

Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan – Landscape and Community Workshop

Saturday 21st October, Kilndown Village Hall

Facilitators: Jim Boot, Community Planner and Michael Thornton, Merit Thornton Planning and Community Consultants Ltd

Introduction

This is the third in a series of three themed workshops or community events:

- 23rd September – Housing and Design (Goudhurst Village Hall)
- 7th October – Traffic and Economy (Kilndown Village Hall) – this report
- 21st October – Landscape and Community (Kilndown Village Hall)

The purpose of these workshops is to:

- Present a summary of the Neighbourhood Plan evidence gathered so far in relation to the topic/s,
- Identify and prioritise the most important issues facing the community,
- Explore the challenges these issues present using SWOT¹ analysis,
- Identify three ‘reasonable alternatives’ or options for each topic area for consideration for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

These ‘reasonable alternatives’ will then be subjected to the Sustainability Appraisal framework currently being developed by the NP editorial team, to identify the most sustainable options for the emerging draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Presentations

The meeting was opened by Colin Willis, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Group by recapping on the previous workshops. There followed a presentation (see attached / Appendix) by Craig Broom on the Parish Survey Results. This was followed by two presentations.

The first of these was from Ed Bates focusing on key issues identified by the Landscape and Character Development Group. [INSERT SUMMARY AND LINK TO PRESENTATION]

The second was from Victoria Aldwinkle based on the work of the Social and Community Working Group [INSERT SUMMARY AND LINK TO PRESENTATION]

Key issues identified

The participants were then reminded of the draft Vision for Goudhurst and the Objectives relating to Landscape, Social and Community issues:

Vision

Goudhurst [Parish] in 2033 will be a [collection of] vibrant, pollution free, hilltop villages that are safe, have a balanced, continuing community with sustainable housing standards, good local services, with

¹ Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

managed traffic and walkable roads that supports change and development but remains quiet [and] unspoilt.

Landscape and environment objective

- *To retain and manage vistas from within and without*
- *To support and enhance the existing constraints to development (AONB) etc*
- *To have safe footpaths and bridleways*
- *To retain agricultural land and open countryside and woodlands as they are, avoiding industrial appearances and bypass*

The Community Facilities and Services objective is still quite unfinished but the key areas that emerged from the Visioning and Objective setting workshop in September were:

- Pride in community
 - Litter picking
 - Linesmen
 - General village maintenance
- Social engagement
 - All ages
 - Clubs and societies
 - Self-help
- Social media
 - Business and shops
 - Clubs
 - Farmers market
 - Parish council
- Sustainable infrastructure
 - Utilities and facilities
- Safe Community
 - CCTV
 - Local police
 - Neighbourhood Watch

A draft objective might look like:

Community facilities and services

- *To develop pride in the community through social engagement using social media, developing sustainable infrastructure resulting in a safer community.*

There followed a brainstorming exercise where participants were asked to list their key issues in relation to the two topics or themes and then using sticky dots to prioritise the most important issues:

Landscape and environment issues

Issues	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protecting, maintaining and managing the landscape [including] orchards and hedgerows	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protection given by AONB – supporting / furthering	10

• Views (protecting)	10
• Protect the countryside	7
• Walkability to services for young and old	5
• New development fitting in ie hedges	5
• Water capture / harvesting	4
• Reliant on oil and electricity for heating – no mains gas – eco-homes	3
• Mixed use / diverse landscape	2
• But we may want some appropriate development in the AONB to improve poor sites	1

Community facilities and services issues

Issues	Score
• Community transport linked to social activity – funding and support	10
• Social hub	9
• Isolation / loneliness	8
• Social inclusion/ integration (welcoming people)	6
• Communicating what's available	6
• Elderly care – lack of provision	3
• Growing health-care	3
• Facilities for youth	3
• Primary and pre-school places	3
• Pubs	2
• Diversifying / a welcoming community	2
• Fuel poverty	1
• Education – access to secondary [schools]	-

Commentary

While the issues identified for the Landscape can be largely addressed through planning policies – although the protection of AONBs is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and High Weald AONB Management Plan. The issues identified for Community Facilities and Services are more likely to be addressed through new or existing projects, clubs and societies. For instance community transport could be provided through the purchase of a community owned mini-bus or better promotion of a dial-a-ride service such as the Kent Karrier: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/community-transport/kent-karrier> and the Goudhurst and Kilndown ReadyCall <https://goudhurst.co.uk/a-z-directory/>.

This was followed by a session when in small groups at tables, participants were asked to complete a SWOT exercise regarding a key topic. The topics were supplied by the two working groups. Some of the issues, were 'pre-loaded' (in italic) onto the SWOT sheets so that key issues identified either through the questionnaire or by the working groups weren't missed. The results of this exercise were as follows:

Biodiversity and wildlife

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous sites: Local nature reserves etc • AONB • Agriculture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition of some wildlife sites • Lack of knowledge / define / quantify

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedgerows (lots) 	
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reduce fragmentation and create ecological networks</i> • Conservation society • Post Brexit: grants / production - encourage new farmers • Hedges and verges incentive • Create corridors for wildlife 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recreational pressure</i> • New houses and more people (effects schooling, medical etc) • Agriculture • Loss of subsidies • Economics of agriculture • Loss of habitat – hedges / spraying • Cost to dump responsibly / fly tipping

Option 1: BAU / Low	Option 2: Medium	Option 3: High
Wildlife continue and adapt	Increased threat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More expenditure on conservation • Section 106 • Design 	More income (tax etc) to spend on conservation
More concrete, people, cats and dogs, pollution, roads, cars etc		

Landscape and land-use (agriculture / horticulture)

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>High Weald AONB 90% of parish</i> • <i>Ancient woodland 30% of parish</i> • High % or green spaces • TWBC Landscape [Character Assessment] Plan generally very supportive 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not to rely on AONB to stop development • Non engagement of farmers in NDP process • Lack of connectivity of footpaths to village facilities • The only place we can build is the AONB • Developers have the upper hand • Economics (!) of the land – financial pressures on farmers
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Woodland and woodland management</i> • <i>Green infrastructure (hedgerows, shaws, ghylls) needs strengthening</i> • Keep hedges in good condition. No change from hedges to fences. New developments to be hedged. • Educate farmers to develop new planting ideas (support, subsidies) • New footpaths to connect villagers to facilities (info on footpaths signs stating distance to landmarks, shops etc) • <u>Sympathetic</u> development of farm buildings to meet any additional housing requirement 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pressure for housing on greenfield sites</i> • <i>Pressure for housing on historic landscape</i> • Brexit – loss of subsidies etc • Too much fallow land leading to scrub • Loss of traditional agriculture • Footpaths not maintained • Bigger fields more economic • Hedges taken out • New development has high fences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading sewerage facilities (grey water), water pumping, Bewl Water drain-off? • Strict guidelines for existing property development vis a vis water use / sewerage • Road-side maintenance – ditches, drains etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of rainfall and increasing water useage • Pollution including agriculture activities with chemical sprays / nitrogen into water courses
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Option 1: BAU / Low	Option 2: Medium	Option 3: High
Community solutions		
Infrastructure to deliver and remove water		
Impose strict guidelines for existing and new developments		
New reservoir		

Health and care for the elderly

Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Life expectancy / ageing population</i> • Supportive, inclusive community • Lunch club – Readycall • Excellent surgery 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demand for elderly care services / facilities</i> • <i>Demand for specialist healthcare: asthma, stroke, mental illness and cancer</i> • <i>Poor physical activity rates for 'at risk'</i> • Poor integration and communication between existing societies • Mobility through High Street – impractical • Lack of transport to access facilities or awareness 	
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Facilities for the elderly</i> • <i>Community hub</i> • Community transport – elderly focus (eg Kent Karrier – maximise / mix existing service [using] Section 106 [monies]) • IT² for the elderly / activities? • Wider ranging and better communication • U3A should join with a 'Youth 3 A' • Young to help elderly with IT skills 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ageing population</i> • Increased housing – pressure on GP services • Elderly housing – pressure on GP services • Increasing isolation of elderly 	
Option 1: BAU / Low	Option 2: Medium	Option 3: High

² Information technology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish-wide support for Ready Call • Integrate primary school, scouts etc with elderly • Community project 	<p>Section 106³ to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community transport • Improve walkability • Venue and facilities for hub • Day care 	<p>Section 106 to provide <u>as Option 2 plus:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (primary / pre-school funding) • Improved funding for medical facilities • Day care centre with eg Age Concern / hearing aid support • Elderly housing / appropriate housing eg bungalows or flats
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Inequality and inclusion

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Village amenities and facilities</i> • Church and its inclusion activities • Readycall, U3A, Drama [Society] etc • Bus services are frequent (?) • Shops (must be well stocked) • Medical services 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pockets of deprivation / poverty</i> • <i>People living in fuel poverty</i> • <i>Physical activity rates</i> • <i>Social mobility / selective schools</i> • Lack of mixing / integration between social classes • No feasible bus service in Kilndown • Social housing in cluster • Church divisive / delusional • Bus stops in wrong place / walking for old people • Lack of crossing points in High Street • Lack of racial diversity
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community hub and communication</i> • <i>Integration and sense of community (planning)</i> • Community transport linked with activities • Monthly activities – films, theatre, clubs • Fake / dummy crossing – different road surface • More local employment • Youth education opportunities (homework clubs / support, work experience opportunities) 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gated housing and isolated developments • Internet shopping / closure of shops • Poor quality housing • Commuting – leads to isolation, time poor, lack of volunteers

³ Section 106 is the name for contributions in kind or in cash made by developers to improve infrastructure facilities or services to offset the impact of their development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with 7200 unaccompanied child refugees in Kent – needing more support 	
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Option 1: BAU / Low	Option 2: Medium	Option 3: High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelop village hall Community transport – fuel only paid – link with bus Village shops n/c⁴ Doctor surgery n/c Hospital access n/c Housing density n/c 	<p>→</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link with activities More choice + 1 GP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New community centre New van / integrated service & dedicated driver Bigger store More pavements / routes / crossings Medical centre, dentist, day centre plus van to TW hospital Open plan “estates”

Education and childcare

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Outstanding” primary [school] Engaged parents (and grandparents) Goudhurst facebook page Thriving pre-school groups 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>All children travel long distances to secondary schools</i> <i>16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training</i> <i>Facilities for young including sport and leisure</i> Lack of breakfast / pre-9am childcare U3A exclusion – ha!
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tech hub Improve use of Glebe Field Youth shelter – ‘hang-out’ Better use of parish / social club Goudhurst “Free School” secondary Public exercise facilities / gym (by playground) Do more with Goudhurst facebook page Electronic parish magazine U3A – youth 3A!!! Football clubs / rugby clubs / athletics club 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Demand for infant, junior and pre-school places</i> School consolidation CSCA – demand Ofsted rating - outstanding

Option 1: BAU / Low	Option 2: Medium	Option 3: High
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⁴ ‘no-change’

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow Goudhurst and Kilndown Primary School • Tech hub “youth” 3A • Shared learning in existing buildings • Open air gym • Improved social media presence • Extended day options • Including sports clubs 	<p>New build</p> <p>Twin with Palo Alto</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goudhurst secondary free school
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Further work (Carrot sack)

The following additional recommendations / observations were made during the course of the morning and captured for further action / clarification:

- Local heritage asset listing as part of the NP
- Local policies to support the above
- Assess long list of Important Local Green Spaces
- Limit to built development means building is constricted/constrained in the “open countryside”
- Protecting hedgerows (ancient hedges)
- Boundary treatments – hedges not close boarded fences
- Conservation society [set up one / could this role be fulfilled by the Goudhurst and Kilndown Local History Society?]

Conclusion

This workshop concluded the series of three themed workshops. Over the course of the autumn these workshops have evolved. At the first workshop the Key Issues brain-storming session was used to identify the topics for the ‘table top’ sessions that followed, but while this was felt to be the most democratic, it was felt that prior identification of the key topics would allow for greater focus and avoid key topics being missed. Also, in the second workshop the idea of different growth scenarios (based on the Tunbridge Wells Issues and Options) were introduced to help participants imagine different ‘reasonable alternatives’. This means that aspects of the Housing and Design Workshop may need to be revisited to ensure that key areas were covered. This can either be done through an additional ‘wrap up’ workshop after Christmas or perhaps tied in with further work for instance to undertake a Character Assessment to develop design codes or else as preparation for the Sustainability Appraisal work.

In particular in this final workshop, but it also applies to the Transport and Economy workshop, many of the issues and options identified at the workshops might be better suited to community led projects captured in an action / Parish Plan rather than through the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies. While some of these might be able to benefit from Section 106 contributions from developers and so should be listed in the NP as such, it might be that these can be taken forward more quickly through community action. Examples would be producing an electronic parish newsletter which could be done straightaway using Mailchimp or similar or the provision of an outdoor gym through a grant application to Sport England, local trusts or a community subscription.

Next steps

Action	Lead
1. Refine vision and objectives	Steering group and / or editorial team
2. Refine 'reasonable alternatives' for inclusion in the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	Editorial team
3. Check SA Scoping Report with TWBC Planning Policy Team	Executive officers from NPG and parish council (qualifying body)
4. Five week Statutory consultation period on SA Scoping Report (Historic and Natural England and the Environment Agency)	Steering group
5. Undertake Character Assessment and develop draft design codes	Landscape and Character Development Group with G&K Local History Group
6. Undertake assessment of Important Local Green Spaces	Landscape and Character Development Group / AN Other
7. Policy training / workshop	Steering group and parish council planning committee
8. Draw up list of 'non-NP' projects emerging from the NP work, start to prioritise (short, medium and long-term) and start working on any 'quick-wins'.	Social and Community Working Group
9. Post all documents / reports on the NP website	Secretary / web administrator

Acknowledgements

Goudhurst Parish council would like to thank the NPG for organising, hosting and facilitating the three themed workshops and all the residents who attended the workshops including at the last workshop:

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|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Ed Bates | 9. Adrian Smith | 17. Howard Huntington |
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| 4. Peter Wood | 12. David Bolton | 20. Keith Buckland |
| 5. Julie Adams | 13. Colin Willis | 21. Jen Sundberg |
| 6. N Lucas | 14. Susan Newsam | 22. Pippa Lane |
| 7. J Rourke | 15. Chris Balkin | 23. Sheila Klopper |
| 8. R Hillier | 16. Victoria Aldwinckle | |

Jim Boot, Community Planner 6th November 2017