- High Weald AONB boundary

## Appendix 4

### Valued Views from local footpaths, bridleways and pavements, as proposed during the consultation process

**11.0** Many of the footpaths that criss cross the parish offer wide ranging views over open countryside, woodlands and orchards. The same is true of several roads that traverse high points in the area. The views selected here are not exhaustive but give a good indication of the types of views that are valued by parishioners. The bulk of the views are from public footpaths that are well used. Most of them have multiple views which should be protected from being materially impaired. The location of each viewpoint is given as an Ordnance Survey grid reference.

#### Valued Viewpoints

##### 1 - View towards the north from footpath WT275

*Grid reference: 566177 142616*



**11.1** WT275, from Matfield village, forms part of a much-used walking circuit, offering wide ranging views over agricultural land and woodland to distant countryside. The view in this photograph shows the tile-hung cottages at Gedges Farm in the centre of the photograph.

##### 2 - View towards the north from footpath WT275

*Grid reference: 567026 142397*



**11.2** Footpath WT275 provides a well-used pedestrian link between Matfield and Brenchley. At the Matfield end, there are wide northerly views of Paddock Wood and on to the Greensand Ridge and the North Downs. It winds through picturesque apple and pear orchards and, as the footpath reaches Brenchley, it winds through the edge of the Conservation Area with a view of Brenchley Manor Oast.

### **3 - View to north towards North Downs and Paddock Wood from footpath WT269**

*Grid reference: 567316 142323*



**11.3** Footpath WT269 follows a gentle slope down to Paddock Wood, through land returned to agricultural use. The Greensand Ridge and the North Downs can be seen in the distance.

### **4 - View towards the North Downs from the Crook Road Viewpoint**

*Grid reference: 568160 142282*



**11.4** This viewpoint on Crook Road offers a stunning view of the landscape to the north, including Paddock Wood and the North Downs. Crook Road is a popular cycle route because of these views and gentle gradient.

### **5 - View south towards Lamberhurst from footpath WT295 on the high ridge above Petteridge**

*Grid reference: 566538 139931*



**11.5** WT295 provides a view towards Lamberhurst over open farmland, woodland and apple orchards. The footpath is frequently walked by parishioners because of the long-distance views. There are similar views to this on most of the ridge footpaths between Petteridge and Keys Green.

**6 - View east from the footpath WT295 on the high ridge above Petteridge**

*Grid reference: 566078 140477*



**11.6** Attractive views of Brenchley village and beyond can be seen from WT295.

**7 - Views from junction of footpath WT225**

*Grid reference: 565347 141875*



**11.7** WT225 to the west of Matfield Green is part of the High Weald Landscape trail and is well used by parishioners and visitors. This view is to the west over grazing land and woodlands, with the North Downs in the distance.

**8 - View easterly from the edge of Matfield village from footpath WT283**

*Grid reference: 566011 141825*



**11.8** This section of the High Weald Landscape Trail is one of the most walked footpaths in the parish, providing a pedestrian link from Matfield to Petteridge with many fine views of the local landscape and surrounding settlements. The view from this part of the footpath, which runs behind the houses lining Matfield Green, is an important element of the village's setting.

## **9 - View from footpath WT 293, towards Matfield**

*Grid reference: 567030 140100*



**11.9** WT293 is part of the pedestrian link between Keys Green and Petteridge, providing wide ranging views of Matfield over apple orchards, farmland and woodlands.

## **10 - Views over valley from footpath WT317 near Castle Hill towards Claygate**

*Grid reference: 568709 142525*



**11.10** WT317, one of the few bridleways in the parish, provides a view to the southeast over farmland and woodland. The North Downs are visible in the distance and similar open views can be seen from WT 277 and WT278.

## **11 - Footpath WT282, towards the Halfway House public house**

*Grid reference: 568459 141786*



**11.11** WT282 provides extensive views of the High Weald to the south, looking towards the Halfway House.

## **12 - View to the southeast along footpath WT282 (High Weald Landscape Trail)**

*Grid reference: 568940 141714*



**11.12** The landscape typical of the High Weald can be seen to the south from footpath WT282, across the orchards and vineyards of Hononton Farm.

## **13 - View to the southwest across Furnace Pond from footpath WT282**

*Grid reference: 569458 141255*



**11.13** Furnace Pond, about a quarter of a mile in length, was the site of a major iron foundry and gun-casting furnace established by the Browne family, who were great Wealden iron masters in the 1600s. The pond is now a fishing pond, limited to members of a syndicate.

## **Valued views of important local buildings**

### **14 - All Saints' Brenchley from Brenchley Memorial Ground soccer pitch**

*Grid reference: 567585 141855*



**11.14** The view of of All Saints' tower and graveyard is valued by the many parishioners and visitors who visit the sports grounds and community cafe at Brenchley Memorial Hall.

**15 - All Saints' from footpath WT 282 (leading from Palmers Green Lane to Brenchley)**

*Grid reference: 568518 141789*



**11.15** WT282 is part of the High Weald Landscape Trail and the profile of the clock tower of All Saints' church can be seen from this location. The dominance of the Grade 1 listed church tower as a landmark within the surrounding countryside is an important feature of the parish.

**16 - All Saints' from footpath WT301 (leading from Gatehouse Farm to Market Heath)**

*Grid reference: 567665 141547*



**11.16** Footpath WT301 is also part of the High Weald Landscape trail, providing a view over grazing land towards All Saints' Church and showcasing its setting within the conservation area of the village of Brenchley.

**17 - Northerly view of All Saints' and Brenchley village from footpaths WT419 and WT295**

*Grid reference: 566458 140234*



**11.17** A beautiful view of All Saints' can be seen from well walked footpaths that wind through the apple orchards that provide Charrington's award-winning cider.

## 18 - Matfield Oast and Matfield House clock tower in the Conservation Area

*Grid reference: 565731 141767*



**11.18** Views northwards across Matfield Green, the largest village green in Kent, highlight Grade 1 listed Matfield House, its Grade 1 listed stable block and clock tower and Grade 2\* listed walls and railings.

## 19 - View from footpath WT268 of Matfield Oast ,Matfield House its and Clock tower

*Grid reference: 565852 142228*



**11.19** This view towards the south from the start of footpath WT 268 at Chestnut Lane shows Grade 2 listed Matfield Oast in the mid-ground and the striking Grade 1 clock tower of the stable block at Matfield House.

## Appendix 5

### Local Green Spaces

The location of each Local Green Space is given as Ordnance Survey X and Y coordinates.

#### **LGS1 - Brenchley Recreation Ground, Market Heath**

*Grid reference: 567326 1418793*



**12.1** This site includes Brenchley's children's playground, a recreation field and the Scout Hut.

#### **LGS2 - Brenchley Memorial Hall Recreation Ground**

*Grid reference: 567606 141808*



**12.2** Brenchley Memorial Hall Charity's Recreation Ground provides facilities for sports and leisure for the community, including the Cricket Field where Siegfried Sassoon played.

#### **LGS3 - Brenchley War Memorial**

*Grid reference: 567768 141887*



**12.3** Commemorating Brenchley residents who died serving their country, the ground also contains the Brenchley Millennium sign and two benches for quiet recreation.

#### **LGS4 - Oak Tree Green, Brenchley**

*Grid reference: 567963 141778*



**12.4** A focal point in the village landscape and the centre of village celebrations such as the Christmas lighting-up ceremony and Carols round the Tree. The Green contains a Grade II listed drinking fountain.

#### **LGS5 - Jack Verrall Memorial Garden, Brenchley**

*Grid reference: 567892 141835*



**12.5** A peaceful public garden off Brenchley High Street, commemorating a Brenchley resident. The garden is Important to the setting of the adjacent grade II\* listed Old Palace.

#### **LGS6 - Broad Oak verges, Brenchley**

*Grid reference: 568019 141809*



**12.6** Planted with spring bulbs and mature trees, this verge is important in the village landscape.

### **LGS7 - Mile Oak verge and Millennium Post**

*Grid reference: 568133 143461*



**12.7** An important feature of the Mile Oak hamlet, this wide verge carries the Millennium sign. It connects public footpath WT273 with public bridleway WT315 and Knowle Road.

### **LGS8 - The Viewpoint, Crook Road, Brenchley**

*Grid reference: 568164 142274*



**12.8** Highly valued by parish residents and visitors for the magnificent views it offers, this site contains a viewing table, donated to celebrate the Millennium, whose design enables sight-impaired people also to enjoy the view. The grassy area, trees and picnic table make it a popular spot for a picnic.

### **LGS9 - The Clays Wood, Knowle Road**

*Grid reference: 568642 142504*



**12.9** This parkland landscape consists of mature oaks with semi-improved grassland and some scrub underneath. It is important to the residents of Castle Hill, many of whom walk the bridleway as well as being enjoyed by horse riders from a wider area of the parish.

### **LGS10 - Matfield War Memorial**

*Grid reference: 565414 140871*



**12.10** Commemorating Matfield residents who died serving their country, including Siegfried Sassoon's brother who died at Gallipoli. The green and memorial are part of the setting of the Grade II listed St Luke's Church.

### **LGS11 - Old Chapel graveyard, Matfield**

*Grid reference: 565807 141588*



**12.11** The old chapel graveyard is listed as a monument in the Kent Historic Environment Record. It is on the site of a former Baptist Chapel which was demolished in the 1950s.

### **LGS12 - Grass verge near Ebenezer Chapel, Matfield**

*Grid reference: 566008 141979*



**12.12** One of the wide verges described by Hasted as characteristic of the parish, it makes a major contribution to the visual character of the village, as well as being a safe place to walk.

### **LGS13 - Woodland to the north of Wish Court, Matfield**

*Grid reference: 565932 142348*



**12.13** Footpath WT268 transverses an important wildlife habitat, mentioned as possible “refuge” for wildlife displaced by Rydon Homes development, including dormice and a minimum of eight species of bat.

### **LGS14 - Grass verge near Pralls Lane, Matfield**

*Grid reference: 566379 142421*



**12.14** This wide verge, of the type described by Hasted as characteristic of the parish, is visually important as an approach to the village. It also forms an important off-carriageway link for parish residents between the village and public footpath WT275, enabling both a circular walk around the northern end of Matfield and an almost entirely off-road walking route to Brenchley.

### **LGS15 – Porters Wood Recreation Ground, Petteridge**

*Grid reference: 566457 140967*



**12.15** This recreation ground, which is adjacent to ancient woodland, serves the community at Petteridge.

## LGS16 - Keys Green verges and pond, Beech Lane

*Grid reference: 565062 139438*



**12.16** The focal point of the hamlet of Keys Green, used by local residents as a place to meet up for a walk or to stand with their dogs and chat. The blackthorn hedge provides a screen from the A21, one side of the grassy area is covered in ox-eye daisies and other wildflowers in the Summer, while the other supports a wide range of fungi in the Autumn. Two relatively young oak trees provide added biodiversity and enhance the landscape.