

Introduction

- 29.1 Horsted Keynes is located approximately four miles to the north east of Lindfield. It has a particularly attractive setting on a low, wide ridge within the undulating countryside of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- 29.2 The village is relatively well provided with services and community facilities including shops, a village hall and recreational open space. There are a number of small industrial/commercial sites within the village, together with a concentration of industrial and storage uses at Horsted Keynes Industrial Park, located approximately one mile to the northwest of the village
- 29.3 Outside the village the landscape is of high quality, comprising a mix of farmland and woodland. The Bluebell Railway station lies to the north west of Horsted Keynes and is an important tourist attraction.

Policies and Proposals

Built-up Area Boundary

- 29.4 A built-up area boundary is defined for Horsted Keynes which seeks to conserve the rural setting of the village and to protect the surrounding countryside from unnecessary development.

Conservation Area

- 29.5 Horsted Keynes Conservation Area was designated in January 1985. It includes the two oldest parts of the village. The first is centred on Church Lane and contains a number of historic buildings dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, and the 13th century church. The second is centred on The Green, and includes parts of Station Road, Lewes Road and the southern end of Church Lane. The Green is a spacious open area lined by two storey buildings of predominantly brick construction with those on the southern side well set back from the road. Many of the properties around The Green and along Church Lane, including The Crown Public House and The Forge, are listed as being of architectural or historical importance. Trees and hedgerows are particularly important features within the village, as are the Recreation Ground and Cricket Ground which provide a spacious setting for development to the south of The Green.

- 29.6 The following features contribute to the particular character of the Conservation Area:

- the spacious character of The Green, the attractive groupings of buildings around The Green and the sense of enclosure created by both buildings and landscaping;
- the variety of age and style of buildings, several of which are Listed Buildings;
- the use of traditional and natural building materials;
- the extensive views of the countryside from within the Conservation Area, especially around St Giles Church;
- the hedgerows, trees and banked verges, including those in Church Lane, Bonfire Lane and Wyatts Lane; and
- the views of the church from within the village.

Employment

Horsted Keynes Industrial Park

- 29.7 Horsted Keynes Industrial Park comprises a group of commercial buildings located approximately one mile north of the village. With a total floorspace of approximately 5,300m² the buildings were formerly used as, amongst other things, a preserve factory and a chicken hatchery. In 1986 planning permission was granted for a change of use for some 3,500m² to food processing, storage and distribution, light industrial storage and ancillary offices. In 1992, planning permission was granted for the conversion of the remaining building, a former apple store, to 10 small light industrial units. Despite these planning permissions being subject to certain restrictive conditions the Industrial Park has a significant impact on local amenity, particularly in respect of traffic generation and the size of vehicles visiting the units, which can be unsuitable for the narrow rural road network in the area.
- 29.8 The Council acknowledges the long history of commercial uses on this site. However, it considers that any extension of the site or intensification of activity over and above that which can be accommodated within the existing buildings would be likely to cause a significant environmental impact and lead to further traffic difficulties which would be contrary to the aim of this Local Plan to protect the countryside.
- 29.9 Consideration may be given to a change of use in exceptional circumstances, for example where a local firm may be seeking to relocate from an inappropriately located site elsewhere and where this would help to achieve other policy objectives. Such a change of use would be subject to normal development control criteria, relating to uses in the countryside and highway safety and traffic generation criteria; any extension to the existing floor area would not be permitted.

HK1 Proposals to extend or increase the level of activity at the Horsted Keynes Industrial Park beyond that already permitted will only be permitted if the proposal involves a change of use where this is intended to meet the specific needs of a local firm seeking to vacate an inappropriately located site and which would thereby help to achieve other objectives. Subsequent expansion of the buildings or activities on the site will not be permitted.

Freshfield Lane Brickworks

- 29.10 Freshfield Lane Brickworks is situated a mile and a half south of the village within the parish of Horsted Keynes. It is one of the largest clamp burning brick works in the country. The Brickworks is a small, independent company and a significant employer in the area. Should the use cease the Council would expect the restoration of the site to be for agriculture, forestry or another acceptable use as stated in the West Sussex Minerals Local Plan 2003.

Transport

- 29.11 In common with many villages in Mid Sussex, Horsted Keynes is adversely affected by the volume, nature and speed of vehicles using its roads. The Highway Authority has introduced a 30 mph speed limit within the village centre and this has resulted in an improvement in terms of traffic speed. However, conditions in Church Lane are of particular concern. Church Lane is a narrow lane which leads to the village school and church, at certain times of the day it is heavily trafficked causing a hazard to pedestrians. The Council will press the Highway Authority to investigate ways in which conditions for pedestrians could be improved, possibly by the implementation of a footway.

Community/Recreation Use

- 29.12 Centrally located within Horsted Keynes the village currently has a private cricket field and public recreation ground, which includes a children's play area and football pitch. At the southern end of the village, between Hamsland and Treemans Road is Constance Wood Recreation Ground. The local Scout Group needs a new building and this field offers the opportunity to locate such a facility.
- 29.13 The field lies outside the built-up area boundary and within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Any proposals for a building on this site should have a minimum impact on the character of the area and the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties in terms of design, scale, use and the level of activity and traffic generated.

HK2 Within Constance Wood Recreation Ground an allocation is made for a scout building, together with appropriate parking provision. A proposal will only be permitted where there will not be an unacceptable impact on the character of the area or the residential amenities of the neighbouring properties.

Other Land Uses

Bluebell Railway

- 29.14 The station at Horsted Keynes is on the Bluebell line. This currently runs from Sheffield Park to Kingscote, two miles south of East Grinstead. The line is primarily a tourist attraction, with around 200,000 visitors per year. The company's intention is to extend the line up to the station at East Grinstead in order to increase its use, and potentially to replace some car journeys into the town. At East Grinstead connections will be available to other rail services. The extension of the line up to East Grinstead and the provision of a new station are considered in the East Grinstead and the Recreation and Tourism Chapters of the Local Plan.
- 29.15 Although the Bluebell Railway has a stop at Horsted Keynes most of the visitor activity takes place at Sheffield Park and Kingscote Station. However, the station site at Horsted Keynes is an important engineering site for the railway. Maintenance and restoration work to the carriages is carried out there and this is, in itself, a special visitor attraction. Immediately south of Horsted Keynes Station a disused branch line exists, running south

west to the main London - Brighton line just north of Haywards Heath. The railway is dismantled but much of the track bed remains. The opportunity clearly exists for the reinstatement of the line and this route will be safeguarded from development which could prejudice its reinstatement. The route is indicated on the Proposals Map. Should this come forward during the Plan period the Council will seek to ensure that no adverse effect on the environment of the surrounding area will arise through visual intrusion, traffic generation, noise or other loss of amenity. The Council will carefully balance the needs of the railway company and the benefits to tourism and the economy with the need to protect the environment.

- HK3** Proposals for additional development associated with the Bluebell Railway at Horsted Keynes will be permitted where the Council is satisfied that such development would have no significant adverse impact on the environment through visual intrusion, excessive traffic generation, noise and disturbance or loss of amenity to neighbouring residential properties.

The route of the disused railway branch line between Horsted Keynes and Haywards Heath is safeguarded for possible reinstatement of the railway link.

Proposals for the reinstatement of, or the opening of further stations or stopping places on, the disused branch line between Horsted Keynes Station and the main London-Brighton line will be subject to particularly close examination.