



West Hoathly Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031



Manor House
from St Margaret's Church,
West Hoathly



Sharpthorne playground, railway tunnel
airvent and views North



Green tunnel along
Cob Lane



View South-East from All Saint's Church,
Highbrook with Bluebell Railway

West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan

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Introduction

1. Purpose

The West Hoathly Parish Neighbourhood Plan prepares a vision of the future of the parish and sets out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use, development change and other community projects. West Hoathly Parish Council has received approval from Mid Sussex District Council, the local planning authority, to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole parish.

In order to achieve the key aims of the community (outlined in Vision and Objectives), the Neighbourhood Plan proposes policies to protect the valued character of the parish and address local issues to create a thriving community. Whilst having a 17 year timeframe the Plan will be reviewed on a 5 yearly cycle when development needs will be re-assessed.

The purpose of this Submission Document is to present the West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan to Mid Sussex District Council for further consultation, independent examination and local referendum.

The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan has been written in the context of the Localism Act 2011, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Mid Sussex Local Plan 2004 and the draft Mid Sussex District Plan which is currently under development.

2. Consultation

The Parish Council has consulted the local community widely since February 2012. Focus groups have been held to review and agree the issues and vision for the future, which now drive the Neighbourhood Plan. This was followed up with a community survey (241 responses and 710 comments) and a Housing Needs Survey (239 responses) that went to every household to obtain the fullest views of the community's concerns, needs and wants. Further focus groups tested the suitability and acceptability of the emerging policies. Following the initial public consultation of the draft plan in 2013, some revisions were made to policies. As a result of concerns regarding the proposed housing site allocation policy further work has been carried out to identify additional potential housing sites. A community Task Force, supported by an independent planning consultant, has reviewed each site against a range of criteria to establish the preferred option.

The Neighbourhood Plan is regularly featured in the parish magazine, on the community website and through regular email newsletters, Facebook and Twitter posts.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not breach and is otherwise compatible with the European Convention of Human Rights and in particular those dealing with privacy (Article 8), discrimination (Article 14) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (property).

3. The Neighbourhood Plan Preparation Process

Following District Council approval the Neighbourhood Plan will be submitted to an Independent Examiner for scrutiny. Any recommendations made by the Examiner will be considered by the District and Parish Council and the Plan amended before being put forward to a parish referendum. If supported by a majority vote, the Plan will be adopted (made) by the District Council as part of the planning policy for the parish of West Hoathly.

4. Sustainability Appraisal

A scoping report was produced, based on the local survey carried out in April 2012, which identified economic, social and environmental issues. Comments received from the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, English Heritage, the Environment Agency and Natural England were subsequently included. This report provides the framework against which the detailed policies and proposals in the Plan have been assessed. It is available as part of this submission and via the Neighbourhood Plan website (www.HoathlyHub.info/OurPlan) or by asking the Parish Clerk clerk@westhoathly.gov.uk.

5. Monitoring and Review

The West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by the local planning authority and West Hoathly Parish Council on an annual basis. The aims and objectives will form the focus of the monitoring activity but other data collected or reported at a parish level will also be included.

The Plan will be reviewed formally on a five year cycle or to coincide with a review of the District Plan.

The Parish of West Hoathly

The Civil Parish of West Hoathly is within the District of Mid Sussex and the County of West Sussex. Neighbouring parishes are Ardingly, Horsted Keynes, Turners Hill and Forest Row. The border to the east with Forest Row is also the border between East and West Sussex.

The parish is predominantly a rural area with two village settlements near the centre of the parish in West Hoathly and Sharpthorne (which have formally defined village built-up areas) and a smaller hamlet settlement at Highbrook plus many individual and small groups of dwellings (including those at Selsfield and Tyes Cross) along the surrounding highways. There are approximately 800 households in the parish with a population of 2,181 (an increase of 3% since 2001). West Hoathly and Sharpthorne each account for around 40-45% of the population / dwellings and Highbrook 6% of the dwellings. Each of the main settlements has its own historic roots and identity which means that the parish of West Hoathly has a multi-centric character.

There are 55 listed buildings within the parish including the scheduled monuments of Philpots Camp, the moated site in Orchard Wood and the two registered historic park and gardens at Gravetye Manor (Grade II*) and at Stonehurst (Grade II).

Ashdown Forest is located adjacent to the north-eastern boundary of Mid Sussex within Wealden District. It is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) due to the important heathland habitats present and classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of breeding Nightjars and Dartford warbler. It is a site of European Nature Conservation Importance comprising heathland and woodland habitats of around 3,000Ha.

Following consultation with Natural England, Mid Sussex District Council has undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to test whether the Mid Sussex District Plan, in combination with other plans and projects, is likely to have an adverse effect on the integrity of Ashdown Forest. The HRA report on the District Plan identifies that proposed new housing close to Ashdown Forest is likely to increase the number of visitors to the Forest. Such visitors could increase disturbance to rare, ground-nesting bird populations (in particular the Dartford warbler and Nightjar). The 'Ashdown Forest Visitor Survey Data Analysis' published in September 2010 found that most visitors to the Forest live within 7km of its boundaries (straight line distance). The HRA therefore identified a 7km 'zone of influence' within which new housing developments must counter its effect by putting in place measures which reduce visitor pressure.

The Neighbourhood Plan area includes land within the 7km zone of influence, and therefore new residential development proposed in the Plan must have due regard to the Habitats Regulations. The proposed

approach set out in the Mid Sussex District Plan includes providing Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace sites (SANGs) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures on Ashdown Forest itself.

SANGs are sites that cater for the recreational needs of communities in order to reduce the likelihood of visitor pressure and disturbance on important nature conservation areas. Developer contributions will be required towards the provision of SANGs and the criteria for a site to be suitable as a SANG site is set out on the Mid Sussex District Council website (www.midsussex.gov.uk).

The District Council is responsible for deciding how developer contributions towards the provision of SANGs and SAMM will be calculated and delivered.

6. West Hoathly

The village of West Hoathly was founded by the Saxons but the earliest surviving building is St Margaret's Church (Grade I listed) which is of Norman origin, part of it dating from about 1090. "The Priest House" (Grade II listed) is a 15th century dwelling which has been preserved by the Sussex Archaeological Society and is a valued local heritage asset and tourist attraction. The core of the "Cat Inn" (Grade II listed) is also 15th century.

To help conserve this historic village, within which there are 26 listed buildings (half the total parish number), Mid Sussex District Council has designated much of it a Conservation Area.

Within West Hoathly the parish owns the Village Hall, North Lane Recreation Ground and the public conveniences.

The parish primary school is located in the centre of West Hoathly opposite North Lane Recreation Ground. A Pre-School operates from the Village Hall. Whilst numbers at both are currently strong, over 25% of the school roll is accounted for by pupils coming from outside the parish. This is due in the main by full schools elsewhere in the locality. This will not be sustained beyond the short term. The Recreation Ground provides a children's playground and football pitch for the West Hoathly Football Club. The District Council owns Hook Lane Recreation Ground which provides 2 tennis courts (managed by the local tennis club), a cricket pitch used by the local cricket team in the summer and a junior football pitch used by another local village football club in the winter. There is also a thriving Bowls Club that has its own facilities next to the Hook Lane Recreation Ground on land donated to it in 1935.

As well as St Margaret's Church there is a small Roman Catholic chapel, St Dunstan's, affiliated to Worth Abbey.

Commercial Enterprises

There is currently a showroom in West Hoathly offering interior design services.

The village supports 2 public houses, The Cat Inn in the centre of the village and The Fox Eating and Drinking House on the border with Sharpthorne. The Cat Inn is acclaimed for its food and attracts customers from the surrounding area and from further afield.

To the south west of the village centre is Philpots' Quarry where local sandstone is quarried, dressed and trimmed. This is the only such remaining source in Sussex.

Philpots Manor School is an independent co-educational residential special school and training centre.

To the north of the village is West Hoathly Garage, a family business specialising in classic cars.

7. Sharpthorne

The Lewes and East Grinstead Railway was built in the valley to the east of West Hoathly village and opened in August 1882. A brickworks was established to support the construction of the railway and particularly to provide the lining for the tunnel through Sharpthorne Ridge. The brickworks still manufactures heritage bricks.

The railway closed in 1958, but the section that lies within the parish has been preserved as part of the steam heritage Bluebell Railway. In March 2013 the Bluebell Railway started running trains from Sheffield Park through to East Grinstead. Currently trains do not stop at Sharpthorne although policy WHS5 of the 2004 Local Plan has left it open for a halt or station to be considered in the future.

The presence of the railway station from 1882 to 1958 encouraged the creation and growth of the settlement of Sharpthorne where previously there had only been two or three farms and a few cottages. One of these original farmhouses, "Old Coombe" is now Grade II listed.

Within Sharpthorne there is also a church hall, managed by St Margaret's Church, and the Sharpthorne Club linked to the Royal British Legion.

There are 2 small recreation grounds, one owned by Mid Sussex District Council and one owned by the parish.

Commercial Enterprises

Within Sharpthorne there is a local Costcutter shop with a part time Post Office attached to Sharpthorne Garage.

There is a light industrial centre, Hangdown Mead, a family building firm, Comber & Son, and also a hairdresser.

Ibstock brickworks still manufacture heritage hand fired bricks.

Sharp Thorne café provides training and work opportunities for young people and adults with special learning needs through Pericles, a pioneering training and work project.

On the outskirts of Sharpthorne there is a picture framing business.

8. Highbrook

The settlement at Highbrook is long established; the oldest surviving house, "Battens" (Grade II listed), is from the 14th century and 3 other houses show medieval origins and are also Grade II listed. The development of the community was facilitated by local landowners, who built and endowed All Saints Church (Grade II listed) in 1884, and the village hall (originally a school) in 1875, for the convenience of their estate workers and local residents. A 19th century Smokery adjacent to the church has been preserved as a public shelter. The centre of Highbrook is also a Conservation Area.

The Village Hall, Smokery, car park, garages and small Recreation Ground are owned and managed by a charitable trust of local residents.

Commercial Enterprises

Highbrook has no local shop.

On the outskirts of Highbrook there is a saw mill.

9. Hoathly Hill Community

The Hoathly Hill Community is a group of about 60 people, adults and children, of all ages in 27 dwellings. The Community consists of people in diverse professions and life-circumstances who are working together to create a supportive environment for home life. In addition to Hoathly Hill House, a 16th century Grade II Listed Building, and other dwellings there is a hall and other buildings for artistic, educational and social activities and over 22 acres of gardens and fields. A Children's Centre, with kindergarten, a special needs project (Pericles), sculpture studio, Forest Garden and Community Vegetable Scheme operate from Hoathly Hill.

Hoathly Hill lies between West Hoathly village and Sharpthorne to the west of Hammingden Lane. Established in 1973, a number of consents at that time included the conversion of various buildings to

residential use, the establishment of a farm study centre and a craft centre and the use of the land for agriculture, forestry, educational and residential uses. Since that time uses at the site have been controlled by virtue of legal agreements, the most recent of which is dated 29th December 1986. Despite its development during the last twenty years the site is extremely well screened and causes little loss of amenity to the locality given its sensitive location.

10. Outlying Areas

Selsfield Common, in the north west of the parish is situated at the important road junction between the ancient ridgeway and the Roman road. The first record of land-ownership dates from 1290 but the settlement has never grown larger than a hamlet. There was once a windmill here but it was demolished in the early 20th century. Today, a water tower (Grade II listed) stands above the skyline. The Victorian house Selsfield House is also Grade II listed.

The common at Selsfield is owned by the National Trust although there is an agreement dating back to 1914 under which the Parish Council manages the land. Currently the gardeners at Standen, a local National Trust Property, maintain the common with the help of local volunteers.

Tyes Cross, to the east of the parish, is a hamlet situated at a crossroads where the ridgeway from West Hoathly to Ashdown Forest crosses the highway from East Grinstead to Birch Grove and Twyford.

Gravetye Manor (Grade I listed) is in the north of the parish and survives today as a hotel and restaurant of national renown. Gravetye Manor and the surrounding Gravetye Woods are owned by the William Robinson Trust. The Woods are managed on their behalf by the Forestry Commission.

Within the parish there are 7 working farms.

Ducky's Farm, on Selsfield Road is another centre that provides residential accommodation for adults with learning difficulties.

In the east of the parish is Blackland Farm, a multi-purpose activity centre owned by Girlguiding UK. It is located on a 120-acre site, comprising woodland and grassed areas.

11. An Overview of the Parish Today

Of the dwellings in the parish of West Hoathly, 78% were owner occupied in 2011. 51% of households lived in detached houses (compared to 35% across Mid Sussex District and 28% across the South East). In 2009 the average value of properties was £307,500, significantly above the average in Mid Sussex of £233,000. There has been no significant housing development in the Parish (i.e. more than 2-3 units per site) since the 1980s.

The mean age in the parish in 2011 was 43 (in 2001 it was 40), higher than in England as a whole (39) reflecting the locally ageing population profile. However, West Hoathly is a popular, if expensive, place for families to live, perhaps due to its proximity to travel hubs to reach employment areas such as at Gatwick, Brighton and London. A snapshot of properties available for sale or under offer subject to contract in April 2014 identified the average price to be £770,000.

Nursery and preschool education is available in the parish. West Hoathly Primary School provides schooling for 94 children (although the school could take up to 120 pupils), of whom 71% live within the parish. Secondary schooling is provided at East Grinstead or Haywards Heath. Around the area there is a good choice of private schools providing schooling for ages 2-18.

Demographic data from the Office of National Statistics (mid-2008 population estimates) suggest that the number of young people in the parish is falling, with an increase in the number of people aged 65+. This is in line with the local perception of an ageing parish population caused by increased life expectancy, with younger potential residents being priced out of the property market.

According to the 2011 census data, 69% of adults of working-age are economically active (in 2001 it was 73%). The skill level of the local population is generally high with 23% (2011) qualified to degree level or above compared to 19% across the South East. Over half the working population (52% compared to 45% in the South East as a whole), work as senior managers and officials or in professional and technical occupations. This suggests that many people commute to the larger employment areas of London and Brighton although some professional people work from home on a full or part-time basis. There is some local employment, in particular at the Ibstock Brickworks, Philpots Quarry, Comber and Son (builders) and the small Hangdown Mead Business Park. There are also the hospitality businesses at The Gravetye Manor Hotel and the local pubs. The majority of business units in the parish employ between 1 – 4 people.

In the 2011 Census, of the 1,137 people of working age, 64% travel by car or van to work (assumed to be mostly outside the parish) and 9% travel by train. Almost three-quarters of working people work elsewhere with 12% working at or from home and 11% walking or cycling to work.

Buses to Crawley and East Grinstead are infrequent (2 hourly service) and do not provide an effective service for commuters. The nearest railway stations are at Haywards Heath (7 miles), Three Bridges in Crawley (9 miles) and East Grinstead (5 miles). In consequence residents need to use a car to commute by train with associated parking capacity problems in station car parks and street parking.

The parish is served by either the Sharpthorne or Ardingly telephone exchanges providing ADSL-2 broadband. Both exchanges are anticipated to benefit from the West Sussex County Council initiative to provide “Superfast Broadband” within the next 2 years.

The 2 main centres of population are split by the C319. This is the road linking, but also bisecting, the settlements of Sharpthorne and West Hoathly. It is known as Selsfield Rd, Chapel Row and The Hollow in West Hoathly; Top Road and Sharpthorne Road through Sharpthorne. The road suffers from high volumes of traffic bypassing East Grinstead. Traffic diverts from the A22 at Wych Cross to the A264 (and M23 junction 9) towards Gatwick Airport. The community is affected by the volume, nature and speed of traffic, in particular delivery vans based in the Gatwick area. There are significant numbers of heavy goods vehicles, most of which are passing through to locations elsewhere. The C319, on which there are residential properties, is particularly affected and the high volume of traffic creates danger, inconvenience and a sense of intimidation to pedestrians and other road users. The noise and vibration affects dwellings, many of which are very close to the road.

Finche Field, an area of meadow, which is owned by the parish, forms part of a local countryside gap between Sharpthorne and West Hoathly and accommodates extensive and well-used allotments.

As a result of the attractions of the West Hoathly village as a tourist destination (The Priest House and St Margaret’s Church and churchyard) and the commercial success of The Cat Inn, there is an ongoing issue with the amount of car parking available. The problem is highlighted by inconsiderate parking which has recently led to the loss of the bus service passing along West Hoathly’s North Lane as it was increasingly losing service time by being unable to get past parked cars.

The Parish enjoys a wide range of community activities that cater for all age groups and interests.

Vision and Objectives

12. Challenges Facing West Hoathly Parish

Through the parish wide survey in 2012 residents' top priorities were identified as:

- Reducing traffic speed, volume and weight on the C319.
- Improving pedestrian/cyclist safety on the C319 and local lanes.
- Protecting the parish's natural environment and built heritage.
- Retaining and enhancing the key public and commercial services and facilities especially the primary school.
- Adjusting the housing mix to provide more homes for younger families or older residents wishing to remain in the parish in a house that is easier to maintain.
- Improving public transport and retaining local employment.
- Support for an ageing population.
- Keeping and enhancing community activities and community identity.

13. Vision

The vision of West Hoathly in fifteen years' time captures the views and aspirations of the local community and therefore forms the basis on which the strategic objectives and proposed policies have been created.

In 2030 the Parish of West Hoathly is a pleasant and hospitable place for people to live and thrive. This is due to the surrounding exceptionally beautiful countryside of farms and woodlands within the High Weald AONB, the wealth of historic built features and its group of villages and settlements each with their own distinctive identities. It has, and is able to sustain sufficient essential services and facilities to meet most local needs. Homes are available for all stages of life and circumstances and there is a strong sense of local community which contributes to low levels of crime. The Parish enjoys low levels of all forms of pollution including noise, light, fumes and excessive through traffic. Residents and visitors are able to safely and enjoyably move around the area on foot or cycle with a reduced dependency on cars.

The following aims and objectives are proposed to determine how successful the Plan is at achieving the vision. To:

- Ensure the continued viability of the Parish's key valued services - primarily the primary school, pre-schools and retailers
- Fulfil the identified local housing needs - particularly affordable/ smaller "market" family homes and easier maintenance homes for downsizing older residents.
- Reduce significantly the negative impacts of the current C319 road traffic usage pattern on the lives of all residents.
- Conserve and Enhance the attractiveness of the countryside and protect the future availability of farmable / timber harvestable land.
- Safeguard the character and integrity of historic buildings and settlements
- Sustain existing employment opportunities in the Parish and encourage additional rurally-relevant opportunities and home-based working / businesses.
- Achieve on-going continued reductions in non-sustainable energy and water use.
- Sustain and enhance the range of community activities and interests

Policies and Proposals

The policies in this Plan should be considered along with the Central Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the 2004 Local Plan. The NPPF sets out planning policies for England as a whole and how they are expected to be applied by Local Planning Authorities. The Local Plan and draft MSDP contain the planning policies for all of Mid Sussex.

The policies in the Plan have been designed to contribute towards achieving the sustainable development of West Hoathly Parish whilst taking into account the existing and emerging District Plan policies. The Sustainability Appraisal associated with this Plan demonstrates how the Plan's policies provide positive support to the key sustainability objectives for the parish.

14. Village and Countryside Landscape Features

The parish lies in a beautiful landscape, rich in wildlife within the High Weald AONB. An important part of the character of the High Weald is the irregular, historic field patterns and network of established tracks and roads alongside extensive tree cover. Within the parish of West Hoathly the landscape is made up of ancient woodland, outcrops of sandstone rocks with underlying clay and the rich pattern of fields surrounded by deciduous hedging. The area supports several Sites of Special Scientific Interest at West Hoathly, Philpots and Hook Quarries and at Wakehurst and Chiddinglye Woods. The area is interspersed with ancient tracks linking the individual settlements, which have become either the local footpath network or roads with no safe provision for pedestrians. Where there is no provision the Plan supports pedestrian safety improvements.

The Plan's policies aim to protect and enhance this unique environment and recognise that open space, including gardens, allotments, recreational space, open fields, woodlands and pathways are important and must be protected. The retention of each settlement's distinctiveness will be achieved by maintaining the open space between them. Development within West Hoathly parish will be focused within the defined settlement areas (as identified on Map C) and the sites allocated in this plan.

The landscape in the AONB is characterised by stretches of tunnel-like tree cover and deep cuttings as well as ridges with open vistas. The Plan aims to preserve these characteristics and would not wish to see gateways and boundaries that use materials and hedging not in harmony with the surroundings; high closed-in boundaries which interrupt and obscure the open vistas of the landscape or engineered features such as wide and deep drive splays, CCTV and lighting masts which impact the visual setting.

WHP1 Landscape. Where appropriate, proposals for development should demonstrate that the viewpoints and spaces identified on Map B will be preserved.

WHP2 Historic Lanes. Where appropriate, development proposals should demonstrate that they will preserve the historic and rural character of the Historic Lanes identified on Map A.

WHP3 Rights of Way. Development proposals that will enhance the rights of way network, whilst meeting other policies of this Plan, will be supported.

WHP4 Visualisations. It is a requirement of any proposed development for 1 or more new dwellings or more than 100 sq. m of new commercial floor space in the Conservation Areas or outside the village development boundary that three dimensional visualisations of the proposed development, in situ, be provided as part of any planning application. Subject to this and other policies of the Plan, proposals will be supported where visualisations demonstrate that they are in keeping with the immediate surrounding area.

15. Traffic and Transport

In all parish surveys residents have expressed very strong concerns about traffic and transport issues and the impact on their well-being. They have highlighted

- Problems with the speed, volume and nature of traffic
- The dangers caused by on-street parking
- The impact of heavy traffic through the parish's narrow rural lanes

- The risks to pedestrian and cyclist safety.

The traffic and transport policies are therefore to be used to manage the impact of further traffic arising from any new local development and to improve the well-being of local residents. Policies will improve highway safety and minimise conflicts between road traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

Car parking standards have been carefully considered and are included because car ownership levels in the parish are high (in the 2011 census 62% of households had 2 or more vehicles compared to 44% for Mid Sussex), reflecting both the rural location and limited availability of public transport. In the West Hoathly Conservation area off-road parking is limited. The Plan's parking standards reflect these local factors and seek to ensure that new development does not add to current levels of congestion.

Since the reinstatement of the Bluebell Railway through to East Grinstead mainline station in 2013, its potential attractiveness for residents' use and for visitors to the countryside, heritage assets and hospitality businesses of West Hoathly Parish has increased. During the Neighbourhood Plan development and surveys much interest was expressed in being able to board and alight from the trains that pass through the parish although concerns were raised in the first pre-submission consultation about the potential additional traffic and parking down Station Road. These concerns have been reflected in a redrafted policy WHP10 below. In the event of the Bluebell Railway wishing to establish a halt, the West Hoathly parish community would expect early consultation on the details to ensure that local concerns are adequately addressed.

The Plan will support new ways of managing the traffic throughout the parish by:

- Promoting pedestrian and cyclist safety and resident well-being through lower traffic speeds and traffic volumes
- Making sure all developments have enough car parking to meet current and future needs
- Supporting local and strategic traffic management which reduces HGV/LGV vehicles through the parish in order to minimise their adverse impact, whilst managing new developments so that they do not have an unacceptable impact on local residents

Concurrent with the development of this Plan, Mid Sussex District Council have defined and are going through the formal approval of their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) approach. The CIL provides the legal framework for local planning authorities to raise funds to provide the infrastructure needed to cope with new developments. Under the Neighbourhood Planning regulations of the 2011 Localism Act, areas with a Neighbourhood Plan in place will receive at least 25% of the CIL raised in their area to direct to their own local infrastructure priorities. Areas without a Neighbourhood Plan will receive a maximum of 15% of CIL subject to a limit cap. In this Plan area the infrastructure priority based on the community's input is clearly related to traffic and safety and this is reflected in the policies below.

As the Highway Authority, West Sussex County Council has, as requested by West Hoathly Parish Council, included traffic calming measures on the C319 in their Infrastructure priorities for the area.

Community Aim: The Parish Council will seek to work with other organisations and bodies to promote the provision of car parking to meet the needs of the Parish, with a particular focus on locally sensitive areas.

WHP5 Protection of Parking. Developments within the defined settlement boundaries which propose to remove recognised off-road parking spaces on a site will only be permitted where alternative provision is made which increases or maintains the number of accessible parking spaces available on or within the immediate vicinity of the site.

Community Aim: The Parish Council will seek to work with other organisations and bodies to promote the reduction of traffic speeds and where possible, volumes; and provide appropriate facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

- **WHP6 Bluebell Railway.** Proposals by the Bluebell Railway to establish a halt at the previous West Hoathly Station Site will be supported.

16. Homes

The evidence from the Initial Neighbourhood Plan Survey (March 2012), the Housing Needs Survey (June 2012) and the two “Call for Sites” exercises have provided an authoritative analysis of the community sustainability issues facing the parish, the identified housing needs and the likely supply of new homes.

West Hoathly Parish is a highly attractive place to live due to the surrounding AONB countryside, the scale of the current settlements, and the easily accessible surrounding towns, travel hubs and employment opportunities. Housing occupants tend to come and stay. The population is ageing faster than the South-East of England as a whole, house prices are relatively high (average value of property sales in 2009 as reported by ONS was 32% higher than Mid Sussex as a whole) and the sustainability of the primary and pre-school are threatened. There are very limited places for older residents to live locally and independently in smaller, easier to maintain homes. These factors create “stickiness” in the local housing market as residents tend not to want to move away as their families leave home. There is a long-outstanding and locally supported need for more affordable housing particularly for individuals and young families with local connections.

Opportunities for additional housing supply are extremely constrained due to the surrounding AONB, the two conservation areas and very limited infill sites within the current development boundaries of Sharpthorne and West Hoathly. This has been confirmed by the Mid Sussex Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

There is an overwhelming desire to maintain the scale, style and setting of the parish settlements and to protect the surrounding countryside from inappropriate development.

Our policies seek to ensure a housing supply to meet the need for local homes and the retention of a sustainable community; specifically providing a housing mix that suits the needs of an ageing population, young first time buyers, and the growth of young families. The consultation also showed a need and desire to increase the provision of affordable homes for lower income families.

New homes, supported by this Plan’s policies, plus currently approved developments would supply approximately 55-60 additional dwellings over the lifetime of the Neighbourhood Plan which is consistent with the identified needs. The Plan allows for the numbers to be kept under review at 5-yearly intervals to ensure that sufficient development is taking place to meet local needs.

Affordable housing within developments will be provided at least at the Mid Sussex District Council policy requirement of 30%. MSDC Housing Development is adjusting its “allocation policy” so that for parishes in the AONB with a Neighbourhood Plan, half of the affordable homes created will be prioritised for people with local connections in perpetuity. On first letting all of the affordable homes will be prioritised in this way.

District planning policies can allow for the development of new sites which would not otherwise be allowed on the condition that all of the new dwellings are, in perpetuity, affordable homes. Sites fulfilling the necessary conditions are known as “Exception Sites”. Proposals for small scale, affordable housing developments on exception sites will be supported if a developable site can be identified meeting the MSDC criteria for such rural affordable housing provision.

The parish contains two formally designated Conservation Areas - in the centre of Highbrook and covering part of West Hoathly village as shown on Map C. Conservation Areas are established to ensure that specific zones of heritage structures, their arrangement and overall appearance are given additional planning attention.

The Plan will provide for a limited amount of housing to meet local needs. It will do this through:

- Making sure that developments include a suitable mix of housing that addresses the identified local needs
- Permitting small scale infill sites and conversions within the parish
- Supporting the redevelopment of disused brownfield (previously used) sites

Since the first draft West Hoathly Neighbourhood Plan was consulted on in April 2013 policy WHP13 Site for New Homes has been changed significantly. Extensive work has taken place to identify additional possible sites and the policy is the result of a detailed assessment of the most suitable sites for the needs and aspirations of the parish. These assessments and the rationale for the sites included in the plan are available on the Neighbourhood Plan website (www.HoathlyHub.info/OurPlan) and in the Sustainability Appraisal Report.

WHP7 Infill Housing. Housing developments within the development boundaries of West Hoathly parish (as shown in Map C) will generally be permitted, provided they have a range of dwelling sizes and in particular provide two and three bedroom dwellings that are suited to the needs of both young families and older residents.

WHP8 Sites for New Homes.

Housing development for a minimum of 10 dwellings will be permitted on the sites allocated on map C at:

- WHCS_05 (Land North of Top Road)
- WHCS_06 (Land adjacent to Cookhams)
- WHCS_02 (Land known as Bluebell Woods)

provided that they meet the site specific conditions listed below:

WHP8a: WHCS_05 (Land North of Top Road)

- The design of the road frontages and vehicular entrance to the site should encourage traffic calming and support the parish initiative to introduce soft landscaping features along the C319 road.
- Pedestrian access from the rear of the development should be provided to the Sharpthorne Old Playground and to link to a pavement from Glenham Place to Station Road along the north side of Top Road. (The feasibility of a pavement from Station Road to Glenham Place has been agreed in principle by WSCC).
- Provisions should be put in place to retain the existing tree belt along the northern boundary of the development site to minimise the impact on the landscape.
- The mature trees on the western boundary between the site and Highcroft Road should be protected to contribute to the rural village scene.
- Around 24 dwellings should be developed on this site.
- The design and density of the development should reflect the rural character of the settlement and the surrounding countryside.

WHP8b: WHCS_06 (Land adjacent to Cookhams)

- The design of the road frontages and vehicular entrance to the site should encourage traffic calming and support the parish initiative to introduce soft landscaping features along the C319 road.
- The rear limit of development should be consistent with the adjacent properties along Top Road respecting the ribbon developments of the area.
- The southern area of the site, as shown on Map C, should be set aside as an amenity space accessible to the community, to ensure that the development is appropriately screened and that the views of the ridge from the south are unspoiled. It should be gifted to West Hoathly Parish Council or other appropriate community body so that it is retained in perpetuity as a community asset.
- A public right of way should be sought through the site to link with existing footpath WH11 (existing route as shown on Map C).
- Around 16 dwellings should be developed on this site.

- The design and density of the development should reflect the rural character of the settlement and the surrounding countryside.

WHP8c: WHCS_02 (Land known as Bluebell Woods)

- The site is allocated, as indicated on Map C, for a linear development of dwellings alongside Bluebell Lane due to the countryside surrounding it on 3 sides at this sensitive, edge of village, location.
- The design for vehicular access should ensure the current convenient and safe use of Bluebell Lane for existing residents, walkers and horse-riders using the bridleway is maintained
- Development design should pay particular attention to any existing water run-off or drainage issues
- Around 15 dwellings should be developed on this site.
- The design and density of the development should have regard to existing utility conduits (e.g. Southern Water) and reflect the rural character of the settlement and the surrounding countryside in particular presenting a green landscape frontage towards Bluebell Lane wherever possible to minimise the amenity impact on existing lane residents.

Permission for these developments will also be subject to the normal planning process, other relevant MSDC policies and WSCC Highways approval.

WHP9 Conservation Areas. Residential infill development and the conversion to residential use of buildings which contribute positively to the area's character will be permitted provided they help meet local housing needs.

WHP10 Alternative Green Space All residential development proposals that result in housing growth will provide for one or more Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace(s) that meet the requirements of the local planning authority.

Due to its background (see section 9 of this plan), Hoathly Hill has special characteristics which, as in the 2004 District Local Plan, warrant exceptional consideration in this plan.

WHP11 Hoathly Hill. Development at Hoathly Hill (see Map C) will be supported where the use, scale, design and siting enhance the character of the settlement and do not result in the loss of important views or open space.

17. Local Employment

West Hoathly has limited employment opportunities within the parish with almost three-quarters of working people working elsewhere. Local businesses include some long-established firms in the building and building materials (stone, brick and timber) industries, several hospitality businesses and a number of motor maintenance firms.

Given the parish location, the existing traffic issues and limited employment development site availability, the priorities of the Plan are to:

- Encourage home-based and self-employed working (and the technology required to support this) that adds to the character and viability of the local economy.
- Conserve the limited current employment opportunities in the parish. In this way it is hoped to avoid becoming a "dormitory" settlement which is over dependent on outward commuting.

The parish has many resources to support tourism including the historic character of the conservation areas, the wealth of listed buildings especially the Priest House and St Margaret's Church, the hospitality businesses and the surrounding High Weald countryside with its extensive footpath network. If a halt is provided the re-opened Bluebell Railway to East Grinstead could also provide an additional, sustainable access to what the parish has to offer.

WHP12 Existing Employment Sites. There will be a general presumption against the loss of employment sites. Redevelopment of an existing employment site for alternative uses, including housing, with some employment opportunities retained on site will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the use of the site solely for employment is no longer viable.

18. Community Well-being (Non Policy Section)

The parish has an active community with pre- and primary education, a variety of social and leisure facilities and village green/open spaces, a wide range of social, sporting and religious groups, and 2 pubs which contribute greatly to the local quality of life. The parish is also well served with 34 allotment spaces on Finche Field. Several years ago the only general retailer in West Hoathly village closed. There remains a wish in West Hoathly Village to re-establish some way of satisfying local shopping needs.

The community is rightly concerned that there should be no loss of facilities, in particular the education of young children. There is strong support for the improvement and retention of these vital community assets in the interests of community wellbeing and sustainability.

Existing community facilities which cater for community organisations and activities are:

West Hoathly Village Hall	Sharpthorne Church Hall
Highbrook Village Hall	Hoathly Hill Hall
North Lane Recreation Ground Pavilion	West Hoathly Bowls Clubhouse
The Public Conveniences	West Hoathly Tennis Courts
Hook Lane Cricket Pavilion	

There is no resident healthcare facility in the parish which is a concern given the ageing population and the desire to attract and retain young families. There is a visiting surgery from one of the nearby medical centres and prescriptions can be collected from the Costcutter store but, as residents are registered with a variety of medical practices in the surrounding towns (approximately 5 miles away), this only benefits a subset of the population.

The Mid Sussex District Plan, through policies DP22 (Leisure and Cultural Facilities and Activities) and DP23 (Community Facilities and Local Services) protect existing community facilities and services considered important for a vibrant community and support the development of new ones which benefit local people and visitors.

Appendices

19. Supporting Documents and Evidence

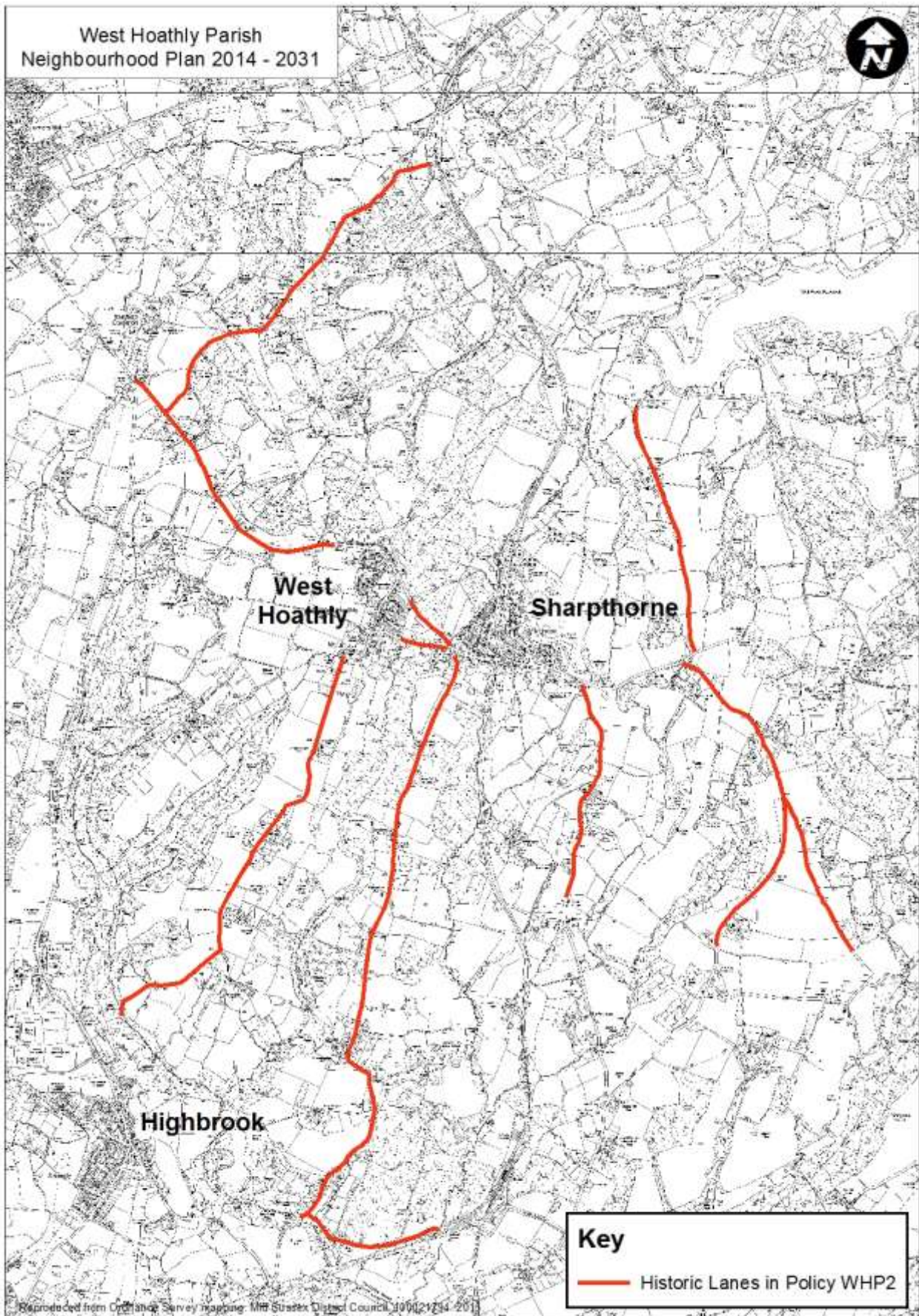
National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012
Mid Sussex Local Plan (MSLP), 2004
Mid Sussex District Plan, Submission Draft 2013 (subsequently withdrawn)
Mid Sussex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009
High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan, 2014-2019
Mid Sussex Landscape Character Assessment, 2005
Ancient Woodland Inventory for Mid Sussex, 2007
Mid Sussex Rural Affordable Housing Strategy, 2007
Biodiversity Action Plan for Sussex
Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy, MSDC 2010
Mid Sussex Infrastructure Development Plan, draft 2013
Mid Sussex Landscape Capacity Study, 2007
Register of Listed Buildings
West Sussex Sites of Nature Conservation Importance Register
West Hoathly "Parish Futures" Consultation , 2009
West Hoathly Housing Needs Study July 2012
TMS Traffic & Safety Study, November 2011
Hamilton-Baillie Associates, Traffic in Villages Toolkit, 2011
Census Data 2001 and 2011
West Hoathly Parish Profile (Action in Rural Sussex March 2011)
A Classification of Residential Neighbourhood (ACORN) Profile developed by CACI.
ACORN is a geo-demographic classification using census and other data to classify postcodes into neighbourhood categories.
Historic Environment Record
Re-appraisal of the West Hoathly Conservation Area 2008
Highbrook Conservation Area 1990
"Case for Space" booklet 2011 by RIBA
MSDC Housing Land Availability Assessment.
Parish Call for Sites I and II
Output from Vision, issues and concerns workshops Feb/Mar 2012
Output from Public Consultation Survey April 2012
Output from policy area workshops
Output from Task Force meetings December 2013 – April 2014
Output from landowner meetings and exhibition feedback February 2014

20. Acknowledgements

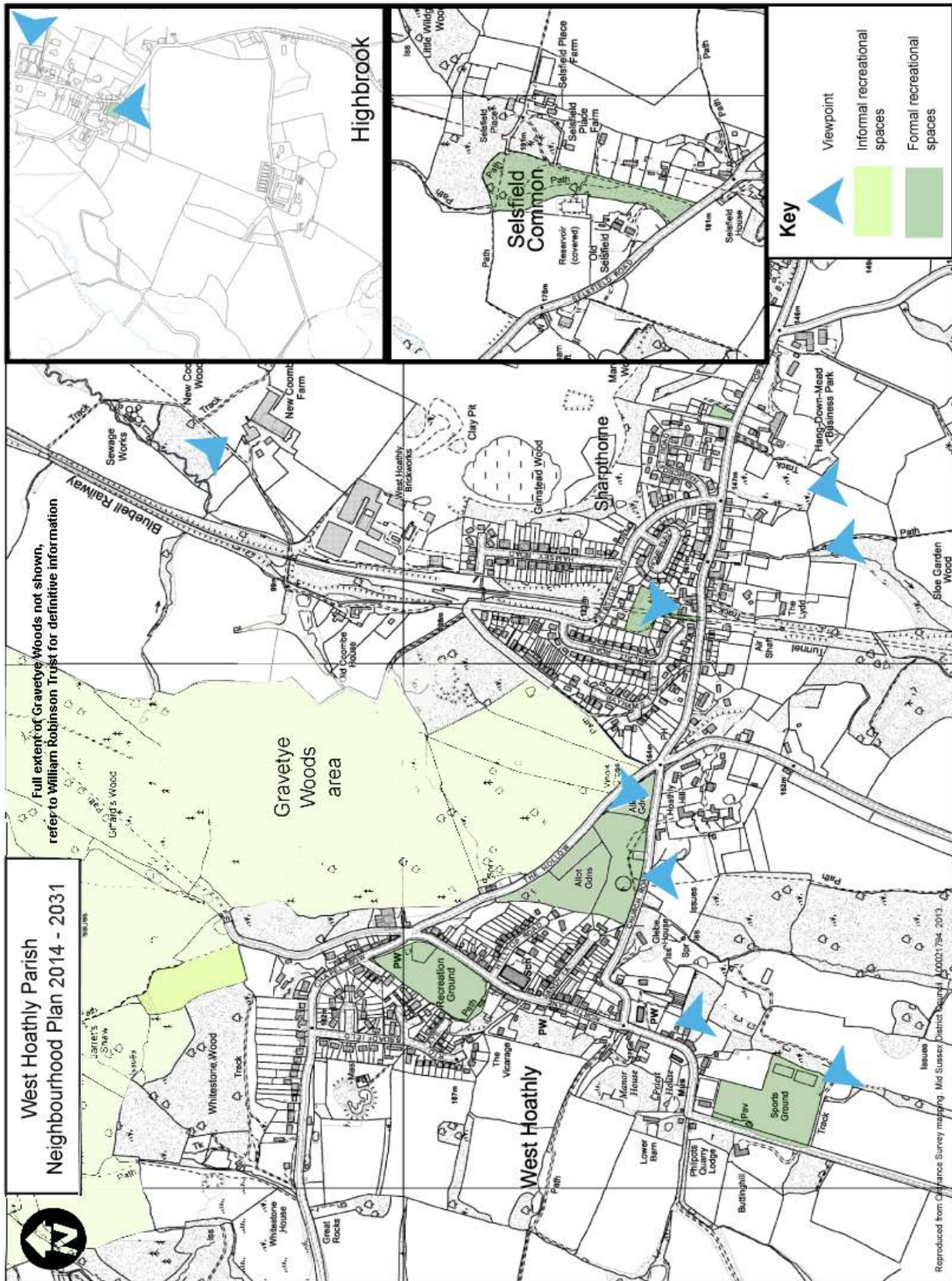
The development of the West Hoathly Parish Neighbourhood Plan has only been possible due to the support and encouragement of a number of organisations and individuals. West Hoathly Parish Council would like to recognise those whose assistance has been particularly helpful and constructive during the research and development of this draft Plan and its associated documents.

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- p. Shirley Hickey, West Hoathly Primary School and Daisy Downe for providing the front cover artwork
- q. Emma Bennett, MSDC for the preparation of the initial maps
- r. Last, but by no means least, all the parish residents who have contributed their time and knowledge to the project by participating in the workshops and Task Force, completing the surveys and commenting during the draft Plan consultation.

21. Maps
Map A



Map B



Map C

