

Social & Community Infrastructure Policies

Objective No. 8 — Protect and regenerate the heart of each village, conserving our heritage.

Objective No. 9 — Reduce the impact of traffic through the parish.

Objective No. 10 — Develop a local energy plan and encourage energy-efficient buildings.



9.1 Ticehurst is currently developing a public realm and environmental improvement scheme to reclaim the centre of Ticehurst village which is presently dominated by cars, and change it into an attractive and safer civic space for all the community to move around and enjoy.

9.2 A well designed centre could also be a draw for visitors and thus have benefits for our local businesses and economy. This is currently being undertaken by a local team in consultation with Rother District Council and East Sussex Highways.

9.3 Each village needs a centre where people can come together for special events: it helps to build a sense of belonging and social cohesion. In Ticehurst Village, annual events and ceremonies – such as Remembrance Sunday, the turning on of the Christmas lights and special celebrations such as for the Queen’s Jubilee – take place in the village square and are always well attended.

9.4 Building has started on the Corner Farm site in Flimwell and will provide 25 houses plus a new community hall adjacent to the recreation field. It will include a village community shop and nine car parking spaces for local residents. This will restore a centre to Flimwell and bring back a local shop to serve the area.

9.5 Many residents have expressed concern over the level and speed of traffic through the High Street and Church Street in Ticehurst Village and at the junction in Stonegate and along Union Street in Flimwell. They have also raised the issue of parking congestion around the Ticehurst village square and outside the school at Stonegate. This problem may increase with the rising population and Ticehurst Parish Council will continue to explore ways of reducing the impact of speeding traffic.

9.6 Key facilities are of prime importance to the residents and the village is fortunate to have a good selection of local shops in the centre of Ticehurst to meet every day and occasional needs, as discussed in Policy E1. Ticehurst doctors’ surgery and the pharmacy provide an essential local service and the primary schools in Ticehurst Village and Stonegate serve the local younger children. Flimwell children must make the journey to another village. Young people in the parish have to travel elsewhere for secondary education. There are recreational fields and open play spaces in each of the three main village centres where football (junior, adult, league and friendly) and cricket (league and friendly) are regularly played. There are also well-equipped playgrounds in each village, monitored and upgraded by Ticehurst Parish Council.

9.7 For young people, there are pre-school playgroups and nursery schools in both Stonegate and Ticehurst village and one is planned for Flimwell. Scouts, Cubs and Beavers and a Youth Group are in Ticehurst Village and the Brownies and Girl Guides are in Wadhurst, the next village, which also shares a youth club with Ticehurst. The neighbourhood plan has highlighted a need for more activities for young people in the parish. This is currently being explored.

9.8 Adult health is promoted through a healthy walks programme, the outside gym in Ticehurst and a variety of yoga, zumba, tai chi, dance classes and a boot camp, which are held regularly around the villages. The allotments in each village provide plenty of physical exercise and social contact, plus the bonus of healthy rewards for effort.

9.9 For indoor pursuits, table tennis, darts, bingo, quiz nights are very popular, and the WI and gardening clubs are well attended. The older people have a weekly lunch club and a social club. The village halls in Ticehurst and Stonegate are well-used and available for hire for a range of functions. A new village hall is being built in Flimwell. Ticehurst church has a group of active bell-ringers. To stimulate the mind, “Out of the ordinary talks” in St Mary’s Hall, a cinema club and monthly comedy nights held at one of the village pubs and the odd paella evening in a local cafe are there to be enjoyed. Three U₃A groups are available in our neighbouring villages, Hawkhurst, Goudhurst and Wadhurst. Ticehurst Parish is also fortunate to have five fully-functioning pubs, and both the fish and chip van and pizza van visit weekly.

9.10 Ticehurst also has a volunteer service (Ticehurst Community Friends) which supports the community with transport needs, befriending and small tasks. The Community Speedwatch team covers both Ticehurst Village and Flimwell. They work with the police to record those who speed through the villages, and this can lead to a caution or prosecution.

9.11 Further afield, there are outdoor pursuits at Bewl Water and at Bedgebury Pinetum and Forest. These areas are for walking, cycling, sailing, canoeing and fishing. Local organisations such as the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the High Weald AONB protect, conserve and promote the unique environment. A Plumpton College satellite at Flimwell runs training courses in rural crafts.

9.12 The TNP objectives are focused on enhancing the quality of life of all parishioners, young and old by:

- protecting and regenerating the heart of each village and conserving our heritage
- reducing the impact of traffic through the parish
- ensuring that the parish residents have the facilities they need for good health, education, leisure, retail.

9.13 Ticehurst Parish Council will resist any proposals that would lead to the reduction or loss of any leisure or cultural activities, unless it could be proved that it is no longer needed or that an alternative suitable option is available.

Policy INF1

Improvements to Village Centres

- 1) Improvements to the character and environment of Ticehurst village centre will be supported.
- 2) Developments in Flimwell village centre which provide shops, a village hall and parking will be supported.
- 3) Improvements which revitalise Stonegate village centre will be supported.

9.14 There is a significant demand from local people for slower speeds through the villages during the early TNP public consultations. The community speed watch team regularly observes that drivers do not respect the 30mph speed limit and some exceed 50mph. Residents and visitors need to feel safe in their communities. The community requires a “civilised streets” design approach that creates a “pedestrian friendly” environment and allows traffic to flow slowly and carefully through the streets. This would reduce noise, pollution and risk and be of benefit to the life and enjoyment of all. In Ticehurst village, most sheltered housing is situated on the north side of village square while the shops are on the south side. This makes it difficult, and potentially dangerous, for pedestrians, particularly for older people, to get to and from the shops. The uneven surfaces are a danger to vulnerable adults, pushchairs and mobility scooters. Consequently, there have been several accidents in the square. Shops and people thrive in more pedestrian-friendly spaces. By increasing the attractiveness of the village centre as a place to work, live and visit, there will be economic, social and cultural benefits.

9.15 The Public Realm strategy, supported by Rother District Council (RDC) and East Sussex County Council highways team, includes improvements to the road surfaces, restoring historic features, removal of clutter, improving the public lavatories, more tree planting and reducing the dominance of cars. These will ensure that the square and surrounding streets in Ticehurst are welcoming and accessible and that people can move around and enjoy the facilities safely. If movement around the village is found to be a safe and enjoyable experience, more people might be encouraged to leave their cars at home and walk or cycle.

9.16 This policy is supported by Rother District CS Policy EN₂ (Stewardship of the Historic Built Environment), EN₃ (Design Quality) and TR₃ (Access and New Development).

9.17 The centre of Stonegate is a junction where four roads meet and where rights of way are unclear and visibility poor. Local people have suggested that a mini roundabout would slow traffic and allow pedestrians to cross, accessing the village amenities more safely. East Sussex County Council highways team do not have any current plans to alter the junction as they have viewed the layout and decided that a roundabout is not feasible.

9.18 Flimwell does not have a village centre but the development currently being built at Corner Farm will incorporate one. A village centre would give Flimwell its own focus.

9.19 On these pages can be found photo-montage visualisations of possible changes to streets and spaces across the neighbourhood area. Further images can be found on the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan website.



FLIMWELL CROSSROADS

Making better use of the left-over parcel of green space near the junction and linking this to the proposals for a new village hall on adjacent land. More direct crossings for pedestrians wishing to access the new hall.



TICEHURST SQUARE

A new surface sweeps across from Pickforde Lane to Church Street, highlighting the war memorials along its path. This visual disruption to the east west route will make car drivers slow down, helping to return priority to pedestrians in this part of the village.

Policy INF2

Community Energy Project

Community energy projects will be supported subject to the following criteria:

1) Installation of generating equipment should be discreet and sensitive to the existing communities and the impact they may have on the High Weald AONB landscape and views.

2) Solar energy schemes on suitable existing and newly developed land and on the roofs of industrial or employment buildings will be supported.

9.20 The suggestion to develop a local energy plan, to generate electricity from sustainable sources, was raised and supported at the TNP consultation events. The UK Government Community Energy Strategy (Ref: 14D/019) promotes community-led energy projects to reduce carbon emissions and to ensure future UK energy security. It was updated in 2015 and says that “communities can help increase the uptake of renewable heat technologies, whether by installing them in community buildings

or by raising awareness of their benefits among households in their area. Community action can help us change the way we use heat, through engaging consumers – particularly those who are vulnerable or fuel poor – in how to use their heating systems most effectively to reduce waste and cut bills”.

9.21 Rother District CS policy SRM1 (Towards a Low Carbon Future) established support in principle for stand-alone, renewable and low-carbon energy generation schemes.

9.22 By bringing the community together to establish a local scheme with a common purpose, the TNP will not only support the Government’s objectives but will also help people to save money on energy bills, reduce fuel poverty and bring wider social and economic benefits. A local scheme could generate income streams for the community and help provide advice on energy efficiency. These projects may be actioned in partnership with non-profit-making organisations.

9.23 Such a scheme could also assist local businesses. In this context, solar photo-voltaic (solar panels) are being explored at the Woodland Enterprise Centre in Flimwell.

9.24 Car charging points in the village centres have been considered as they will become an important part of the infrastructure in the future. However, Ticehurst Parish Council has received advice that it would be premature to make a commitment to provide them at this stage; they have stated that full compliance with statutory obligations in the future would be met.

Policy INF3

Community Areas in Housing Developments

1) In developments of less than 10 homes, it is expected that only well-planned layout and informal open spaces will be provided. In developments of more than 10 houses, or where an individual phase comprises 10 or fewer dwellings an on-site Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) should be required.

2) Developers will be responsible for maintaining outdoor play spaces and facilities until a formal transfer to a management organisation or Ticehurst Parish Council is arranged, to allow for establishment of facilities and planting.

3) Developers will also be required to produce maintenance plans for all on-site informal open spaces, formal outdoor sports and play facilities.

9.25 There is evidence to suggest that the distance young children are able to travel from home on their own is limited to one or two streets and younger pre-school children require supervised outdoor play opportunities. Therefore the quality and diversity of the outdoor environment is extremely important if children's needs for active, creative and social play are to be satisfied. Children and their parents greatly value the ability to move around safely within sight of their homes. This gives children social contact with their friends in a spontaneous way, so places to cycle, skate, and push buggies using a footpath network are important.

9.26 New developments should be carefully designed in consultation with the local community to be child-friendly places, in accordance with Rother District CS Policy Co6 (Community Safety).

9.27 Developers will be expected to ensure that outdoor play space and facilities are appropriately maintained up to the point of transfer. They should provide the management organisation with a helpful guide to ensure that maintenance is then continued at an appropriate level.

9.28 Funding for play areas could come from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or site-specific S106 contributions. Once the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan has passed referendum and been accepted by Rother District, the CIL levy passed on to the parish will increase from 15% to 25%. This will enable Ticehurst Parish Council to meet community aspirations that were strongly expressed in parish consultation informing this plan. In developing this policy we have researched other local authority policies, in particular:

- *Open Spaces in New Developments (South Cambridgeshire District Council Policy)*
- *Child's Play: Facilitating Play on Housing Estates (A Report for the Chartered Institute of Housing and The Joseph Rowntree Foundation)*
- *Rother District Council Open Spaces Sport and Recreation Study (2007)*

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Pursue shared space and traffic calming plans with ESCC Highways and Rother District Council

9.29 Work with the local authorities to plan and implement safer villages. See policy INF1 for images and ideas about improvements to the village centres. Further images can be found on the Ticehurst Neighbourhood Plan website.

9.30 Work with local authorities to designate some lanes in the parish as “quiet lanes” (not suitable for heavy traffic)

9.31 As the service centre for the surrounding area, the village of Ticehurst recognises that it is important to protect the vital range of essential services to meet the public need. However, Ticehurst village is particularly vulnerable to the pressures generated by the growth of traffic on the B2099 which passes directly through village, dividing its retail and social centre.

9.32 The village square has become a car park, the historic features have become neglected and events that used to take place in the Square have been squeezed out. The village plans to develop a quality scheme in partnership with Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council to restore it and create a multifunctional shared space that supports village social and economic life. It will be available for short term and disabled parking only. This is considered critical to the ongoing success of the village.

9.33 Local authorities are able to designate county lanes as “quiet lanes” under the Transport Act, 2000. In order to improve safety for both pedestrians and cyclists, Ticehurst Parish Council plans to work with RDC and ESCC to ensure that relevant lanes in the parish are designated as “quiet lanes”.

Complete open space, sport and recreation audit

9.34 Develop a local action plan for Ticehurst in line with Rother District Council's stated aim: "All open space sites should be clean, litter free and have a range of ancillary facilities appropriate to the site. Where applicable, sites should be accessible to all and promote the Council's Vision of achieving a better quality of life in Rother."

9.35 Ticehurst Parish Council is planning a programme of improvements to the recreation fields in all three villages and is consulting the community to ensure that it provides suitable play spaces for all ages.

9.36 Litter in public spaces is unsightly and a danger to other users. Ticehurst Parish Council employs a part-time litter picker and checks the recreation fields regularly for hazards. It encourages litter picking through voluntary action and education programmes in the local children. This is a continuous programme.

Encourage recreational use of the AONB

9.37 Ensure local people and visitors are aware of the excellent walking opportunities by displaying local maps and advertising them.

9.38 The attractions of the AONB draw tourists to the area and benefit the local economy.

9.39 Notice boards informing local people and tourists of the facilities that are available are planned for central areas.

9.40 The pub in the centre of Ticehurst Village plans to produce leaflets about local walks. Information about local events is published every month in the parish magazine (News and Views) which is distributed throughout the parish.

9.41 Ticehurst has a well-attended footpath society and healthy walks programme.