



## Natural and Built Environment Topic Report



Tatsfield Parish Council

Draft Topic Report

13 March 2020

## INTRODUCTION

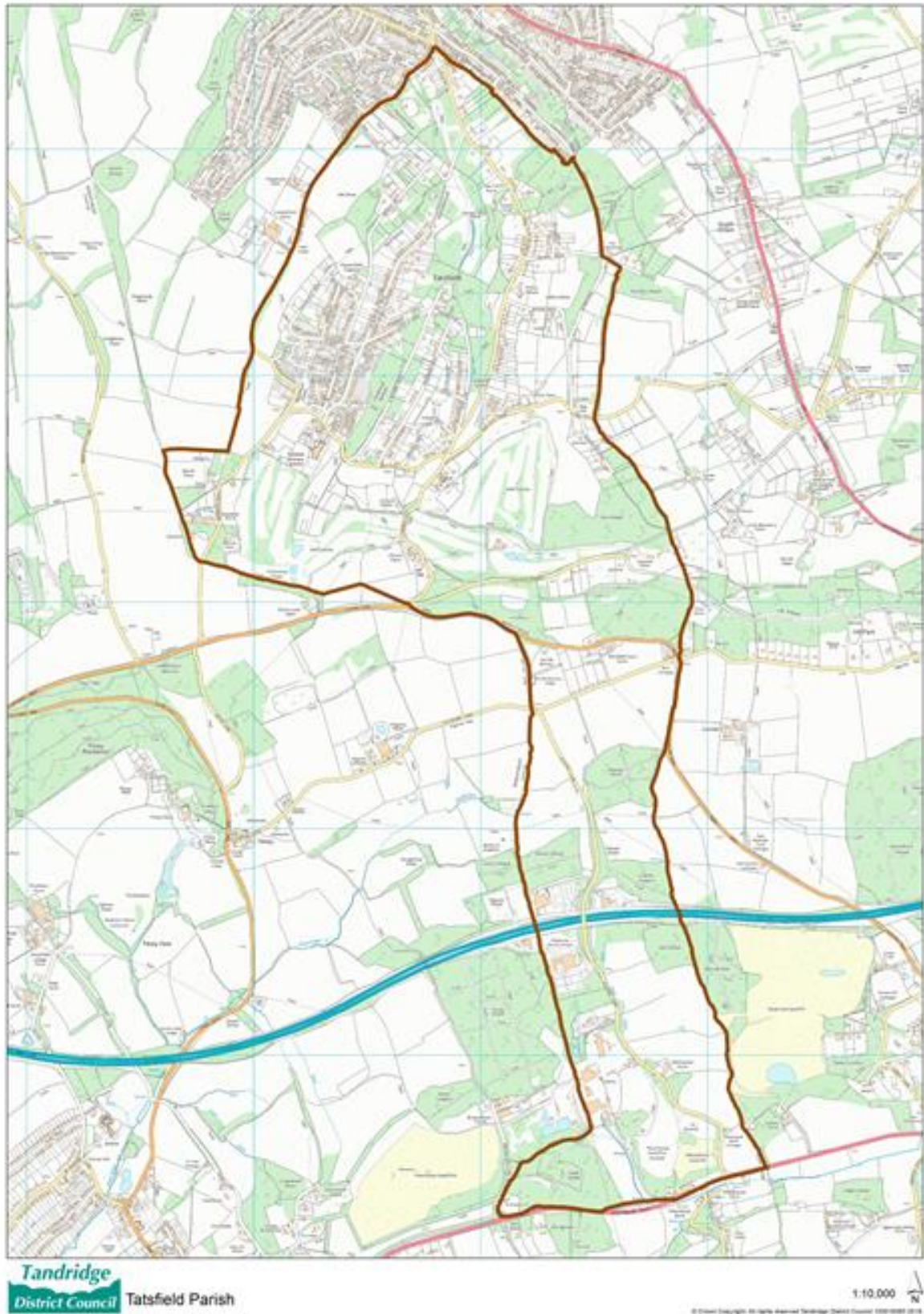
The parish of Tatsfield is in the extreme east of Surrey, tucked up against the border with Kent and with Greater London. It lies nine miles south-east of Croydon and 16 miles south of central London. The village itself is in the north of the 1300 acre parish, close to Biggin Hill in the London Borough of Bromley. At that point it is about one mile across. The rest of the parish is a narrow, sparsely populated strip running south for two miles, crossing the M25 Motorway at the Clacket Lane Service Area. It then continues further south to the A25 Guildford to Maidstone road, just outside Westerham. One of the characteristics of the village – centred on its pond and village green – is its network of more than five miles of unmade roads. The commercial centre of the village with its shops and facilities lies at the southern end of the built-up area.

Listed buildings (all Grade II) include St Mary's Church originating largely from the 12th and 13th centuries; Colegates a 15th century hall house; the 18th century Manor House; and Westwood Farmhouse. All have settings that contribute to their heritage significance.

Tatsfield is predominantly rural. The village is surrounded by fields and mature woodland. Much of the central part of the village within the defined settlement area contains large plots which provide a sense of openness. Residents greatly appreciate the long views, extensive areas of woodland and mixed farmland, public rights of way, open green areas and abundant wildlife. However most of what we have is not natural in its true sense – that which occurred naturally without man's assistance – in fact we are the beneficiaries of the work of others over many years.

The parish also contains a number of environmental designations including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (Titsey Wood), a Local Nature Reserve (Hill Park), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance and there is a significant amount of ancient woodland dispersed across the parish.

This report is informed by national and local planning policies and guidance as well as community consultation undertaken through the Neighbourhood Plan process.



Tatsfield Parish

## **POLICY BACKGROUND**

The Tandridge Core Strategy (2008) and Local Plan Part 2 (Detailed Policies) and the emerging Tandridge Local Plan 2033 include built environment planning policies which seek to encourage high quality and sustainable new development, reinforcing local distinctiveness and character. Tatsfield is designated as a 'defined village' within the Green Belt whereby certain appropriate development is supported within the settlement boundary, such as infilling an existing developed frontage. The development plan also includes more detailed policies which seek to protect buildings identified for their heritage value such as listed buildings; and features which make a key contribution to the built environment (for example trees and other landscape features) as well as more specific policies relating to ancillary domestic building design, garden development, highway safety, design and agricultural buildings.

The Tatsfield Neighbourhood Plan can introduce built environment and natural environment policies which add further detail to these strategic level policies, making them more specific to the parish.

Until the Core Strategy is replaced by the emerging Tandridge Local Plan 2033, it and the Detailed Policies adopted in 2014 form the statutory development plan. The replacement Local Plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in January 2019 for public examination. Increasing weight will attach to the emerging plan as it passes through the public examination process.

## **GEOLOGY AND DESIGNATIONS**

The entire parish lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. A large part of the parish south of the village lies within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which gives an indication of the significant quality and importance of the local landscape. Fields and open space around the village acts as a buffer, protecting views into and out of the AONB. Much of this area is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in the current 2014 Local Plan.

The AGLV designation remains until a review of the AONB boundary takes place. An assessment in 2007 recommends that no areas should be removed from AGLV designation until the case for an extended AONB has been considered. The assessment categorises parts of the landscape around Tatsfield, much of which is now used for equine purposes and as a golf course, in a colour code: "green areas" are capable of being included in the AONB without further assessment; "amber areas" require more detailed assessment; and any areas that remain outside a newly defined AONB should be subject to detailed landscape character appraisal and criteria based policies.

The assessment confirms that the character of a significant part of the AGLV is similar to the AONB and is therefore worthy of inclusion into the AONB. Because



of the importance of the AGLV and the aim of including much of it within the AONB a criteria based approach alone would not be adequate. Therefore the strategy proposes the retention of the AGLV designation until such time as a review of the AONB boundary has been undertaken by Natural England.

The Neighbourhood Plan has the opportunity of identifying areas of landscape value in the Parish that could be included in the AONB or positively identified as having local value for views and character. Such an area could include Park Wood and farmland/equestrian land north of Rag Hill.

*Insert AONB and AGLV plan showing red, amber and green areas from 2007 study? Link:*



Surrey Hills AONB  
Recommended-additi

## **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

*Insert 'Magic' map or similar showing ancient woodland, green space, designations, nature reserve, public footpaths?*

### **Geology**

There is a wide variety of geology in the Parish - from North to South an underlying chalk bedrock with pockets of clay-with-flints formations gives way to East-West bands of chalk, Greensand and Gault clay, moving down the escarpment and on to the Moorhouse Sandpits.

*There is a nice illustration of this in the 'Tatsfield The first 2000 years' book.*

### **Biodiversity**

We are fortunate to have a number of areas where wildlife can flourish. Across the Parish **xx** bird species have been recorded, many appear in Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds.

Hill Park, a 24-hectare Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Conservation Interest (SNCI) spans the entire width of the Parish north of the B2024 Clarks Lane and south of Chestnut Avenue. The reserve is a mosaic of secondary woodland, scrub and chalk grassland and is owned by Surrey County Council and managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust to maximise biodiversity. The reserve occupies a commanding position on the crest of the Downs and the southerly views are spectacular. 160 plant species have been recorded including Fly, Bee and Pyramidal Orchids and there are strong colonies of the nationally rare Greater Yellow-rattle *Rhinanthus angustifolius*. 28 species of butterfly have been recorded including the declining Grizzled skipper. Grass snakes and slow worms are frequently encountered, as are Roe and Fallow deer.

## **Park Wood Golf course**

The golf course may at first appear to be a barren green desert with large areas of heavily mown greens and fairways. However, the rougher areas can make a significant contribution to biodiversity. Also, the artificial ponds, a welcome feature given our position high in the Downs, are excellent habitat for many invertebrates and amphibians - common toad, a biodiversity priority species under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006), breed here in good numbers. There may be an opportunity to work with the landowner to further improve the biodiversity.

## **Park Wood**

This privately-owned Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) is much cherished by locals, particularly in spring when it is carpeted with a magnificent display of bluebells.

## **Tatsfield Green/Kemsley Wood/Ashen Shaw**

Owned by the Parish but **are there any formal management plans for these assets?** There is great potential to enhance the existing biodiversity in these areas. Limehouse bottom and other privately-owned woodland is of significant ecological value and some is designated as Ancient Woodland (the east side of Ninehams Road).

These environments will only thrive if we maintain and enhance the connections between them allowing the wildlife to move through the landscape. This can be achieved by having policies that prevent habitat fragmentation and broken links.

We need to: Encourage a little untidiness in the garden and the preservation of hedges and soft boundaries; explain the benefits of allowing our verges and greens to go a bit wild before the annual cut; require developers to follow the biodiversity net gain approach, even if not compulsory, to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development; and acknowledge the important role that private green spaces play in contributing to local biodiversity.

## **Agriculture and rural land- access, fencing and hedges**

Tatsfield village is surrounded by agricultural land from the South East aspect through to the North West; Tatsfield Parish also contains farms and private land.

Access:

This land is crossed by many public footpaths and bridleways some of which are in regular use by walkers, horse riders and increasingly by cyclists. Whilst some of these cross open ground, many of them pass between boundaries with associated fencing and hedges. Duties and responsibilities for their maintenance is complex and set out in the Surrey County Council "Countryside Access Guide for Surrey"; many are in a poor state and some are now barely accessible due to heavy growth, poor surfaces and unsafe stiles and gates. Whilst it is the

responsibility of SCC to maintain the width, it is also the responsibility of adjacent landowners to cut their hedges and maintain their fences (many of these are of barbed wire); with no inspections, or maintenance, being carried out by county footpaths officers it seems likely that there will be further deterioration with the possibility that more will become inaccessible. There is a particular problem for access by disabled persons due to restrictions at entrances (stiles instead of gates), poor surfaces and heavy growth.

There is a need to establish community-based footpath and bridleway wardens – the SCC Volunteer Path Wardens Scheme will assist with training and organising teams of local volunteers who can carry out basic maintenance and work with adjacent landowners to maintain their hedges and fences.

There is a need to develop local initiatives, with assistance from the SCC Rights of Way Team, to secure funding for the provision of accessible gates suitable for disabled users.

There are also a large number of unofficial access paths that are regularly used by walkers.

Landowners have closed some of these unofficial access paths by fencing and hedge planting but overall the use of these paths seems to be tolerated with very few incidents involving loose dogs or gates left open.

It would be an unsafe assumption that this tolerant attitude by landowners would continue or that users would continue to respect this facility; an increase in the local population may result in greater use and perhaps less respect.

There is a need to identify these paths and aim to secure permissive access arrangements by agreement with the landowners'. **Local residents have expressed a strong desire to obtain safe pedestrian access to the parish church avoiding the single track Church Lane. This will involve the co-operation of the local landowner of Park Wood golf course.**

## **Trees and Woodland**

Section xxx deals with ancient woodland in and around Tatsfield Parish. Within the village there are two areas designated as Ancient Woodland, on the east side of Ninehams Road and on the west side of Old Lane. Tatsfield also has groups of trees in private and public woodland, as copses, in hedgerows, on common land (reference to maps) and in gardens.

The dominant species are Oak (*Quercus*), Beech (*Fagus*), Ash (*Fraxinus*), some Sycamore/Maples (*Acer* sp), Lime (*Tilia*) with supporting understory species of Thorns (*Crataegus*, *Prunus*), Hazel (*Corylus*), Willows (*Salix*), Field Maple (*Acer campestre*); Smaller ornamental species of Cherry (*Prunus*), Rowan (*Sorbus*), Laburnum, Maple..... (*Acer*) are found in gardens.

Other than ancient woodland and our public open spaces; there is no detailed survey of trees so we do not have an accurate idea of what trees we have or

their age and condition. There is no plan or programme for their renewal or increasing the population, this despite various national initiatives e.g. The Tree Council, The Woodland Trust.

There is a record of Tree Preservation Orders within the parish but these are historic with no new TPO's being made in recent years to protect good specimens.

Many tree species are under attack by pests and diseases (Ash Die Back, Processionary Moth Caterpillars, Weeping Canker....) and this is accelerating the loss of mature, but also young trees. Trees have been removed, or badly pruned, to make way for housing development including extensions in private gardens. This nett loss of trees in Tatsfield is significantly altering our landscape view, but it is also an important environmental loss (trees can support in the region of 200 separate species) and this reduces our biodiversity.

The increase in the density of housing development e.g. the loss of one property with a large garden for three with small gardens, has included the loss of trees within the defined village resulting in a more urban environment and loss of habitat.

**A survey of trees in the parish should be carried out with a target set and a programme of tree planting initiated using national and local planting schemes to increase the population of trees in gardens, woodland, hedges and copses.**

**The removal and disfigurement of trees should be actively discouraged in any future development; specimens of importance to the landscape view, the local environment and biodiversity should be protected making better use of the TPO Regulations and guidance.**

Tatsfield residents currently enjoy a significant variety of wildlife and encourage this to be preserved when considering new housing development. The built and natural environments should therefore continue to be supportive of the native birds, mammals, amphibians and insects in the local eco-system as follows:

- Birds are the most evident form of wildlife which Tatsfield residents enjoy. Mature trees and native hedgerows should be preserved as important bird habitat for roosting, nesting and food sources and measures should be implemented to maintain the welfare of these niches.
- New property boundaries should be planted with native hedgerows alongside fences for the birds' security and privacy and holes for hedgehogs to range naturally should be integrated into all fences or boundary walls.



- Integration of Swift bricks, ready-formed House Martin nests, Starling Boxes and Bat Boxes should be considered under the eaves of new buildings.
- As insects are an important part of the wildlife food chain and need a variety of plentiful flora the incorporation of significant green space, planted appropriately e.g. with wildflower meadow plants, into the planning of private and public spaces is required. This will also support the native reptiles: grass snakes and slow worms.

Wildlife ponds should be included in future planning (as opposed to ornamental ponds) as these are vital to continue to support the many forms of wildlife present in Tatsfield and they provide the correct environment for native amphibians, water insects and water fowl. They also provide vital drinking and bathing water for birds and wild mammals. The wildlife inhabiting the woodland in the parish depends on ponds for water.

## **Green Spaces**

(Ian)

See James G's contribution and para 100 of NPPF

Add plan of green space in Parish

## **Notable views**

### **Views**

Tatsfield's altitude of 230 metres provides it with some outstanding views both south and north. These, along with several aesthetic vistas within the village itself are considered valued by Tatsfield's residents, as evidenced in public consultation meetings. These are summarised on the attached plan and listed below. Obscuring of these views by development would not be welcome:

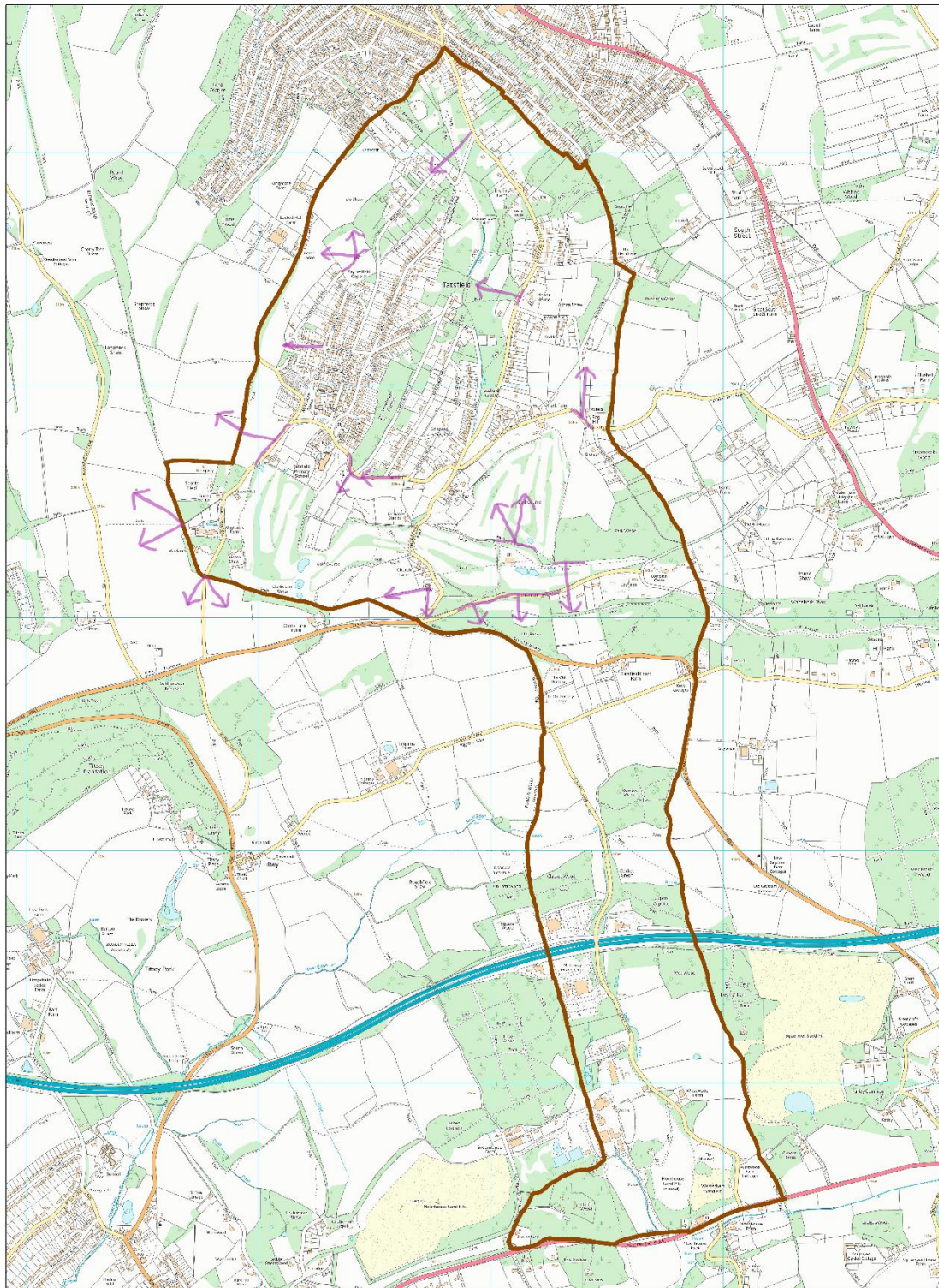
### **Views out from the village:**

1. View south from Approach Road, across the weald towards the South Downs
2. View south across the weald from St Mary's Churchyard
3. View North to London City and Docklands from the west side of the village and from the allotments and footpaths in the adjacent fields
4. View North to London City and Docklands from the golf course on the east side of the village

### **Views within the village:**

5. Views across the Old Lane Valley / Millenium Woods e.g. from Rickets Hill Road and from Barnfield Road
6. View across the Ninehams Valley e.g. from Maesmaur Road and Ship Hill Close

7. View across Village Green and centre, from The Ship, The Bakery, seats by the pond
8. View across from Ship Hill, over the fields towards the old School Building



## **Wildlife/birds/pond**

### **Birds**

Future development on a scale permitted within the village is unlikely to affect bird populations. In fact, it could be argued that a residential garden, planned and developed with wildlife in mind, could well be more beneficial to local wildlife than the unplanned/wild habitat it replaces. However, when considering development of either public or privately owned land, there may be existing natural features that deserve special attention from a conservation viewpoint. The two that instantly spring to mind are mature trees and natural (native species) hedgerows. These are both of great benefit to most species of bird found within the village providing roosting and nesting sites, a shared food source (nuts, seeds, berries, insects) and shelter from adverse weather and predators. They also, of course, play a key role within the village's broader, natural eco-system. The village needs to secure the future welfare of these existing trees and hedgerows and wherever possible implement measures to ensure their upkeep and care.

In terms of providing benefit for birds at the building proposal stage, the following is suggested:

- Encouraging the planting of hedgerow boundaries (native species), possibly alongside a fence for security and privacy.
- The inclusion of 'swift bricks' within new brickwork. These are unobtrusive nesting sites aimed at attracting Swifts, situated below the eaves. Alternatively there is a form available that fits within the roof tiles. Swifts tend to nest in colonies and remain localised. The provision of suitable nesting sites, particularly on a multi-dwelling development, could lead to the appearance of a new colony.
- The installation of bird boxes for those other species that enjoy human habitation, in particular, ready-formed House Martin nests and Starling boxes, both of which are installed below the eaves. We have experienced a great reduction in numbers of Starlings within the village and the fitting of these boxes may promote a revived population. House martins used to nest regularly around the village but have not done so for many years. It is possible that the provision of nest boxes would encourage their return.

There are, of course, many other forms of bird box that would benefit our native species but not all are as unobtrusive as the ones suggested above. Our House Sparrows, for example, may well benefit from the provision of a multi-entrance box fitted to a wall but, being fitted at a lower height, not everyone will appreciate this as a feature of their home. Obviously, house owners could be encouraged to provide nest boxes within their gardens but it needs to remain their choice to do so.

### **Other wildlife**

As we are all aware, birds are simply part of a much broader eco-system. Nevertheless, for most residents, birds are the most evident form of wildlife within

our village. They visit our gardens, eat the food we supply for them, inhabit our nest boxes (if we're lucky!) and generally provide interest and entertainment for naturalists and non-naturalists alike. Mammals, reptiles and amphibians do, nevertheless, occasionally emerge from the undergrowth and make themselves visible. So, what form of conservation measures do we, or could we, take to benefit these creatures? Here are a few examples:

- Install bat boxes on new and existing buildings.
- Inform people that Grass Snakes and Slow-worms are harmless.
- Encourage pond owners to make provision for Frogs, Toads and Newts.
- Educate and, when necessary, assist homeowners to provide a simple hole in or under their boundary fence that allows the free movement of Hedgehogs, thereby providing the range of movement necessary for the finding of food and shelter.

As we are all aware, these more obvious forms of wildlife are simply part of a much broader ecosystem. Local plants or insects are often greatly overlooked when it comes to conservation provision. Encouraging gardeners to leave pockets of wild plants or allowing them to prosper within a lawn would be a significant step towards the maintenance of our plant and insect ecosystem. Badgers, Deer or Foxes, particularly within the defined 'settlement area', can be destructive within gardens and since the objective here is clearly to encourage people's acceptance and joy of wildlife, judging wild animals to be a nuisance would be more of a hindrance than a help. There is plenty of land surrounding the village to cater for these larger mammals.

#### Environmental change

By looking at old photographs of the village pond, we can see how changing ideas have created a whole range of presentation forms. Whenever landscape 'improvements' are made we do, however, need to be aware of the environmental impact. The latest work on the pond has created a very attractive 'garden' feature, but is it beneficial to the once resident flora and fauna? It will certainly be difficult to attract House martins back to the centre of the village (where they were once abundant) now that the muddy edge (used for nest building) has been eliminated. Also, it is unclear that the environmental needs of Frogs and Newts (both of which were commonly found before the 'restoration') have been sufficiently considered. This doesn't mean change shouldn't happen, but it does highlight the necessity of careful planning with wildlife in mind.

It's easy to look at established land use and ignore better alternatives. We shouldn't accept things as they are simply because they've always been that way. Hill Park is a wonderful example of how careful planning and management works to create and maintain a land parcel of environmental richness appropriate to the area. The barren waste of Green opposite the allotments, on the other hand, is a classic example of poor land use. Apart from becoming an overflow car park for Westmore Green events, it is a wasted amenity; an area of common land crying



out to be developed into a magnificent wildflower meadow. Some may say this is 'blue sky' thinking, but it's not. It's entirely feasible and would provide a wonderful conservation feature within our village, providing a greatly enhanced habitat for wildlife, particularly if shallow ponds were included in the plan.

### Community involvement

Community involvement is the keystone for effective change. If our aim is to improve the natural environment within the village then all members of the community must be given the opportunity to get on board. They must have an understanding of the planner's aims and objectives, and they must become 'partners in spirit', whether or not they actively participate. The 'Tatsfield in Bloom' team are immensely successful and have considerable support within the village. I see no reason why a similar team, focusing on wildlife issues, couldn't be just as successful. If people are willing to plant daffodils, surely they will be willing to plant cowslips? If they clear leaves, surely they will build and fit nest boxes for birds and roosting boxes for bats? Once people have tasks to focus on, they often prove willing to participate, either as team members or alone. And where does all this community interest begin? With effective environmental education. Not just for interested adults but for all villagers including our school children. There is an 'Eco-Schools' programme and award. Does our village school participate? If not, why not? When encouraged, young people usually show genuine interest in the natural environment that surrounds them. We do them, and ourselves, a massive disservice by ignoring that interest. And what about commercial landowners? We have very little farmland within the parish boundary but even so, an agreement to plant a few Oak trees along field edges would make a significant difference, not only visually but in terms of an increased habitat for insects. Similarly, our local golf course, which already displays a variety of trees and wild flower/grass areas, could further benefit local wildlife if a variety of appropriate nest boxes were fitted.

### Funding

A common obstacle to many new projects is the perceived lack of funding. One of my roles, when teaching, was that of 'Initiatives Manager'. This was a totally new role within primary schools. When I began, I came up with many wonderful ideas that were scrapped before they even got onto paper. The problem was funding. There was never enough money available to carry out my proposals. But then I discovered the solution: Come up with an idea, create the initial plan, get some expert advice, make a formal proposal, have it agreed and then think about how to fund it. When people see the potential benefits of a well-planned proposal, funding from various sources tends to become available.

### Concluding note

Over the next 50+ years, dramatic changes in environmental conditions will be seen. These are (regrettably) beyond our control. However, there is no reason to sit idly by. We should, as a community, do what we can, when we can, in order



to conserve and improve conditions for local wildlife. The 'what' is up for debate: The 'when' is now.

#### Further notes

Future development on a scale permitted within Tatsfield is unlikely to affect bird populations. In fact, it could be argued that a residential garden, planned and developed with wildlife in mind, could well be more beneficial to local wildlife than the unplanned/wild habitat it replaces. However, when considering development of either public or privately-owned land, there may be existing natural features that deserve special attention from a conservation viewpoint, such as mature trees and natural (native species) hedgerows. These are both of great benefit to most species of bird found within the village, providing roosting and nesting sites, a shared food source (nuts, seeds, berries, insects) and shelter from adverse weather and predators. They also play a key role within the Tatsfield's broader, natural eco-system.

In order to secure the future welfare of these existing trees and hedgerows, the following measures should be implemented in order to ensure their upkeep and care.

- Encouraging the planting of hedgerow boundaries (native species), possibly alongside a fence for security and privacy.
- The inclusion of 'swift bricks' within new brickwork. These are unobtrusive nesting sites aimed at attracting swifts, situated below the eaves. Alternatively, there is a form available that fits within the roof tiles. Swifts tend to nest in colonies and remain localised. The provision of suitable nesting sites, particularly on a multi-dwelling development, could lead to the appearance of a new colony.
- The installation of bird boxes for those other species that enjoy human habitation, in particular, ready-formed house martin nests and starling boxes, both of which are installed below the eaves. There has been a great reduction in numbers of starlings within Tatsfield and the fitting of these boxes may promote a revived population. House martins used to nest regularly around the village but have not done so for many years. It is possible that the provision of nest boxes would encourage their return.

There are many other forms of bird box that would benefit our native species but not all are as unobtrusive as the ones suggested above. House sparrows, for example, may well benefit from the provision of a multi-entrance box fitted to a wall but, being fitted at a lower height, not everyone will appreciate this as a feature of their home. House owners should be encouraged to provide nest boxes within their gardens.

#### Other wildlife

Birds are part of a much broader eco-system. Nevertheless, for most residents, they are the most evident form of wildlife within Tatsfield. They visit gardens, eat food supplied for them, use nest boxes and generally provide interest and entertainment for naturalists and non-naturalists alike. Mammals, reptiles and amphibians also emerge occasionally from the undergrowth and make themselves visible.

The following measures should be implemented in order to benefit these creatures:

- Install bat boxes on new and existing buildings.
- Inform people that grass snakes and slow-worms are harmless.
- Encourage pond owners to make provision for frogs, toads and newts.
- Educate and, when necessary, assist homeowners to provide a simple hole in or under their boundary fence that allows the free movement of hedgehogs, thereby providing the range of movement necessary for finding food and shelter.

These more obvious forms of wildlife are simply part of a much broader ecosystem. Local flora and fauna can be overlooked when it comes to conservation provision. Encouraging gardeners to leave pockets of wild plants or allowing them to prosper within a lawn would be a significant step towards the maintenance of Tatsfield's plant and insect ecosystem. The variety of wild plants appearing within the garden can be of greater interest than cultivated plants.

#### Mammals

Encouraging badgers, deer or foxes, particularly within the 'defined village' can be controversial. These mammals can be destructive in gardens and if

considered to be a nuisance they defeat the objective of encouraging people's acceptance and joy of wildlife.

There is plenty of land surrounding the village to cater for these larger mammals, but people should be discouraged from disturbing wild animals by visiting such habitats.

### **Flood Risk**

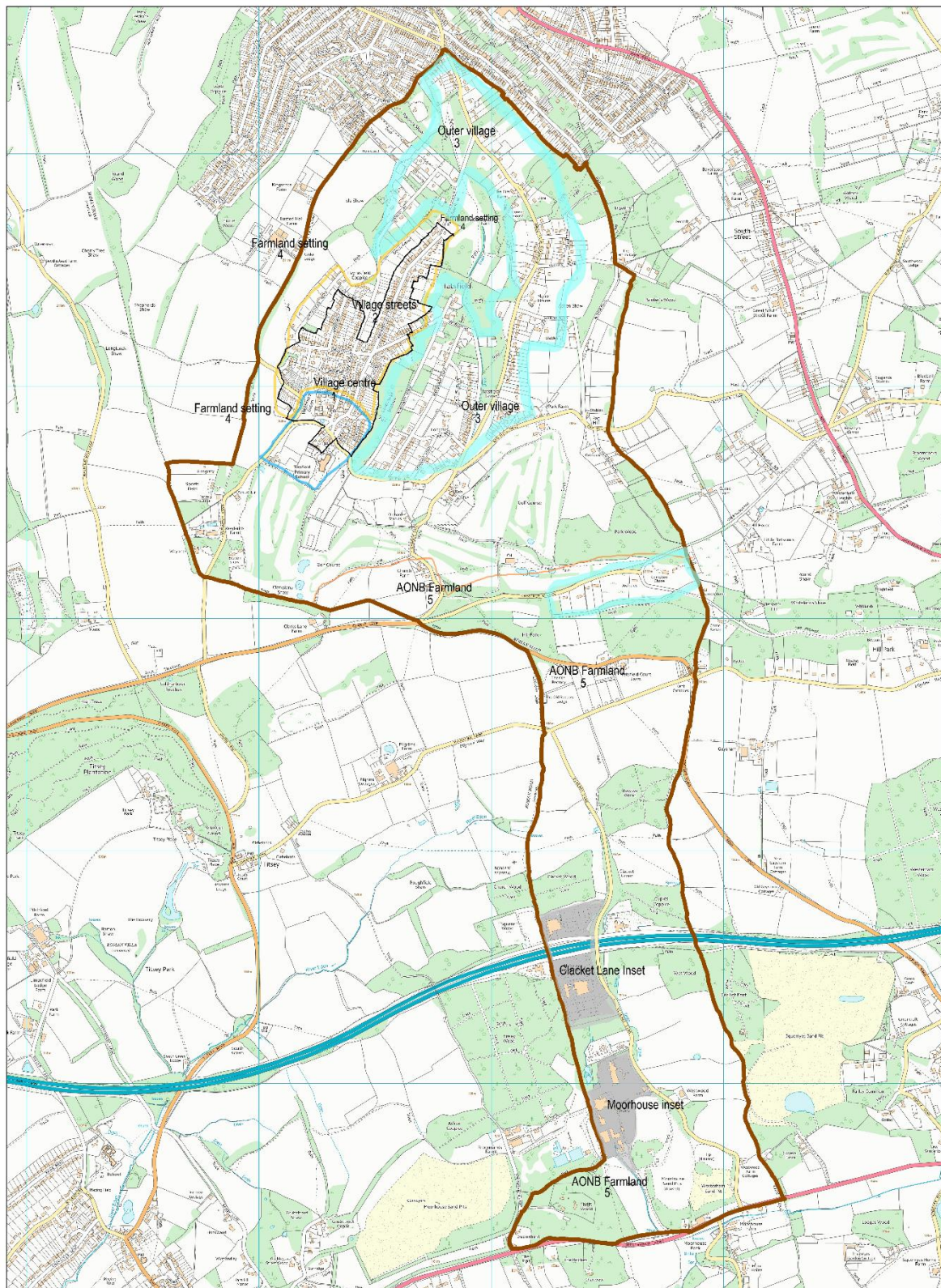
The parish lies entirely within Flood Zone 1. There are areas of surface water flood risk in the north (in and around Tatsfield village) and to the south of the parish. Most of the parish has only a low risk of groundwater flooding but the far south of the parish is at risk of groundwater flooding at the surface locally. Localised flooding occurs in heavy rain, particularly on unmade roads.

The whole of the South East is identified as being an area of water stress.

### **CHARACTER AREAS**

The parish can be divided into broad character areas. The dividing lines between these are not necessarily easily seen 'on the ground' but are useful in establishing what is valuable about a place and identifying what should be preserved, conserved or improved. For each character area, following the SWOT analysis and consultation exercise, questions are raised for discussion. The character areas do not necessarily follow the village settlement boundary but are intended to reflect the area as perceived visually.

Key plan showing character areas and defined settlement boundary





## Area 1- Village Centre (blue)



Village centre

This area forms the centre of the village around Westmore Green and includes the school, village shops, the Village Hall and meeting rooms, the Village Club, the Ye Olde Ship pub and the Bakery bistro, restaurant and rooms. These buildings are clustered around a road junction and an attractive dew pond which acts as a focal point of interest. The centre is approached from the south via Approach Road, from the east via Ship Hill and from the north via Lusted Hall Lane.

The tree and hedge lined approaches to the village are interspersed with properties of varied and interesting character. The White House is currently designated as a Building of Character, in other words, a building of heritage interest. Whilst this does not give it statutory protection, it is an asset with significance that needs to be taken into account in planning decisions. All the properties on the approach to the Village centre maintain very natural gardens and hedgerows giving a very rural feel with agricultural land that can be seen behind some of these hedges during the winter months.

Westmore Green is defined by mature trees and hedges. The green is a focus for community activities and benefits from extensive bulb planting undertaken every year by community groups. A raised display bed faces the southern approach. Tatsfield residents are very proud of the village centre and maintain all the green/natural areas through an extensive volunteer network which is very important in supporting the key work the Parish Council and Tandridge District



Council carry out. This work includes the various hanging basket displays that help show off the key buildings.

On entering Westmore Green and the heart of Tatsfield the street scene changes and buildings become more densely grouped with gardens of varying styles. Two recent housing developments in the village are Bassett's and Vern Place.

Bassett's is fairly dense and uniform in character and is set well back from the road. Vern Place offers a more individual layout and design. Residents of the village are generally supportive of the architectural style of Vern Close but recent smaller infill developments in Westmore Road are perceived as cramped and unsympathetic. Moving away from the village centre on Lusted Hall Lane, Westmore Road and Paynesfield Road, the eclectic mix of buildings becomes more evident before more spacious development becomes obvious around The Square and on larger plots.

There is significant parking pressure in Westmore Road and around the centre, especially at school times. New development in Area 1 generally includes off street parking, which reduces the amount of space available for parking at the kerb but also reduces parking on the kerb, easing passage for pedestrians. Local residents see the increased density of development in this area as detrimental to the character of the village, citing urbanisation as an undesirable trend.

#### **Area 1- Questions to consider**

All previous village appraisals and consultation report that residents consider that the pub and the shops are essential to maintain the heart and sense of community of the village and should be protected as far as possible from unsympathetic future development or change of use.

*Should there be any future planning and design guidelines to control or limit development in the centre?*

*How should we deal with density? This is the main area where local residents feel 'overdevelopment' is occurring.*

*Should the defined settlement area be moved to allow future development south of Westmore Green on unutilised agricultural land in the Green Belt?*

*Are there any buildings of character or landmarks that need additional protection?*

*Should the design of front parking areas be more sympathetic to the rural character of the wider village?*

*Should there be careful design guidelines to preserve gaps between buildings and encourage sympathetic detail design?*

## Area 2-

### Village Streets within the settlement boundary (yellow)



Grove Road

The rest of the village within the settlement boundary. This area includes some unmade roads. Each road has been assessed separately

**Crossways:** Second highest density of dwellings and third highest in terms of population. All but one dwelling on an unmade public bridleway. 33 dwellings - 18 flats and a mixture of bungalows and houses. VERY MIXED, LARGELY BECAUSE OF CROSSWAYS COURT (flats for the elderly)

**Footpath from Westmore Green to Crossways:** Third lowest in terms of dwellings and population. Access via unmade public footpath. 3 dwellings - one house, one bungalow.

**Goatsfield Road:** Least dense in terms of dwellings and second least in terms of population. Unmade public bridleway. 14 dwellings - all but two are houses. SEMI-RURAL

**Greenway:** Just above average in terms of dwellings and population. Unmade public bridleway. 26 dwellings - 20 houses. VERY MIXED

**Grove Road:** Cul-de-sac. Fourth highest in terms of dwellings and highest in terms of population. Unmade public footpath. 12 dwellings - two bungalows. 'ORIGINAL VILLAGE STREET'

**Johns Road within Defined Village** - to Hornbeams and Winibar: Third highest in terms of dwellings but sixth in terms of population. Unmade public

bridleway. 21 dwellings - 10 in terraces, predominantly bungalows. MIXED DEVELOPMENT BECOMING SEMI-RURAL

**Lusted Hall Lane west** - from Nos 17 and 28: Highest in terms of dwellings but fifth highest in terms of population. Adopted road. 35 dwellings - semis and terraces of four. RELATIVELY HIGH DENSITY

**Paynesfield Road north of Tatsfield Garage** - from Nos 13 and 18: Above average in terms of dwellings and second highest in terms of population. Adopted road. 85 dwellings - includes bungalows, two-storey houses, semis, a terrace and a number of large houses. PAYNESFIELD ROAD HAS SOMETHING OF EVERYTHING - FROM SMALL DWELLINGS TO VICTORIAN MANSIONS

**Shaw Road:** Second lowest in terms of dwellings and lowest in terms of population. Unmade public bridleway. Seven dwellings - mainly houses. RURAL FRINGE

**Westmore Road north of Redhouse Road** - from Hedley and Greenwood: Just below average in terms of dwellings and population. Part adopted road and part unmade public bridleway. 43 dwellings - mostly two-storey, some semis, and terraces, some bungalows. Closely situated near the centre of the village. THE ORIGINAL HIGH STREET WITH FORMER SHOPS LEADING INTO RURAL SURROUNDINGS

**Whitewood Cottages:** Fifth highest in terms of dwellings and fourth in terms of population. Adopted road. 10 semi-detached houses. RURAL FRINGE

## **Area 2- Questions to consider**

*Recent infill and redevelopment schemes have increased dwelling density locally and led to hard surfacing dominating front gardens- should density be subject to control? (similar to Area 1)*

*Some areas of gardens and undeveloped land on the outer edges and at the north end of Westmore Road retain a strongly semi-rural feel and are designated as Green Belt. How important is it that these areas remain undeveloped? How would openness be affected if further development was proposed?*

*Trees and planting in front gardens are declining due to pressure from parking and development, changing the way the village is perceived by residents. Is this harmful? Should there be guidelines on the proportions of planting and the type of surfacing that are desirable?*

*How do we encourage wildlife in such areas? How do we provide permeability for wildlife to enable hedgehogs, for example, to move and feed?*

*How do we maintain the character of unmade roads which usually have generous verges looked after by the frontagers? There is pressure to pave over verges for parking or to extend driveways, or sometimes to add to private property.*

### **Area 3- Outer Village (light blue)**



Ricketts Hill Road

Historical development of area 3 mainly spans the last 130 years with existing buildings representative of architectural styles of most of the decades from late Victorian through to the end of the 20th Century. The area boasts many fine mature trees, some of great age and height. Dwellings are frequently on large plots which add to the semi-rural feel. New development is severely curtailed by the Green Belt designation over the whole area.

There are 2 more dense and distinct groups of dwellings in Area 3 built before Green Belt designation, in Old Lane (including part of Ship Hill) and Maesmaur Road. Both resulted from the development of some of the 40 foot wide plots offered for sale from the Colgates Estate in the 1890s in anticipation of the arrival of the Orpington, Cudham and Tatsfield Light Railway. The eventual failure of the railway project in the 1920s limited the extent of development. Both are away from the main settlement area of the village and separated from it by the wooded valley of Limehouse Bottom, a strong landscape feature which extends into Gorsey Down farm to the north and into attractive open fields to the south (see views, below). Mainly 2 storey cottages in Old Lane and Ship Hill face open fields, Tatsfield Green or Tatsfield Wood which gives the area an open and spacious feel, aided by the mature trees in the curtilage of Colgates, a listed building in large grounds. In Maesmaur Road, mainly single storey detached

dwellings set behind mature hedges and generous green verges are interspersed with gaps and become much more sparse on progressing along this long bridleway. The gaps consist of a variety of woodland, gardens, equestrian and undeveloped plots which all help to preserve a strong sense of openness, helped by its elevated position.

A distinct group of substantial detached houses in large gardens in Chestnut Avenue is included in Area 3. This group lies on the edge of the escarpment and is within the AONB.

### **Area 3- Questions to consider**

*The eclectic mix of building styles is valued. It provides an opportunity for innovative new styles of replacement or new dwellings with environmentally friendly features. What are the aspirations or concerns of people who live there? How should we control development to maintain the existing semi-rural feel and avoid a sense of urban sprawl?*

### **Area 4- Farmland setting (other areas inside and immediately outside village)**



Parkwood Golf Club

This area consists of a mix of attractive rolling farmland, woodland, recreational activity such as equine uses and golf. Housing is intermittent. The area includes St Mary's Church and churchyard. It forms the rural setting for the village and separates it from dense development in Biggin Hill to the north. It is greatly valued by local residents because of the topography, an extensive footpath network and long views available to north and south.



It is sensitive to unsympathetic development which changes its rural character such as use of farm buildings for other purposes or poorly designed farm building conversions for commercial or residential use. Equine uses lead to individual loose boxes and fencing that is out of keeping with agricultural use. Some large houses have added security measures such as electric gates which are often urban in appearance. There is a tendency to erect close boarded fencing for reasons of privacy and security. Many smaller fields are neglected, sometimes leading to creeping brushwood and dense thickets and scrub.

New development is restricted by the Green Belt designation and along the highest parts of the parish by the close proximity of the AONB, the boundary of which may be revised and redefined. The Green Belt designation has tended to reduce the number of smaller dwellings in the parish as existing houses have been enlarged.

### Questions

*Should NP policy seek to control boundary treatments and the design of development to reflect the rural environment? Should there be policies to control recreational uses to avoid harm to the setting of the AONB and the countryside setting of the village?*

### **Area 5/6 AONB Farmland (south of parish beyond orange line)**

### **Clackets Lane and Moorhouse (insets)**



### **The Grasshopper**

This area is more conspicuously agricultural and is protected by the AONB designation, which is the highest level of protection in policy. It consists of the land south of the steep chalk escarpment running east-west across the Parish. The edge of the Surrey Hills AONB is not well defined on the ground or in policy

but runs approximately across the top of the scarp. Development consists of farmsteads and individual dwellings in large holdings or grounds with notable insets at Clacket Lane Service Area and Moorhouse tileworks. There is also a substantial public house/restaurant/hotel at the Grasshopper. Development is controlled having regard to the GB and AONB status.

At Clacket Lane, there is constant redevelopment pressure. Should the NP draw attention to the need to maintain acceptable building heights, vegetation screening and the desirability of restricting light spill?

## **THE WAY FORWARD**

In addition to the suggestions for the natural environment above, develop a Design Guide to help residents and developers understand the aspirations for the village and its surroundings and guide layout and design.

### **Possible overarching policy aims for the whole Parish:**

Consider:

*Encouraging high quality architecture including contemporary design that maintains high standards of residential amenity*

*Sympathetic materials that are compatible in the street or local area and if an extension, complement the host building*

*Height restriction to 2.5 storeys generally*

*Maintain aesthetic quality particularly on extensions (via local design panel?)*

*Specifically encourage 'eco-friendly' design*

*Restricting visible services such as external meter boxes and waste pipes*

*Identifying contribution of informal boundary treatments in many Tatsfield roads that contribute to rural character and protecting and enhancing same*

*Identification of designated heritage assets and their significance including contribution of setting. Identification of undesignated heritage assets*

*Identify Areas of Special Village Character (ASVC) eg Tatsfield Green, Westmore Green, War Memorial, Chestnut Avenue, where development should take into account contribution of ASVC*

Pertaining to character areas:

Village Centre

Consider:

*Restricting density to maintain permeability and gaps between houses*

*Design and form should be unobtrusive in street scene unless enhancing a junction, view or introducing interest where there was none*

*Limiting proportion of hard surfacing for parking off-road to avoid tarmac sprawl*

*Introducing minimum proportion of green space in front gardens (liaise with NE group)*

*Seek a varied and interesting street scene*

## Village Streets

Consider:

*Maintain existing density and garden areas as proportion of built development*

*Maintain gaps between larger houses in proportion*

*Encourage maintenance and enhancement of verges to preserve rural feel*

*Preserve views out to surrounding countryside*

*Encourage informal boundary and gate treatments that respect the rural surroundings and distinguish Tatsfield from more urban areas*

*In light of the possibility of infilling, consider contribution made to character and openness by areas designated as Green Belt along Goatsfield Road and Westmore Road.*

*Discouraging large areas of unrelenting paving in front gardens which lead to rainwater runoff, increased surface water flood risk, erode unmade roads and fail to encourage biological diversity. Suggest alternatives with examples*

## Outer Village

Consider:

*As village streets +*

*Preserve hedges, stock fences and informal boundary treatments where village meets countryside to preserve sense of transition in Green Belt*

*Discouraging development that would detract from character and openness of Green Belt countryside on edge of settlement area*

## Farmland Village Setting

Consider:

*As Outer Village +*

*Discouraging development that would detract from character of adjacent AONB countryside*

## AONB Farmland, Clacket Lane and Moorhouse (insets)

Consider:

*Discouraging development that would detract from character of AONB countryside*