



Landscape and Community Workshop

15th November 2018



Introduction

This workshop held in the Chequers, The Broadway, Lamberhurst on 15th November was the last of a series of issues and options workshops undertaken by the Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group with residents and stakeholders also including:

1. Visioning and Objective setting 27th September
2. Housing and Design 1st November
3. Traffic and Economy 8th November
4. Landscape and Community 15th November

Separate reports including recommendations are available for each of these workshops. This report sets out the information shared with residents and stakeholders at the meeting and the results of their table top discussions using SWOT analysis. It also sets out some conclusions and recommendations to inform the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan.



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The workshop aimed to address:

- Landscape and Environment
 - Brief overview of what they've been doing, key results (important local greenspaces) and setting out some options (policy intentions) for discussion. Separate what is achievable in the context of the NP (ie ILGS and 'walkable' village) and what are 'projects' (ie improving management of open spaces and footpath network).
- Community and infrastructure
 - Utilities / sewerage, Memorial Hall, School, Surgery, Retail and Playing Field.

The findings would then be discussed by small groups of residents working at 'topic tables' to identify issues and opportunities for Landscape and Community infrastructure in Lamberhurst Parish over the next 15 years using a SWOT analysis with a session for feedback at the end. The topics were:

- Looking after open-spaces
- Bio-diversity
- Walkable village
- Community facilities (including school, pre-school and halls)
- Recreation, health and social care

Presentations

The workshop started with a reminder of the Visions developed at the first workshop in September:

Vision A	Vision B
In 2033 (15 years) Lamberhurst will be quintessentially rural and environmentally sympathetic with a diverse community which is well served by pubs, shops, GP etc cultural destination, it will have appropriate housing stock, excellent communication links (e.g. broadband/mobile) and more public transport, traffic management and parking.	In 2033 (15 years) Lamberhurst will be a strong, welcoming, vibrant community with places to live, work and meet, which is both attractive to both residents and visitors of all ages and supported by good local facilities and transport links. We want it to be safe, clean and green and the best place to live in the Kentish Weald.

The intention is now to merge the two preferred visions into a single vision statement that will act as the anchor or 'golden thread' for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The group was then reminded of the Landscape and Community Objectives emerging from the same workshop which will be further refined as the plan develops to ensure they help to achieve the vision and continue to meet the outputs from the workshops:

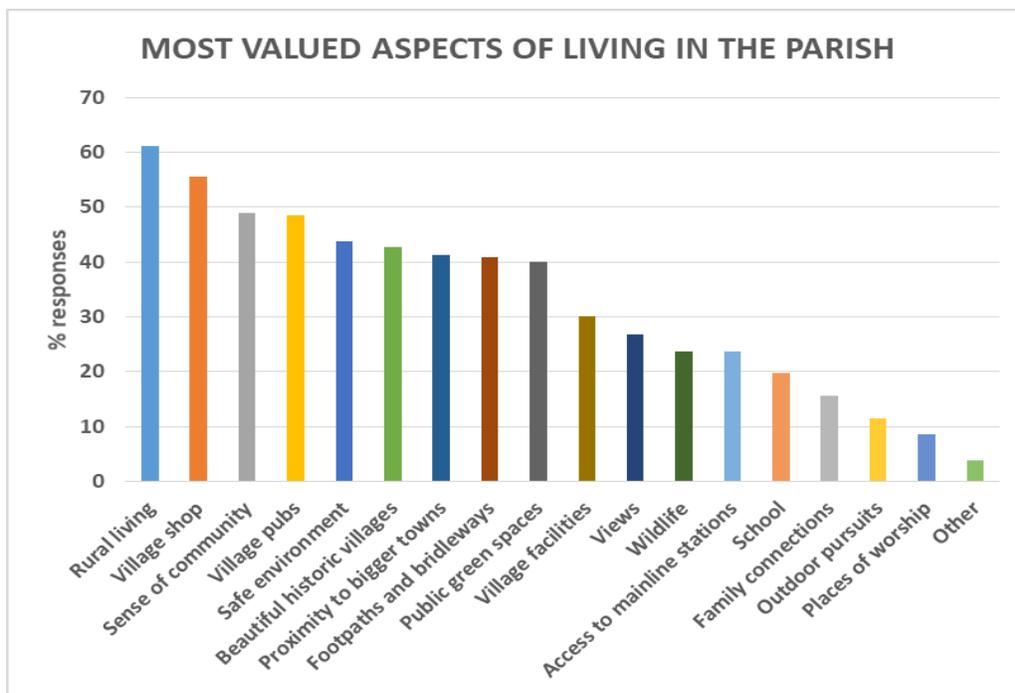
Landscape objective	Community objective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List preferred views eg from Church Yard across valley, from top of school hill down to village, up Spray Hill from village • Plant lots of trees and shrubs – evergreen and deciduous • Planting hedges and native trees to enhance wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain and enhance community assets • Expand the range of common interest groups and support their growth and involvement with appropriate facilities ie Memorial Hall and Playing Field • Tap into communities ie Scotney, school and church



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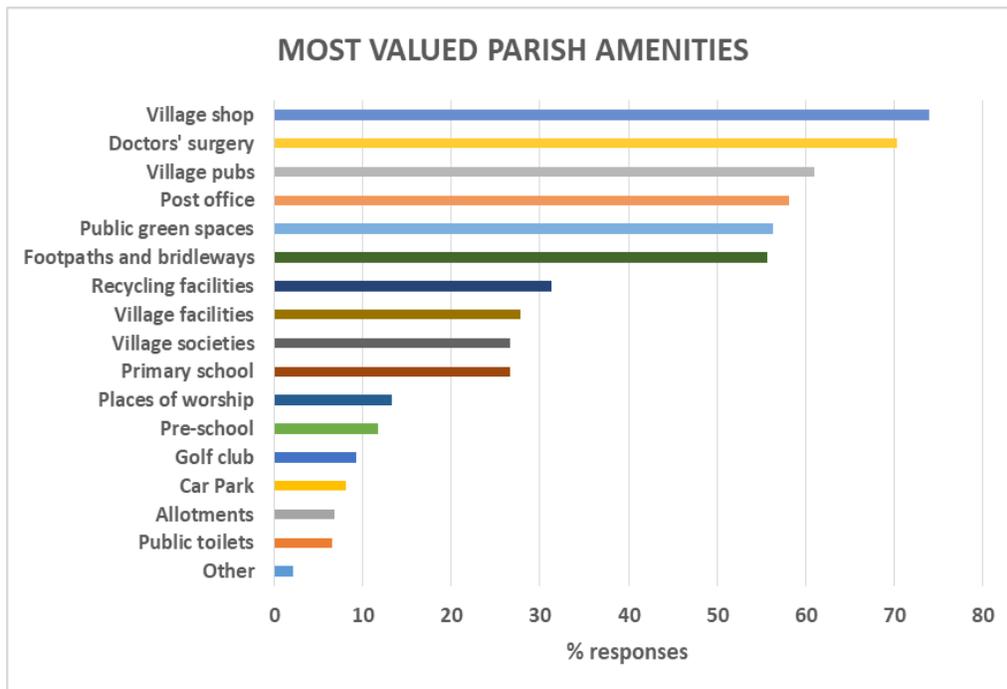
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain common land • Ensure that all new development is properly landscaped and screened • Roadside verges managed as meadows to preserve meadow habitat • Preserve mediaeval character of existing landscape • Develop management plans to create areas of conservation value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain and grow community groups by providing appropriate facilities • Increase activities and facilities • Increase capacity of community hall and facilities • Provide sufficient capacity in local school for growing population
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These have been published in October edition of the Parish magazine to invite further feedback and reflection from parishioners. The group were then reminded of the results of the village questionnaire that took place in the summer which identified:

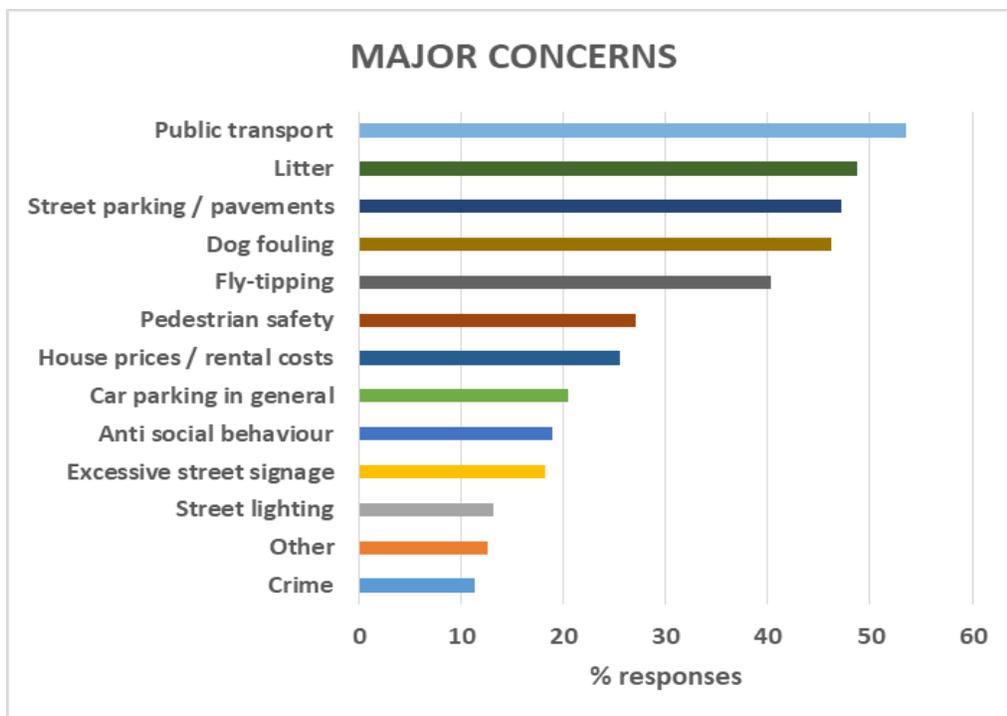




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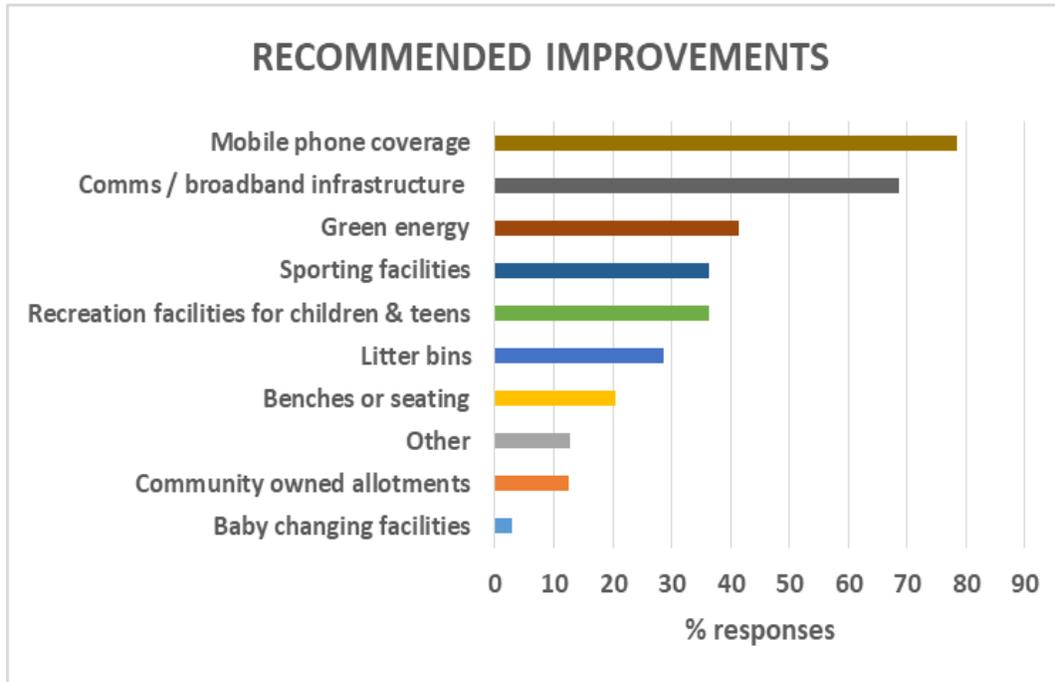


Lamberhurst has many aspects and amenities that are valued and add to the experience of living in the village.





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Telecoms/broadband infrastructure, parking and pavements and litter and dog fouling are the major areas of concern where parishioners are looking for improvements to be made. The group was also reminded of parishioners' comments relevant to the workshop:

- "I am in favour of planned development within Lamberhurst, Village we have to constantly evolve to survive. And it will hopefully benefit the local businesses and school. Any development must be generous with parking or the village will become choked with cars, added to which it can cause huge disaster"
- "This plan is vital to the village. We need to accept new housing, but we need to manage the sites so we protect the environment and wildlife. Unless we do we risk damaging the spirit and community of our village."
- "I think development could be a good thing if local buildings are used and its done in a style sympathetic local style. The extra population would mean the shop/church etc would be much more viable"
- "....I value village life, the environment and biodiversity the village offers"
- "We have a beautiful village that could benefit from sympathetic expansion retaining the character, views, community, architecture and wildlife. New blood and commerce should be encouraged but Social Housing should be included....."

Landscape and Environment Presentation - Andrew Cotterill CHort MCIHort MHort (RHS)
Andy started by sharing the terms of reference of the Landscape and Environment sub-group of the Neighbourhood Plan steering group:



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Land within the parish is designated under the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In addition, there are conservation areas which cover Lamberhurst and the Down. In consultation with the High Weald AONB assess habitat including ancient woodland, gills and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). Assess open spaces which include the Commons, recreation ground, war memorial and Lamberhurst Golf Club. Appraise 26 miles of public footpaths which run through the parish and Drovers Trail. Determine appropriate land management procedures with the Environment Agency to help reduce the severity of flooding experienced from historic flood events from the River Teise.

The sub-group has already identified and following consultation with TWBC have agreed proposals to designate the following sites as Important Local Greenspaces (ILGS) within the Development Plan¹. The ability to designate ILGS is a key legal power given to Neighbourhood Plans once 'made'².

- Brewer Street Allotments x 2 sites
- Victoria Walk (area including War Memorial).
- St Mary's Churchyard
- Chequers Field
- Lamberhurst Playing fields
- Hook Green Common (meadow area)
- The Slade Allotments

See over for maps showing the ILGS:

¹ The Tunbridge Wells Development Plan will comprise both the emerging Local Plan and Lamberhurst Neighbourhood Plan. Both plans may identify ILGS.

² 'Made' is the formal term for when Neighbourhood Plans are successful at referendum and have to be considered in future land-use planning applications and decisions.



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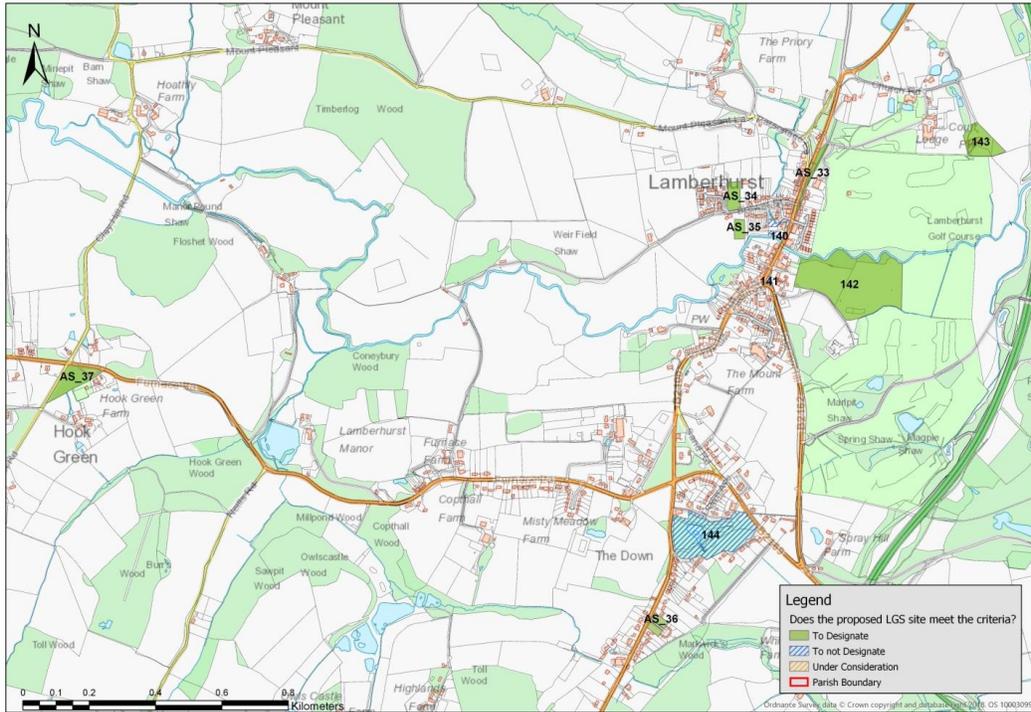


Figure 1: Important Local Green Spaces in Lamberhurst Parish



Figure 2: Victoria Walk Important Local Green Space



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Andy then gave key features of the two most important wildlife sites within the parish - two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) at Scotney Castle and Brookland Wood in Lamberhurst Quarter, the Gravel Pit which is a Site of Local Nature Conservation Value (TWBC Local Plan designation) but also mentioned the area of the Down now being managed as a meadow, Hook Green Common as well as the River Teise and river bank behind Brewer Street. Below is a map of the parish showing the two SSSIs, ancient woodlands and the two historic parks and gardens Scotney Castle and Bayham Abbey:

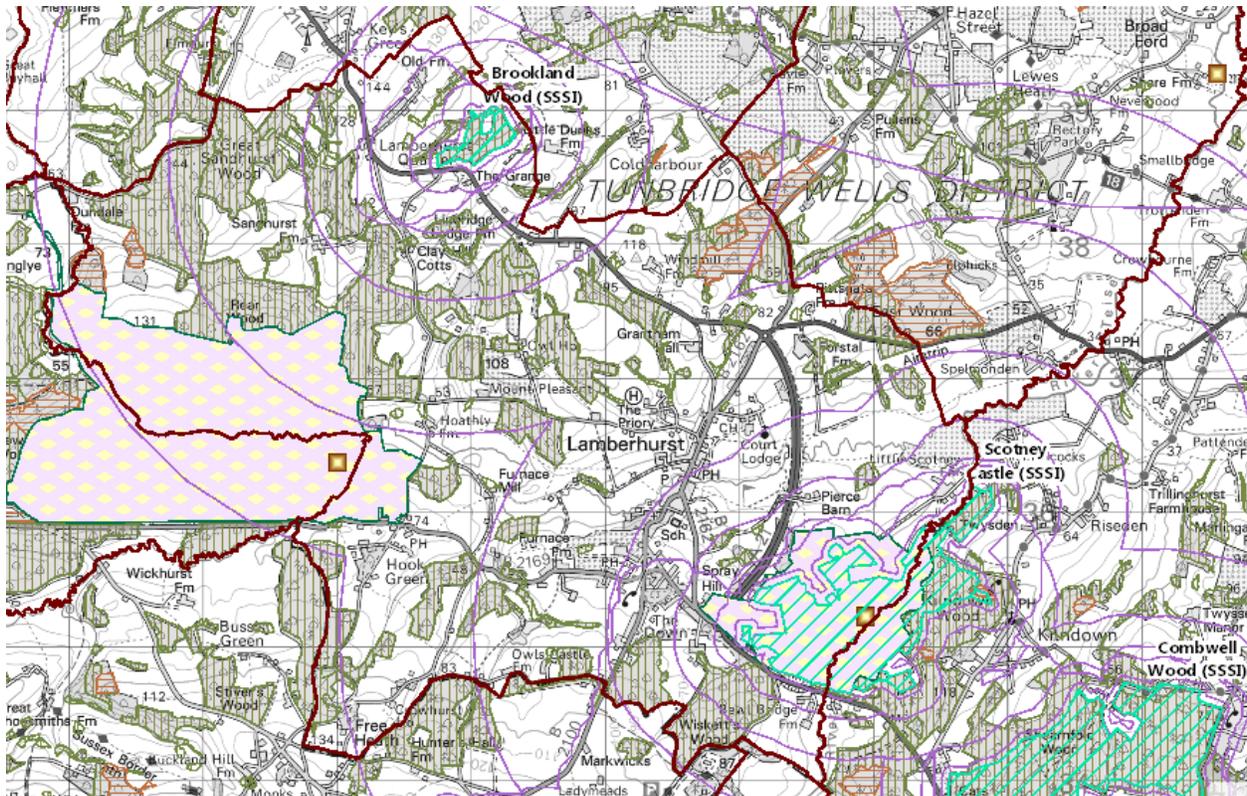


Figure 3: Map showing wildlife and heritage designations

A walking community

Another policy intention is to develop the idea of a walking community or walkable village – where residents of existing and new developments are easily able to access local services and facilities from their homes without having to get into their cars adding to congested parking for example outside the school and on the Broadway. Andy highlighted:

- There are 26 miles of Public Footpaths covering a large area of our parish, a number of which cross the Scotney Castle estate.
- Parishioners would like to reopen the two footpaths which traditionally crossed the Bayham Abbey estate which otherwise remains closed from September through to Easter.
- Consultation with English Heritage has begun.



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Ancient woodland

Although already protected in legislation from development, with mandatory buffers around ancient woodland of 15 metres from new development and recommendation from the Woodland Trust for 50 metres, the parish is rich in ancient woodland:

- Place Names “**Hurst**” Anglo Saxon for wooded hill
- **16.27%** of the total area of our parish is covered by Ancient Woodland
- These habitats are under threat from invasive plants (garden waste) cross pollination and poor woodland management practices.
- When 5 or 6 **indicator plants** are present
 - **Bluebell** *Hyacinthoides Non-Scriptus*
 - **Wood Anemone** *Anemone nemorosa*
 - **Early Purple Orchid** *Orchis mascula*
 - **Common Dog Violet** *Viola riviniana*
 - **Lords and Ladies** *Arum maculatum*
 - **Primrose** *Primula vulgaris*
 - **Wild Garlic** *Allium ursinum*
 - **Wood Spurge** *Euphorbia amygdaloides*

Flooding

As a final point, Andy shared photographs of Lamberhurst from 2000 when most of the central part of the village was flooded following an extensive period of winter rainfall (See his presentation - Appendix A for further photographs) from both 1960 and 2000 showing the areas that were and still are liable to flooding. In terms of future flood events Andy asked the group to consider:

- The Environment Agency have stated that they have no plans for any further flood protection work in Lamberhurst.
- They have advised us to review our village Flood Management Plan.
- The environment Agency regard the Teise Valley at Lamberhurst as a priority habitat
- Unfortunately, our primary survey has discovered a number of invasive plants which threaten this sensitive ecosystem.
 - **Japanese Knotweed** *Fallopia japonica*
 - **Giant Hogweed** *Heracleum mantegazzianum*
 - **Himalayan Balsam** *Impatiens glandulifera*



Figure

4 Extent of flooding in 2000

Community infrastructure – David Ward

David Ward gave a talk based on his investigations into: Utilities / sewerage, Memorial Hall, School, Surgery, Retail and the Playing Field. **Notes from his talk to be inserted:**

Table or 'topic' workshops

The next part of the evening aimed to 'workshop' some of the key topics emerging from the questionnaire and follow up research undertaken by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups. Each table was provided with a flip sheet with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) matrix marked out. Steering group members acting as facilitators invited participants to fill each quadrant for their theme with:

- STRENGTHS – what's good or working well in Lamberhurst
- WEAKNESSES – what's bad / not working in Lamberhurst currently
- OPPORTUNITIES – what might work to improve Lamberhurst in the future
- THREATS – what might make things worse / impact negatively on Lamberhurst in the future

As previously mentioned the emerging topics for discussion were:



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- Looking after open-spaces
- Bio-diversity
- Walkable village
- Community facilities (including school, pre-school and halls)
- Recreation, health and social care

On the night the Open Spaces and Bio-diversity groups were combined:

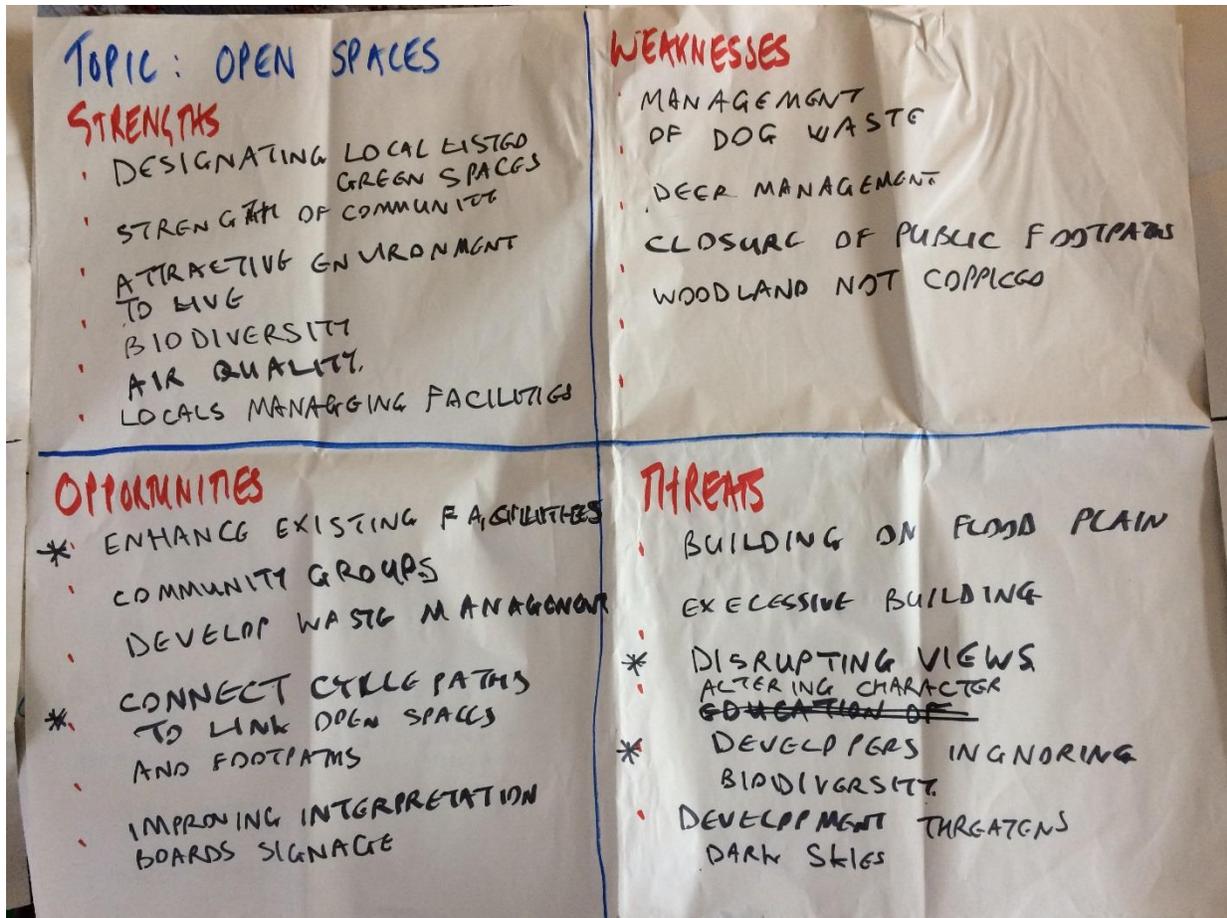


Figure 5: Open spaces (landscape and environment) SWOT



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WALKABLE VILLAGE (CONNECTIVITY + RECREATION) STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LOTS OF GOOD PATHS ALREADY.• GREAT VIEWS• WELL USED BY LOCALS + VISITORS. - INCLUDING THE CIRCULAR WALKS.	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NOT ALL ARE WELL MAINTAINED. (WET, DARK, NARROW).• PARK ON ROAD NOT ON PAVEMENT.• LIGHTING ON PATHS TO ENCOURAGE
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NEW FPATH UP SPIN HILL, SAND RD → BROWN TRACT. + BETTER FOOTPATH CONNECTIONS.• BETTER SIGNPOSTING.• ALL WEATHER TRACK (RICK RUN/CRIM TRAIL) ENHANCED CYCLE ROUTE BROWER ST → VINEYARD.• BETTER LIGHTING FOR PATHS - BEARING IN MIND LIGHT POLLUTION.• DISABLED ACCESS.• CONNECT SEWER WATER	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MORE TRAFFIC / RAT RUN• PARKED CARS.• THREAT

Figure 6: Walkable / walking village SWOT

COMMUNITY FACILITIES (SCHOOL, PRE-SCHOOL + HALLS) STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• LARGE NO. OF SOCIETIES & FACILITIES ARE HEAVILY UTILISED• NEW SCHOOL• GOOD HALL / (NEED TO BE MAINTAINED) SCHOOL	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11-14 YR OLD ACTIVITIES.• WE UNSURE HOW MUCH ACCOMMODATION IS AVAILABLE → DO WE NEED MORE• BETTER DEMOGRAPHIC FOR REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES AND SOCIETIES
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• DECLARE CHEQUERS FIELD AS A DESIGNATED OPEN SPACE• BETTER LANDSCAPING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE VILLAGE• BREAKFAST CLUBS & AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS TO SUPPORT WORKING PARENTS (ALIGNING LIFESTYLES)• CANVAS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FUNDING - FOR PROJECTS• COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES e.g. PACE SCHOOL RELIANCE TO KEEP INCOME FOR HALL

Figure 7: Community Facilities SWOT



HEALTH + SOCIAL CARE (ALSO RECREATION)	
STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NUMEROUS SOCIETIES• GOOD GPs• PUBS.••	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CHANGING ROOMS FOR REC• LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR ELDERLY• SHOP HAS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT• ENOUGH PRIVATE HEALTH SERVICES -• LACK OF COMMUNICATION & VILLAGE SUPPORT NETWORK• ROAD CYCLE ROUTES
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>FURTHER RETAIL DEVELOPMENT - SUPPORT ELDERLY ETC</u>• <u>SHELTERED HOUSING / WARDEN ASSISTED</u>• SOCIAL HUB FOR TEENAGERS• CRICKET CLUB?• COMMUNITY BUS. / VOLUNTEER PRIVATE CARS	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>TOO MUCH DEVELOPMENT - UNSUSTAINABLE</u>• <u>APATHY</u>••

Figure 8: Health and social care (SWOT)

Each table then fed back their findings to the rest of the room underlining two key priorities to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Conclusion and recommendations

Although a smaller group attended than at the Housing and Design Workshop, the workshop element worked well with a representative cross-section of the parish in attendance.

OPEN SPACES (LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENT) – The group were pleased that the Important Local Green Spaces (ILGS) that they had identified had been taken on board in their entirety by TWBC. As well as recognising the attractive environment, biodiversity and air quality of the Parish they also acknowledged the strength of the community including ‘locals’ managing parish facilities. Unfortunately dog waste, deer management (deer damage trees and woodlands), closure of public footpaths and that woodlands were no longer coppiced were all having a negative impact. New development damaging views and biodiversity were the key threats that were recognised but also excessive building, building on the flood plain and loss of dark skies also needed to be addressed through the plan. The main opportunities were to enhance existing facilities and join up or connect open spaces using footpaths and cycle paths.



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WALKABLE OR 'WALKING' VILLAGE – The group recognised that there were lots of good paths with great views already which were well used by locals and visitors including the circular walks. But that not all are well maintained, footways / pavements aren't well lit and parked vehicles can block footways / pavements forcing pedestrians, buggy or wheel-chairs into the road and hence putting them at risk from moving vehicles. Local roads have become rat-runs as drivers attempt to avoid congestion hotspots most notably the A21 where congestion has appeared to have got worse since the dualling of the A21 at Pembury. Opportunities to be addressed through the NP include new footpaths up Spray Hill, and Sand Road to the Brown Trout and for all weather trails (possibly even a 'park-run' or trim trail) from Brewer Street to the Vineyard and even as far afield as Bewl Water. These should be multi-use for walkers, 'buggies', disabled people and cyclists [and riders].

COMMUNITY FACILITIES (PRE-SCHOOL, SCHOOL AND VILLAGE HALLS) – Lamberhurst is blessed with a large number of societies and facilities (notably the Memorial Hall and new school) are heavily utilised. However, there is a lack of activities for 11-14 year olds, there is uncertainty about whether there is sufficient capacity (particularly halls) and low representation by younger people on [organising] committees and societies. There is a need for better funding for projects and halls are reliant on commercial enterprises such as the dance school to provide income [that means availability is limited]. There is scope for better landscaping in the middle of the village [including street furniture / layout?] and some of the issues could be better addressed through better aligning of lifestyles [more mixed age activities], breakfast and after-school clubs to help working parents. Specifically, it was recommended that the Chequers Field is designated as an Important Local Greenspace (ILGS) in the Neighbourhood Plan.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE (and RECREATION) – There was some initial discussion over whether health and social care should be addressed separately. The group again recognised the number of clubs and societies as a strength as well as the number of pubs and 'good GPs'. Weaknesses seemed to outweigh strengths with lack of social support for the elderly (lack of awareness / communication of village support network) and private health services [including domiciliary care services – care in the home] particular concerns. Changing rooms for the recreation ground as well improving the shop were also suggested. Apathy and over-development which was unsustainable were the main threats. As well as a social hub for teenagers, cricket club, a community bus and volunteers drivers' scheme [to get to hospital or other far flung services] priorities to be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan were for further retail development to support the elderly [who might struggle to get to the nearest supermarket – a 20 minute bus ride / 13 mile round trip]. Sheltered housing in particular warden assisted housing was also considered a priority for the Neighbourhood Plan.

[Next steps or roadmap in outline](#)

The table (overleaf) shows the next steps and the approximate time period for completing the next stages of the Neighbourhood Plan from December 2018 to late 2018 / early 2020 when it might be possible to hold the Referendum³ on the Plan and see the Plan 'made'. The first step is a meeting with TWBC Planning Department to discuss their possible Local Plan site allocations for housing and

³ This is the last stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process following the successful outcome of an Examination of the draft Plan by an independent Examiner.



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employment on 12th December followed by a training session for the Steering Group on how to write the plan and policies in the evening.

Next steps	Month/s	Who
Finish evidence base (assessments)	November and December	Working groups
Training on drafting the plan and planning policies	December and / or January	Steering group, working groups and parish council
Drafting chapters and policies	January and February	Working groups
Put together “rough draft”	March	Editorial team
Consult on “rough draft”	April	Parish council with residents, landowners and local and statutory bodies
Strategic Environmental and Habitat Regulations Assessment screening	April	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Formal (Regulation 14) consultation	May and June (6 weeks)	Parish council with residents, landowners and local and statutory bodies
Amend Plan, write Consultation and Basic Conditions Statement	June and July	Consultants
Statutory (Regulation 15) consultation	August and September (6-8 weeks)	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Examination	October	Independent Planning Examiner
Referendum	Late 2019 / early 2020	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Also see over the latest ‘Local Development Scheme’ or timetable for the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan:



Local Plan Review Timescales

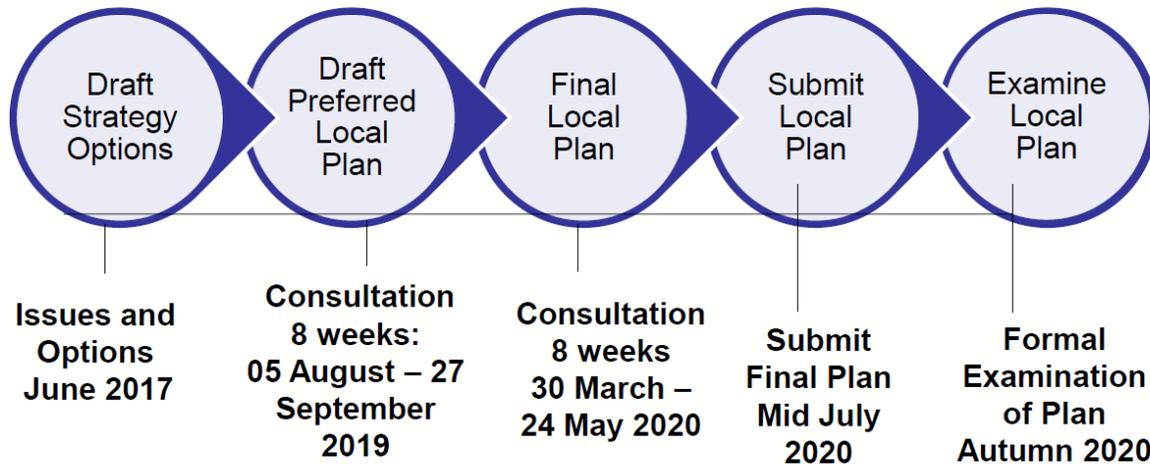


Figure 9: TWBC Local Development Scheme (November 2018)