



# 2013-2033

## Setting the Pattern for Future Development in Goudhurst Parish Landscape Character Assessment

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This document has been produced with the considerable help and support of residents of Goudhurst Parish.

Cover – Photographs submitted for the NDP photography competition, [ndp/Goudhurst.co.uk/PhotoCompetiton](http://ndp/Goudhurst.co.uk/PhotoCompetiton)

## Section 1 Purpose

*Our Parish occupies one of the most dramatic areas in the High Weald AONB and all three settlements are prominent on the skyline. Protecting this landscape is important to our communities and for our future generations.*

*Goudhurst is one of many rural Parishes in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells*

This document provides an assessment of the Landscape Character of our Parish. It is a supporting document for the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan.

The size and nature of our Parish means that a Landscape Character Assessment for Goudhurst is a complex activity.

### Submitting Body

This Neighbourhood Plan, which this document supports, is submitted by Goudhurst Parish Council and covers the Parish of Goudhurst as designated by TWBC on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

### Our Parish

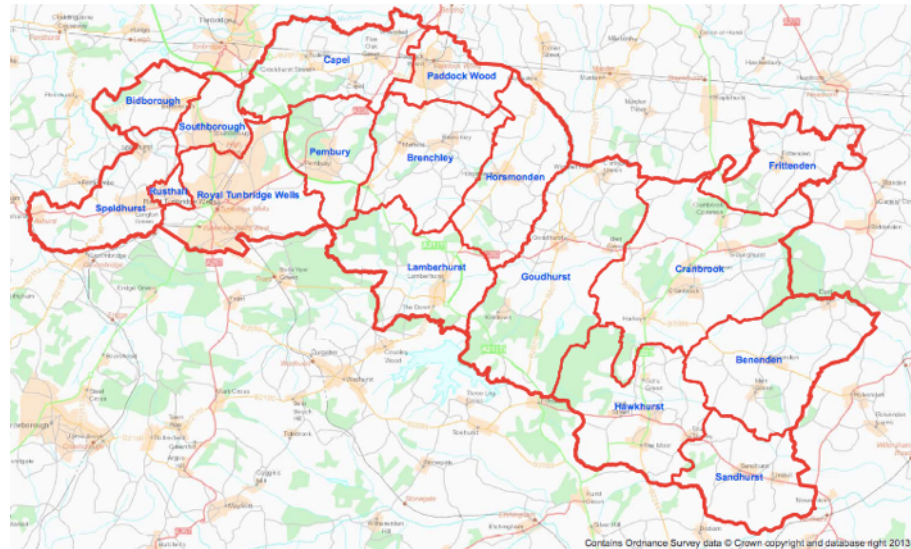


Figure 1 Parishes in Tunbridge Wells

The proposed Neighbourhood Area follows the boundary of the Parish of Goudhurst.

Goudhurst lies some 16.3 km (10 miles) south east of Royal Tunbridge Wells and 28.6km (17.7 miles) south west of Maidstone on the A262. The B2079, which passes through the village, leads to Bedgebury, Flimwell and the A21 to the south, and Horsmonden and Winchet Hill to the north. Cranbrook lies 8.5km (5.3 miles) to the south east.

Kilndown lies on a minor north south road 3.2km (2.0 miles) south west of Goudhurst and just a short distance north of the A21. There are direct road links east to Bedgebury and a number of footpaths west onto the Scotney Estate.

Goudhurst was originally designated as a conservation area in February 1970 and reassessed in January 1992. Kilndown was designated separately as a conservation area in October 1981.



## The Parish of Goudhurst

This Plan applies to the Parish of Goudhurst in Kent. Goudhurst Parish covers 25 sq. Km (9.6 sq. miles). It has a rich heritage and the natural environment has changed little over centuries. 80% of the Parish falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), 27% is ancient woodland and 19% of our buildings are listed.

Goudhurst Parish has three hilltop settlements with Goudhurst being the largest. Goudhurst contains 53% of the population, Kilndown (11%), Curtisden Green (9%) and the remainder (27%) are in the surrounding countryside.

**Key**

- High Weald AONB Boundary
- Goudhurst Parish Boundary
- Historic Field Boundaries (FH2)
- Heathland (FH3)
- Known Wildflower Meadows (FH3)
- - - Historic Routeways (roads) (R1)
- - - Historic Routeways (PRoW) (R1)
- Ancient Woodland (W1)

**Historic Landscape Characterisation**

- Early Medieval (AD 410 - AD 1065)
- Medieval (AD 1066 - AD 1499)

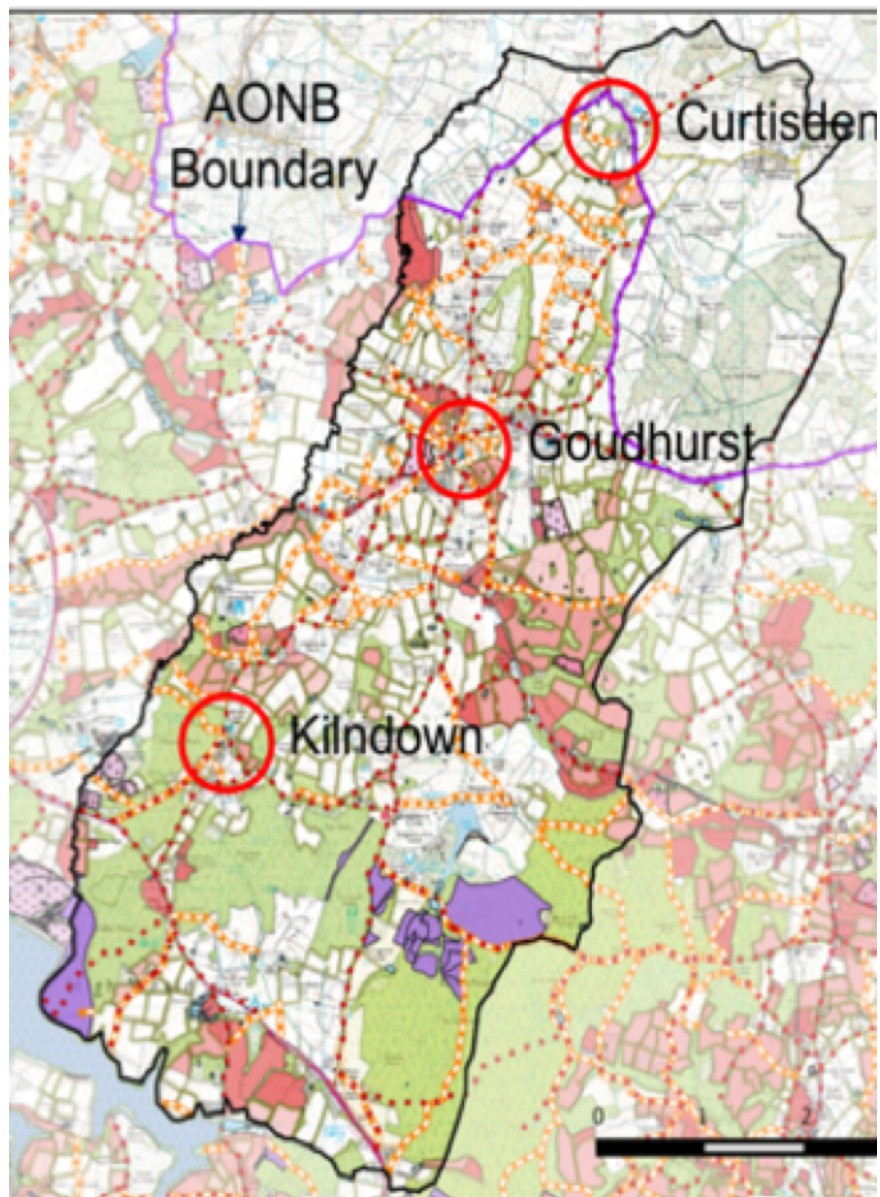


Figure 2 The Parish of Goudhurst



## Section 2 Goudhurst - A History

Goudhurst Parish is situated in the High Weald, a landscape of ridges and picturesque valleys dotted with lanes and tracks; farmsteads and fields; houses, cottages and gardens; orchards and ancient woodlands. But it has not always been that way. It was once a very small part of the great forest of Andresweald and, from relics found in the Parish, people are known to have been in this area as early as the Bronze Age. Clearings were made in the forest and, by the time of the Saxons, permanent settlements began to evolve.



Church of St Mary the Virgin

During the Middle Ages the Parish was divided between Manors, some under the control of Lords and others in the ownership of the Church. Of particular note are Bedgebury, Chingley, Combwell and Pattenden, the names of which are recognisable today. Goudhurst does not appear in the Domesday Book, but the Domesday Monachorum (1087) mentions the Church of St Mary the Virgin.

By the end of the 13th century Goudhurst was an established hilltop village at the centre of a farming community. During the 14th century it was prospering from the wool trade, which was later enhanced by the local weaving industry following the arrival of Flemish weavers into Kent. Goudhurst village was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1380, but the fine 14th and 15th century properties in the High Street bear testament to the wealth of that era.



Goudhurst High Street

The period of prosperity, for the Parish as a whole, continued into the 16th century when the iron smelting industry, which drew on the plentiful supply of local wood for charcoal, became established.

The 18th century saw the decline of the weaving and iron industries and the Parish reverted to relying on local fruit and hop growing. The success of hop farming in the Parish led to seasonal workers from London being brought in for the hop-picking season from the 19th century until that industry also declined in the middle of the 20th century.



Hop Picking in Goudhurst

The railway branch line arrived in 1892 from Paddock Wood to Hope Mill, Goudhurst bringing alternative opportunities for travel and the transportation of goods into and out of the Parish. However, with the popularity of motorised vehicles, railway use declined, and the line was closed in 1961.

The late advent of the line, the fact that it was only a branch line, and the situation of the station some distance from both Kilndown and Goudhurst villages, probably acted as a brake to any major developments in the Parish.

At the time of the 1801 census the population of the Parish stood at 1,782. That figure rose steadily but did not exceed 3,000 until 1911 when it stood at 3,019. At the same time the number of inhabited dwellings more than doubled from 273 in 1811 to 581 in 1901. The 2011 census showed that the population of the Parish had not increased markedly over the previous 100 years standing at just under 3,500, while the number of dwellings had almost doubled.



Goudhurst Station

## Section 3 Landscape Character

### 3.1 High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*Our landscape is internationally important*

*80% of the Parish is within the High Weald AONB*

The High Weald National Character Area (NCA) encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe<sup>1</sup>. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (HWAONB) covers 78 per cent of the NCA.

The majority of Goudhurst Parish lies within the HWAONB with only a small area in the north, at Winchet Hill, Curtisden Green and Finchurst Farm, outside the AONB, although this area remains important to its setting.

Our settlements are sited on the sandstone ridges and the Parish is a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain prominent in the character of the landscape.

Our area of the High Weald has a long history and is extraordinarily well documented through old maps<sup>2</sup>.

In the Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation Area Appraisal of 2006<sup>3</sup>, TWBC draws attention to some key elements of design which, therefore, form the basis for our design guidelines to be applied to any development proposals. In particular, the appraisal states: *“The character of a settlement is determined by more than just the age and style of buildings. It is also influenced by the positioning of the buildings, their use, the shape, size and use of spaces between them, the materials, colours and textures employed. Topography and the relationship between the built form and the landscape elements are also key elements of settlement character.”*

### 3.2 Landscape Character

The Parish of Goudhurst lies within the Kentish High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The landscape in this area is generally one of undulating ridges and gentle valleys lying between the North and South Downs; a patchwork of orchards, hops, arable fields and pastures with scattered copses, and some more extensive areas of deciduous woodland. There are also historic parklands associated with major landowners.

The Parish can be broadly divided into two distinct areas.

1. The northern half of the Parish covering Goudhurst and Curtisden Green is an intricate rural landscape of orchards and fields which are highly visible in

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<sup>1</sup> Natural England

<sup>2</sup> Goudhurst History society archive

<sup>3</sup> [Ndp.goudhurst.co.uk/resource](http://Ndp.goudhurst.co.uk/resource) s/Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation aeea.pdf

views over the undulating slopes of the high ridge, which climbs from the Teise valley.

2. To the South the area centred around Kilndown provides a rolling upland landscape, incised by valleys, with a dispersed settlement pattern of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads hidden within the framework of extensive blocks of ancient semi-natural deciduous ghyll, and shaw woodlands that surround medium-large fields of arable farmland and small fields of pasture farmland.

## 3.3 Parish Setting

*Geology and the hilltop position of our settlements define our Parish making it unique in Europe – We want to conserve this for future generations*

The landscape of Goudhurst Parish has been shaped by the unusual underlying geology<sup>4</sup>. Tunbridge Wells Sandstone forms our high ridges, with Wadhurst Clay and localised thin belts of alluvium deposits in the valleys.

Our main communities have been developed on sandstone outcrops with Goudhurst having an elevation of 120m from valley to hilltop. This dramatic landscape coupled with diverse land cover and land usage combines to create a visual richness revealing an ever-changing series of views, panoramas and intimate spaces.

The settlements, Goudhurst village, Kilndown, and Curtisden Green, all have dominant hilltop positions. This defines their character with a series of distant views out and their profiles act as landmarks from distant points in the local area.

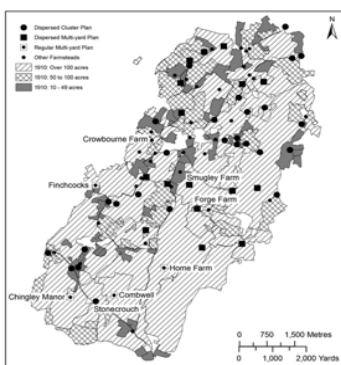
Three tributaries of the River Teise, the largest of which is the River Bewl, flow in a general south to north direction through the area and have influence on its character, contrasting with the high ridges which are regularly incised by the thin, narrow valleys. Numerous 'Chalybeate', or iron-rich springs, occur on the upper slopes at the junction of the permeable sandstone and clay. (see figure 2)

These, and the heavy clays of the High Weald, have generally restricted historic roads, paths and settlements to the drier higher ground or ridge tops.

Outside the settlements the Parish consists of a rolling upland landscape, cut by valleys with a dispersed settlement pattern of small hamlets and isolated farmsteads hidden by extensive blocks of ancient deciduous ghyll, and shaw woodlands which surround medium-large fields of arable farmland, fruit, hops and small fields of pasture farmland.

The farms are frequently large-scale buildings, often in association with barns and fruit packing sheds, although many are not visually prominent in the landscape as they tend to be hidden either by tree cover or the landform.

Just over a hundred years ago a visitor described Goudhurst in words that are as true today as they were then:



<sup>4</sup> A detailed analysis of the geology of Goudhurst can be found on our [website](#)



*Although development has taken place the character of the Parish remains unchanged*

*"The whole neighbourhood is singularly beautiful with the sylvan pastoral beauty that is England's great characteristic. The village is straggling. Genius could scarcely have made it more irregular. It is built on the slope of an eccentric hill. Approaching it from the south you see a collection of red roofs one above another, picturesque and promising. At the summit of the hill you come to the church, ancient, large and interesting. The landscape is richly timbered. There are woods on all sides. The whole scene sparkles with a light and laughter that makes you joyous" –*

Very little has changed since then, although there has been some limited creep down the slopes. In general, development follows the geography and respects the complex geology of the Parish.

Our settlements have landscape settings which are increasingly rare and of recognised international importance. Our intent is that the valued features and qualities of the landscape should be conserved and enhanced.

### 3.4 Parish Heritage

*19% of our buildings are listed with 11 listed Grade 1 and Grade II\**

Goudhurst Parish contains three distinctive hilltop Settlements. Goudhurst has a relatively intact historic settlement pattern and well preserved and interesting medieval buildings. It is important that development conserves and enhances the heritage assets of the Parish and their setting. The Parish has 224 listed buildings (19%), 11 of which are Grade I or Grade II\* status<sup>5</sup>. More than 50% of our buildings were built before 1874 and remnants of past industries (oast houses, hop pickers' huts, hammer ponds, ancient routeways) can be seen across the Parish and constitute significant local features.

*Strong local character from brick, tile and weatherboarding*

There are conservation areas in both Goudhurst and Kilndown<sup>6</sup> centred around the stone, Grade I listed churches of St Mary the Virgin and Christ Church. Details of these are given below (Section 4).

*Highest density of historic timber buildings in Europe*

The high proportion of listed buildings contributes to a distinctive 'look and feel' to the Parish. The consistent use of similar materials across a broad range of buildings is the most notable feature of our local architecture. They are generally brick with traditional Kent peg tiles hung vertically on first floor walls under a tiled roof. Tiles were historically made from local iron clay.

Our area of the High Weald has the highest density of historic timber-framed buildings anywhere in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.5 Overall Topography

#### Goudhurst

Goudhurst village occupies one of the most dramatic sites in the High Weald, perched on a narrow round-topped ridge which rises 120m above the Teise valley to the west and steep slopes and ghyll valleys to the north and south.

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<sup>5</sup> Historic England register of listed buildings

<sup>6</sup> There are Conservation Areas in both [Goudhurst and Kilndown](#)

<sup>7</sup> Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 122 'High Weald' was updated on the 18th December 2013.

## Landscape Character



Goudhurst Village centre

Goudhurst dominates the landscape and is a familiar and visible feature over a wide area.

The village is arranged around two small plateaux, the higher with the church and the lower with the crossroads and pond, with surrounding houses set on sloping ground. Tattlebury lies to the east of the main village on the gently sloping ridge top.



Figure 3 Topographic Parish Map (courtesy of Google)

The village centre has a high density of Historic buildings with a diverse range of styles, including the distinctive Wealden timber framed buildings and sandstone houses, as well as the local vernacular tile and weatherboarding. The hilltop location means that the village has rather inconclusive boundaries, tapering out at the lower end, with more modern twentieth century development extending out from the crossroads. There has been some level of development on the western approaches.

This distinctive topography is a key characteristic of the village and has been an important factor in determining the settlement pattern and development of the village and is one of the main factors that today makes Goudhurst special.



Curtisden Green from Goudhurst

### Curtisden Green

Curtisden Green is a medieval hamlet centred around a village green, overlooked by historic cottages and farmhouses. Curtisden Green is adjacent to the AONB.

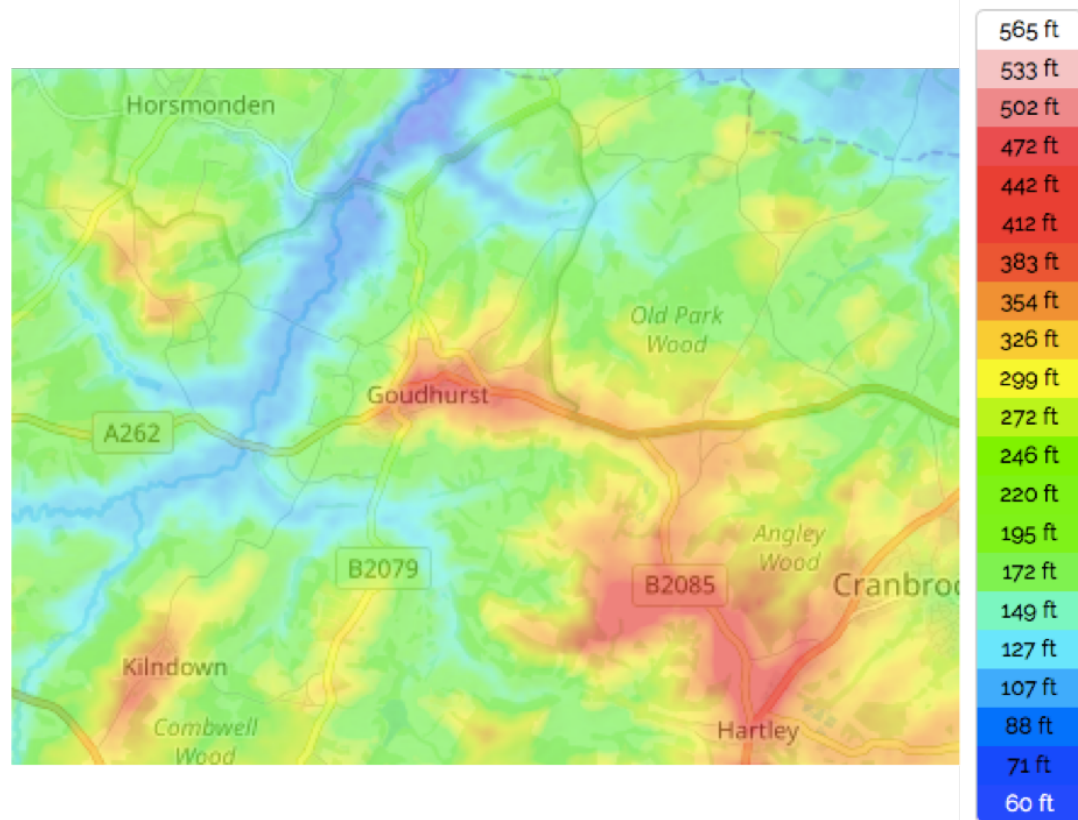


Figure 4 Topographic map showing height above sea level

## Kilndown



Kilndown from Goudhurst

Kilndown is a small linear settlement located on a sandstone ridge in the south of the Parish. To the east it has views across the open countryside to the forested ridges of Bedgebury and north to the wooded ridges of Goudhurst. Land to the south is of lower agricultural quality with the Tunbridge Wells Sandstone producing acidic soil and the clays. Because of this, much of the area has remained covered by semi-natural broad-leaved woodlands, many of which are ancient in origin, giving Kilndown a more ‘enclosed’ feel.

Properties are generally small and unimposing, giving rise to a generally small-scale domestic environment. The exceptions to this are the imposing Christ Church and the extensive single building of the Globe and Rainbow Inn. These two buildings are the dominant and defining landmark features of the settlement and are at variance with the surrounding environment. The Quarry Centre community facility is a low-key timber structure that blends harmoniously with its rural setting and the adjacent Quarry Pond is a striking feature much used by locals.

The landscape is more open to the west, with views available from the rear of the Christ Church, Rogers Rough Road and the rear of the Globe and Rainbow Inn, but they are dominated by woodland and wooded farmland which create an enclosed and remote character.



Former Globe and Rainbow -



## 3.6 The Rural Parish



Dramatic countryside

The remainder of the Parish has grown up around a number of historic farmsteads and large country houses including Scotney Castle, Finchcocks, Twysenden and Glassenbury manors and Ladham House. Many of the historic farmsteads date from the medieval period, possibly originating from former 'dens'. Included in this sector are the hamlets of Iden Green, Horden, Broad Ford, Riseden and Winchet Hill.

Farmsteads have retained buildings from the 17th century or earlier along with the characteristic oast house. Historic England note that, by national standards, historic farm buildings in the High Weald have low rates of structural failure. This has resulted in high rates of conversion of listed buildings to non-agricultural uses, 46% against a national average of 34%.<sup>8</sup> Most of these are to domestic use, with only 5.7% of listed working buildings being converted to commercial use.<sup>9</sup>

## 3.7 Soils, Agriculture and Forestry

*Woodland is an important part of our Parish*

There are sixteen soil series ranging from the sandy soils of the old forest areas, the well-drained fine sands, and the clays with fair to poor drainage<sup>10</sup>. The cultivation of fruit (apples, pears and cherries) on the slopes and hops has been important in the Parish and remains part of the ongoing heritage. Permanent grassland and arable land on the flatter ridge top and the gentler slopes to the south and west are also an important part of the landscape, with typically sheep rearing and reducing dairy farming.



Orchards and tradition boundaries

Medium-large arable fields with irregular boundaries of wooded hedges, shaws and hedgerows are mixed with small pasture fields which represent an extensively intact historic landscape pattern. Much of the area is covered by medieval assart fields bounded by the characteristic thick strips of shaw and ghyll woodland, and early post-medieval regular informal fields with sinuous and wavy boundaries surrounding the early and late post-medieval designed parklands of Scotney Castle, Finchcocks and Glassenbury manors

Much of the higher sandy ground is given over to forestry. An unusually high proportion of the Parish (27%) is designated as Ancient Woodland or Deciduous Woodland.<sup>11</sup> In addition, much of the old Bedgebury School estate is marked as Woodpasture and a Parkland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Habitat, while the 320 acre Bedgebury Pinetum is part of the Ancient Woodland and National Forest Inventory.



Orchards are once again prevalent in the area

field boundaries are particularly varied; the tall Lombardy poplar and coniferous edges which shelter the orchards are the most visually distinctive, while the

<sup>8</sup> Historic England

<sup>9</sup> [TWBC document on Farmsteads](#)

<sup>10</sup> Goudhurst Geology study

<sup>11</sup> Forestry Commission management of the Bedgebury Pinetum

medium-sized pasture and arable fields are generally bound by hawthorn hedges with a scatter of mature hedgerow oak trees.

The pasture fields, orchards and increasingly rare hop gardens create a patchwork effect in views across the steep slopes, where the eye is drawn in by the intersecting lines of the tall shelter hedges and regular criss-crossed rows and stripes of dwarf fruit trees.

Hop gardens, once prevalent across the area, are still to be found on the Scotney Estate and in Iden Green, and hoppers huts can be seen scattered through the landscape.

### 3.8 Roads and Routes and Footpaths



Footpath Smugley

Our Roads, a network of rural lanes, follow the routes of ancient droveways. The Parish is crossed by a network of historic droveways, tracks and which were the former lanes used for transhumance – the seasonal movement of people and animals for summer and winter feeding in the woodland pasture (or ‘dens’) - which were generally isolated areas in the High Weald.

Goudhurst village is at the centre of a great variety and number of roads and footpaths that radiate out from its hilltop location. The primary route, the A262, which passes through the centre of the village on the main axis of the church, provides a backbone for the secondary routes. The crossroads of the A262 with the B2079 provides a focus for vehicular traffic, but the footpaths and lanes permeate the whole of the settlement and stretch into the wider countryside. The lanes and footpaths emphasise and encourage both historical and present-day pedestrian activity and add greatly to the variety and intricacy of the built form.

The Parish has a large well-maintained footpath network, including the circular Goudhurst Millennium Walk and the High Weald Landscape Trail, providing access and enjoyment for recreation. All settlements lie at the centre of networks of Public Rights of Way between the major tourist attractions and walking areas of Bedgebury Forest, Scotney Estate, Goudhurst village and Bewl Water.

### 3.9 The Natural Environment

*Extraordinary biodiversity with ponds and river courses supports a range of protected species*

The presence of ponds, many resulting from historic industrial activities, and rivers is important to the extraordinary biodiversity of the High Weald. Over 100 species are supported including a number of uncommon ones that are recognised to be of national importance. Birds, mammals, amphibians, insects and other invertebrates all use ponds for food and shelter and to complete their lifecycles.

Areas of natural biodiversity and visual value, including the semi-improved pastures on the steep slopes surrounding Goudhurst, are important both visually and as a biodiversity resource.

The Parish has an abundance of species-rich ‘woodland’ hedgerows, primarily as field margins, which provide an important wildlife habitat. These hedgerows have been an integral part of the Parish landscape and very often carry historic

significance where they denote medieval field patterns. Large oaks are a feature in hedgerow boundaries. The fields contain burnet-saxifrage and salad burnet, with moisture loving plants such as water mint and ragged robin common at the base of the slopes.

Ponds and the local river courses support a range of protected species including the great crested newt, water vole, shining ramshorn snail, and the medicine leech. Protected plant species include the bugle, marsh marigold, ragged robin, marsh woundwort, lady's smock, water nut, purple loosestrife, branched bur-reed, greater pond sedge, water violet, reed sweet grass, water forget-me-not, lesser spearwort, arrowhead, water starwort, rigid hornwort, water crowfoot and water milfoil.

Deer are a growing presence in local woodlands including roe, red and fallow deer.

The only Regionally Important Geological Site in the area is the outcrop of Tunbridge Wells Sandstone in Scotney Castle Grounds - a preserved dinosaur footprint. This is covered and protected by the National Trust.

### 3.10 Habitats and Species

*There are important habitats across the Parish*

A Priority Habitat Inventory Site of 2.7ha is located near Forge Farm and the lower meadows below Kilndown Wood. Around Smugley Farm and Furnace Farm there are Environmental Stewardship Agreements (ESAs) in place covering 666ha. West of Kilndown the ESA covers nearly 300ha for Organic Entry Level farming and there are further ESAs covering 95ha on Riseden Farm.

The following Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Parish will impact planning decisions:

- Combwell Wood - Ref 1062208. Unfavourable, Recovering.
- Combwell Wood - Ref 1062207. Favourable.
- Scotney Castle - Ref 1062206. Favourable.
- Scotney Castle - Ref 1062657. Unfavourable, Recovering

*Our Sites of Special Scientific Interest are favourable or*

The entire Parish falls within the Higher-Level Stewardship Target Area for England, as part of the High Weald and Associated Valleys region.

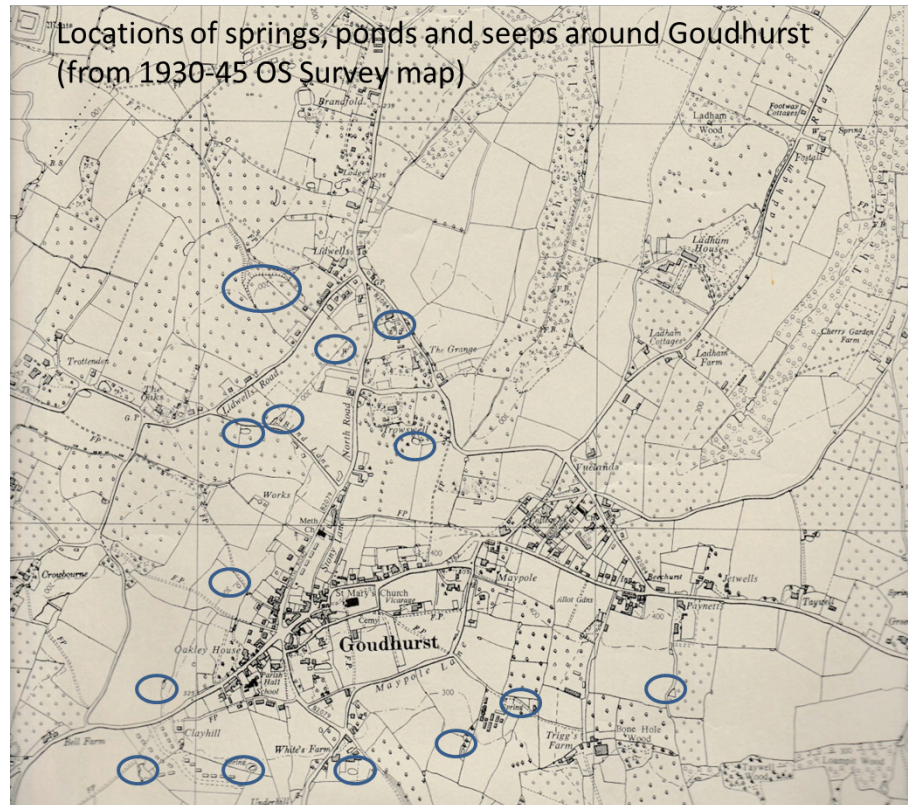
### 3.11 Rivers and Watercourses

*Goudhurst provides 10 million litres of drinking water a day to surrounding Parishes*

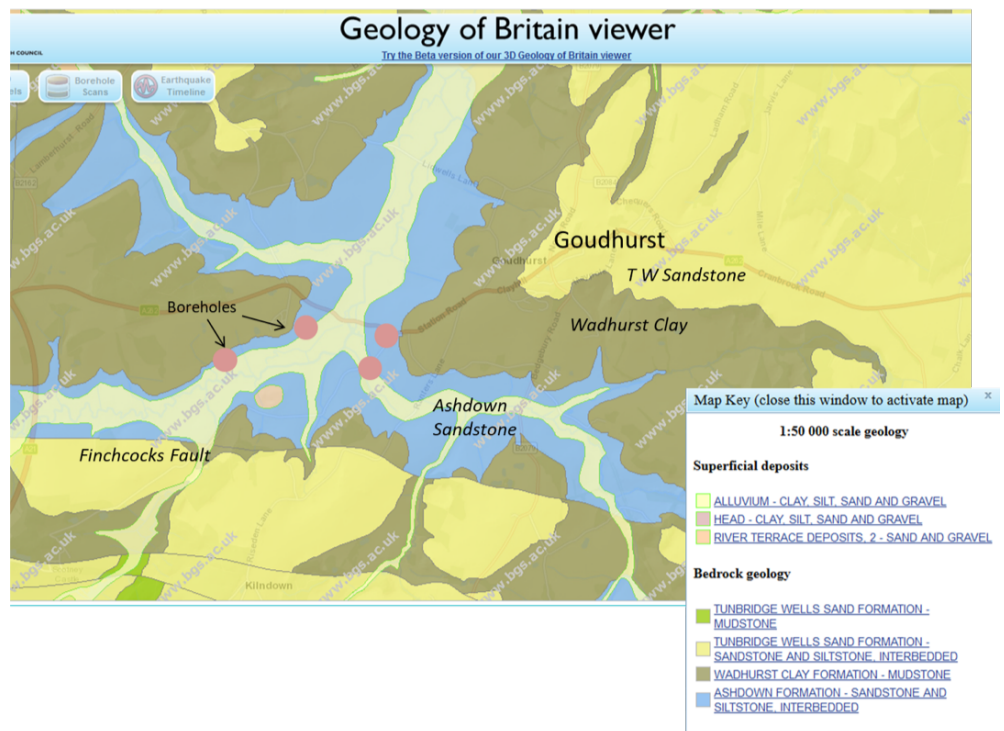
The Parish is bounded on the western margin by the river Teise (which takes most of the drainage) and the smaller River Bewl which flow northwards to the Medway.



# Landscape Character



Springs and ponds are common, some are man-made ponds, excavated for their stone or clay resource, but most are naturally formed. Some have distinct Chalybeate characteristics providing an important habitat for vertebrate and invertebrate species.



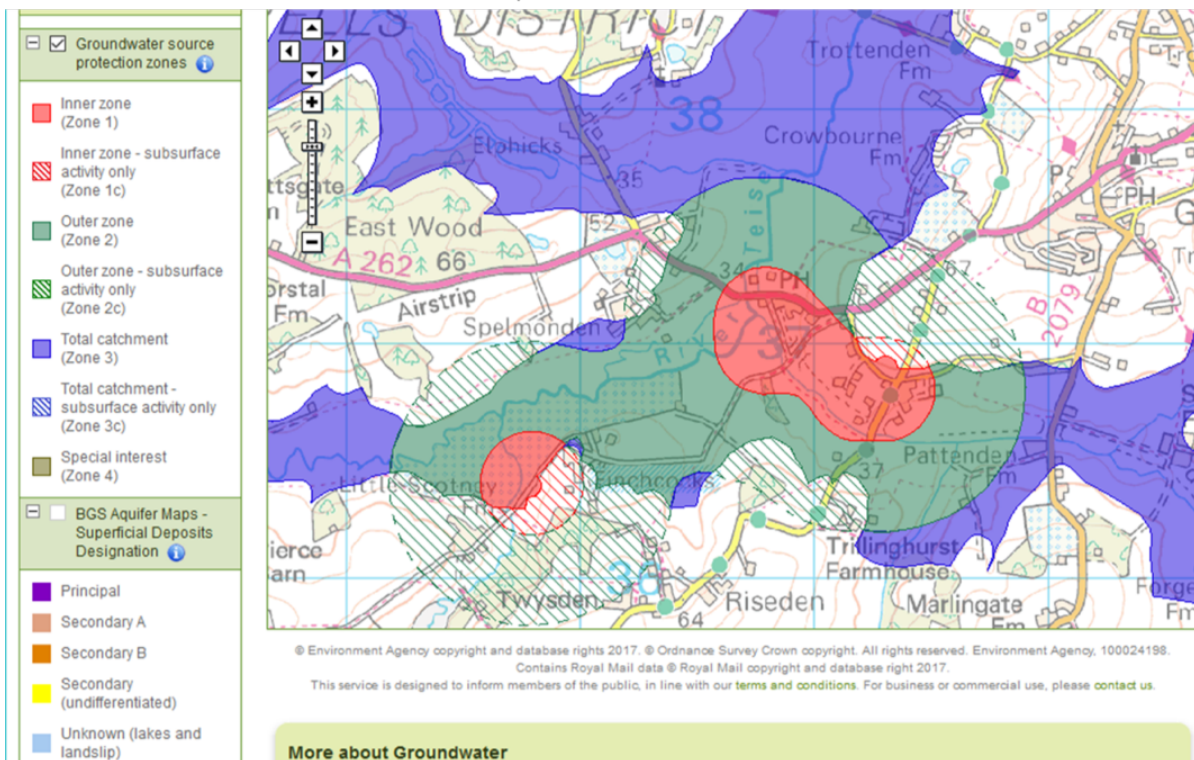
Goudhurst is the only village in the Weald to maintain its own groundwater abstraction pumping station serving Goudhurst and other villages, providing up

# Landscape Character

to 10 million litres per day. It is important, therefore, given the lack of mains drainage in the Parish, that any development should manage waste water and surface water run-off to ensure there is no risk to groundwater sources.

As background, around 80% of Kent's public water supply is obtained from groundwater, the remaining 20% is almost entirely from pumped water storage such as Bewl Reservoir. While the county as a whole is self-sufficient in water supply, Tunbridge Wells Borough is a net exporter of water, primarily from the sources at Pembury, Bewl Bridge and Goudhurst Pumping Station. A high proportion of water from Bewl Reservoir and from Goudhurst is directed eastwards towards Ashford to support the growing demand in that area.

Groundwater source protection zones for Goudhurst



<http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk>

However, over the years the EA has noted instances of localised environmental impact and over-abstraction which threatens the sustainability of water supplies and which might harm wetland and surface water habitats. Evidence from climate change research, coupled with recent drought experience, points to an increasing mismatch between the replenishment of water supplies and demand for abstraction. Consequently, it is important that development is only permitted in locations where an adequate means of supply can be made without harming groundwater resources.

As part of its statutory obligations, therefore, the EA has produced plans which map the protection zones around each water source. The shape and size of a zone depends on the condition of the ground, the geology, how the groundwater is removed, and other environmental factors. The zone is defined as how the groundwater behaves in that area and is based upon a model which describes these movements.

The relevant zones for the Goudhurst Pumping Station are presented in the map above. Groundwater source catchments are divided into three zones as follows:

1. Inner zone (Zone 1): RED. Defined as the 50 day travel time from any point below the water table to the source. This zone has a minimum radius of 50 meters. It can be observed that this includes the area around Risebridge, Bluecoats Lane, Green Cross and Finchcocks.
2. The shaded Zone 1 relates to the extension of Zone 1 where the aquifer is confined and may be impacted by deep drilling activities or deep groundworks.
3. Outer zone (Zone 2): GREEN. Defined as the 400 day travel time from a point below the water table. This zone includes much of the area from Spelmonden to Riseden, Pattenden Farm, and Ranter Lane
4. The shaded Zone 2 extends the zone where the aquifer is confined and may be impacted by deep drilling activities or groundworks.
5. Total catchment (Zone 3): PURPLE. Defined as the area around a source within which all the groundwater recharge is presumed to be discharged at the source. On the Goudhurst map it includes almost all the area of the Ashdown Formation outcrop.

The importance of these zones is that they are used in conjunction with the Groundwater Protection Policy to prevent pollution, to control development, and to monitor the activities of potential polluters. Their Groundwater Protection policy is set out in their latest guidelines of March 2017 (*The EA's approach to groundwater protection*).

### 3.12 Areas of Flood Risk

*It is important that run-off from buildings does not contaminate our drinking water*

There are a three types of flood risk in the Parish:

- Flood risk from rivers. This includes much of the Teise and Bewl and stretches to Smugley Farm and Lamberhurst under High Risk
- Flood risk from surface water (stormwater). This is mainly restricted to the Teise and Risebridge/Green Cross valley and is more limited in extent
- Flood risk from reservoirs is much more extensive. For example, the overtopping of Bewl Reservoir would be considered a major risk here

There is a risk of long-term climate change but given that the Parish is above 30m AOD (Above Ordinance Datum – sea level), major impact will not be seen for the next 300 years.

There is a spring line around Goudhurst marking the perimeter of the village. A survey marks the locations of ponds, seeps, springs, marshes and bogs which are either on or just below the sandstone. Historically, this geology has constrained building on the western and southern slopes of the village: the underlying clay is highly mobile and plastic, and difficult to drain.

Heavy rainfall can result in the reactivation of the older underground discharge routes with the potential appearance of sudden water flows. Any contamination from the top of the village, whether run-off from a road or site, or subsurface pollution, is highly likely to surface along this margin and run overground down the clay slopes into the valley.

These features impact on the biodiversity of the Parish and the contribution to potable water resources.

*Our plan will not include specific policies around water or flooding as national and TWBC policies are robust*



## Section 4 Conservation areas

### 4.1 Conservation Areas

*Conservation areas deserve special protection*



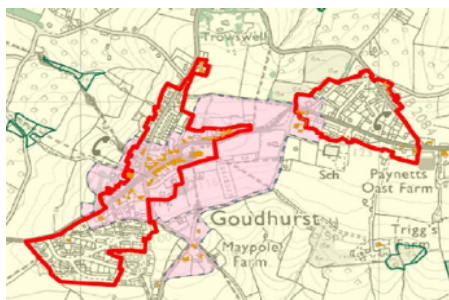
St Marys Church Goudhurst

Conservation areas in both Goudhurst and Kilndown surround a Grade I listed church. Whilst conservation areas benefit from specific protections afforded by national and local planning requirements, we wish to reinforce these requirements by establishing a set of local parameters to sustain and protect our conservation areas. Our priority is that development maintains the character of the conservation area and complements rather than contrasting with it. Designs that are respectful of existing character and design. Whilst we acknowledge that we cannot create policies that deal with style, our view is that conservation requires more sensitive treatment than we have experienced in recent years. Modern style extensions or new developments will be resisted.

There are two conservation areas in the Parish which surround the Parish churches of St Marys Goudhurst and Christ Church Kilndown.

### 4.2 Goudhurst Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is centred on the heart of the village, but stretches along an open ridge to the east to include what was historically referred to as ‘Little Goudhurst’, the area around Tattlebury House. The designated area in Goudhurst covers a variety of plot patterns and spatial forms, including the compact village centre, village pond and open areas of rural and amenity landscape.



Goudhurst LBD (red lines) and Conservation area (pink)

The focus of the village is the upper High Street, where the view terminates with St Mary’s Church at the high point of the village. The unique and dramatic hilltop location gives a sense, in distant views, of a compact and singular settlement around the church. This masks the variety within, created by an intricate pattern of roads, paths and alleyways, of built form and open spaces.

Many of the buildings are early in origin and of substantial construction, reflecting in their quality the prosperous nature of the area.



Goudhurst Village from St Marys

Goudhurst has a vibrant local commerce with an array of local shops that include butchers, grocers, bakers, newsagent and general store, as well as other retail stores selling gifts and antiques. These shops are augmented by local services such as the doctors’ surgery, hairdressers, estate agents, restaurant and pubs, to create a lively village centre. Other village facilities include the Ex-Servicemen’s Club and the Parish Hall, both of which are well used for public and private functions.

#### Approach

Goudhurst is a medium sized Conservation Area with a variety and wealth of historical and architectural interest, in which the landscape is an important feature, both as setting and as an integral part.

To better understand the detail of the Goudhurst Conservation Area it has been divided into eight character areas which are described in terms of their building



## Conservation areas

types, layout, related landscape and topography. Full details can be found in the Conservation area definition <sup>12</sup>

<b>Lower High Street and Pond</b>	The probable location of the original settlement was at the meeting point of the three routes from north and east Kent and from the Weald in the south, with the village pond immediately to the west – the setting for the first market place. The village would have grown up around this nodal point and around that of the church on the high ridge at the east end of the High Street.
<b>Upper High Street, ‘Star and Eagle’</b>	This is the spine of the historic and present day village, connecting the lower market place to the church on the upper ridge.
<b>Church and Limehouse</b>	The church occupies a flat area of ridge at the summit of the High Street, forming the focal point of the streetscape and dominating the view from many places, raised up both by its location and by the banked burials in the churchyard. The wide churchyard is open to the sky and views all round, in direct contrast to the enclosed streets and ‘keyhole’ views experienced lower down in the village.
<b>Back Lane</b>	Back Lane in its present form dates from about 1768 and effectively forms the boundary to the south of the village, the agricultural fields falling away to the south and the backs of the historic High Street plots to the north. The south facing slopes are dotted with large, detached buildings, the pattern of development apparently having begun in Victorian times with the construction of the fine Victorian Vicarage, the Old Parsonage and other, later, detached houses on large plots. In the further landscape are isolated, older farms and remote cottages.
<b>Wealden View</b>	This character area is centred on North Road, the old road leading north east from the market place crossroads.
<b>Cricket Ground</b>	This is open ground between Goudhurst and Tattlebury. There are no buildings of significance.
<b>Tattlebury</b>	Tattlebury lies to the east of Goudhurst. Also known as Little Goudhurst, it is a satellite settlement of the larger village, possibly originally an independent agricultural settlement or hamlet.
<b>White’s Farm</b>	This is a group of farm buildings and cottages in an informal arrangement amongst large plots and fields, situated to the south of the village and separated from it by a four-way meeting point of old routes and tracks that appear unchanged to those mapped in 1769. The junction comprises Balcombes Hill to the north west, Maypole Lane to the north east, Bedgebury Road to the south west and a track to Smugley Farm to the south east.

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<sup>12</sup> Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation area

### 4.3 Kilndown Conservation Area



Kilndown LBD (red line) and Conservation area (pink)

Kilndown is a small and compact Conservation Area which does, however, fall into three discrete parts, determined by the apparent periods of the development of the village. These are listed below.

For the purposes better understanding its nature, the Kilndown Conservation Area’s three character areas have been defined and described in terms of their building types, layout, related landscape and topography.

<p><b>Character Area – Church and Environs</b></p>	<p>The church is the principal and defining building in the character area, a neo-Gothic design of 1839/41 by Anthony Salvin, for Marshal Viscount Beresford; later altered by Alexander Roos for A J Beresford Hope in 1840/5.</p>
<p><b>Globe and Rainbow Inn</b></p>	<p>The church is detached from the natural focus of the village, the meeting point of the traditional routes from the north, south and south east, in front of the Globe and Rainbow Inn. The meeting point of these historic roads is open space, surrounded loosely by the inn, the village pond, the old forge (now a house) and the village hall. However, the inn has the closest physical relationship with the crossroads, the pond now being obscured by undergrowth.</p>
<p><b>Rogers Rough Road</b></p>	<p>Leading south east from the village centre is Rogers Rough Road, an old track now flanked by large residential plots, possibly originating as smallholdings, and now occupied by a mix of houses of different dates, but mostly 19th and 20th centuries.</p>



Quarry Pond



Christchurch Kilndown

The historic road junction and centre of the hamlet  
The church and environs

## Section 5 Design and Materials

*We have a broad range of homes of different periods and styles throughout the Parish*

*19% of our buildings are listed*



Traditional Oast houses



In the Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation Area Appraisal of 2006<sup>13</sup>, TWBC draws attention to some key elements of design which therefore form the basis for our design guidelines to be applied to any development proposals. In particular, the appraisal states: *“The character of a settlement is determined by more than just the age and style of buildings. It is also influenced by the positioning of the buildings, their use, the shape, size and use of spaces between them, the materials, colours and textures employed. Topography and the relationship between the built form and the landscape elements are also key elements of settlement character.”*

In Goudhurst Parish, design character is described as a “picturesque jumble” with a variety of styles reflecting the development of each of the settlements over time. At their core are some significant historic buildings, 19% of our buildings are listed<sup>14</sup> and English Heritage recognises that the area has one of the highest proportions of surviving medieval buildings in Western Europe. Our main settlements are also conservation areas and benefit from specific protections which we also wish to emphasise in this plan.

There is a sharp contrast between the dense and tightly packed built form and the open spaces of churchyards, pond, pasture and the wider countryside. The village itself sits in contrast to the surrounding rural landscape. The topography accentuates the contrast between the tightly packed streets and the open countryside, with the land falling away from the major settlement to create open aspects from the ‘rear’ elevation of streets and lanes.

Goudhurst village contains a variety of spaces, from narrow streets and alleyways to wide and open sections of streets (top of High Street) and highway (crossroads). Narrow footpaths give way to wide-open spaces, and narrow lanes run adjacent to open churchyards and fields. New Local Green Spaces are to be designated as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Both Kilndown and Goudhurst village has a simple and recognisable form with a clear hierarchy between routes, with a series of obvious and notable landmarks, including pubs, church and pond. Age, style and density of built form provide a clear differentiation and hierarchy between historical centre and outlying residential areas.

### 5.1 Materials

Most of the Parish is in the AONB but buildings across the Parish demonstrate a common design code, the most notable feature of which is the consistent use of materials across a broad range of buildings. They are predominately brick with traditional tiles hung vertically on first floor walls under a tiled roof. Tiles were

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<sup>13</sup> [Ndp.goudhurst.co.uk/resource/s/Goudhurst and Kilndown Conservation aaaa.pdf](https://www.ndp.goudhurst.co.uk/resource/s/Goudhurst_and_Kilndown_Conservation_aaaa.pdf)

# Design and Materials

historically made from local iron clay. 98% of residents support the continued use of traditional materials.



Figure 5 There are many examples of good design in the Parish

Our heritage has a strong local character influenced by a variety of locally available building materials. This has resulted in an abundance of brick, tile, weatherboard and stone or rendered buildings.

The density of housing in the Parish has evolved over many centuries. In general, density within villages is higher than in the open countryside. This is a pattern we would expect to retain.

The variety of housing layouts contributes to the sense of ‘jumble’ that is important to residents. The intricate pattern of roads, paths, alleyways, the built form and open space, together create the character which we wish to preserve. Most of the Parish is in the AONB but buildings across the Parish demonstrate a common design code, the most notable feature of which is the consistent use of materials across a broad range of buildings. They are predominately brick with traditional tiles hung vertically on first floor walls under a tiled roof. Tiles were historically made from local iron clay.

Our heritage has a strong local character influenced by a variety of locally available building materials. This has resulted in an abundance of brick, tile, weatherboard and stone or rendered buildings.

Goudhurst village exhibits a wealth of architectural detail in the façade and elevations of its buildings, most notably in the variety of size and design of windows and doors. This characteristic is most notable in the High Street where the lower floors of the stepped properties have shortened doors and basement windows, and those buildings with upper floors have large picture windows and bays overlooking the street.

Red brick is the most commonly used building material used for brick houses, garden walls and is also found in pavements. Some has also been used to infill panels in timber-framed buildings. Bonding is variable, with older buildings exhibiting the dark glazed brick ends that in some cases are used to form a distinctive pattern.

The red of brick and tile is contrasted by the black and white patterns of timber-framed buildings and white weatherboarding on others.



Timber, tiles and stone

*Modern design and technology can enhance the “picturesque jumble” and be more environmentally sympathetic*



Kentish Oast Houses Finchcocks

## 5.2 Roofscapes



In the historic core of Goudhurst village, the grouping of the buildings in short terraces, set at angles to each other and to the street, together with the constantly varying roof profiles and pitches, results in a picturesque jumble of red tile slopes that is a principal characteristic of the Conservation Area.

Across the Parish red clay peg tiles are a dominant feature on both roofs and elevations. The large and varied roof patterns where they stagger up the slopes



provide an interesting combination of pattern and form. The textures, colours and patterns of the tiles bring out the richness of the buildings and greatly add to the attractiveness and character of the area.

## 5.3 Streetscape



View from the Chequers football pitch



Bedgebury Pinetum

Picture - Cottage on Church Road with tile hanging and white weatherboarding  
Picture - Doors and Windows

Picture - Lack of Street Lighting

There is only one street lamp in the village and, at various Parish Council meetings over time, residents had expressed the wish that it should remain so. The absence of street lamps not only reduces street clutter, but also contributes to the special character of the village during dusk and evenings. The village and, most notably the High Street, rely upon the 'borrowed' light of buildings, which creates its own atmosphere. The lighting on the outside of The Vine is a good example of discreet, well-designed external fittings. By contrast, the church is lit by spotlights until 10.30pm and stands in sharp contrast to the dimly-lit streets. This effect can be appreciated in distant views from the surrounding countryside.

The absence of a kerb and markings to the road, together with the wooded edges, maintains a rural feel throughout the village, which is reinforced by the backdrop of trees and occasional trackways leading into the woods. These 'soft' edges are reinforced by the predominance of grass verges and garden hedges and are a characteristic that should be maintained.

The villages have few large road signs and, apart from the main road signs at the crossroads, street signage is generally discreet and in scale with its surroundings.

## 5.4 Landscape and Trees



Beech trees Kilndown



Trees are not a particularly strong feature in the main area of the village in Goudhurst, but notable groups are associated with the village pond, Clayhill and around Balcombes Hill. Trees are more prominent, and a stronger influence, around Tattlebury, with a notable group on the green at Maypole Lane. There is also a group of protected trees near Lamberts. The older churchyard has few trees, but historic photographic evidence suggests that there were more. The Victorian churchyard to the south of Back Lane is dominated by conifers, with a formal pattern of fastigiated yews.



Gap between the Goudhurst LBD's

The playing field and pastures between the church and Tattlebury divide the two settlement areas and allow the countryside to flow around the church. The rural setting of the church is defined by these open areas, together with the fields and churchyards south of Back Lane and the cottages with their backdrop of trees along Church Road.

The fields and open land that surround the settlement are an essential part of the setting of the village and a defining part of its character.

## Section 6 Views from, into, and across the Parish

*Views are an important part of living and visiting the Parish*



View of Horsmonden Church



View of Somewhere

There are a number of views identified in the Goudhurst Neighbourhood Plan and these are described in a separate companion document<sup>15</sup>.

The elevated ridge top position occasionally affords panoramas across the surrounding countryside. From Goudhurst Church) where there are 360 views of the successive dark wooded ridgelines of Bedgebury Forest creating a sense of being on the 'roof' of the High Weald.

The arrangement of buildings, roads and lanes and an absence of trees create a series of framed, long distance views from within Goudhurst village across the rural landscape of the Teise valley to St Margaret's Church, Horsmonden, and to the wooded Bedgebury Forest. The tributary of the River Teise in the north of the area around Worms Hill creates distant and distinctive views to and from Curtisden Green and Goudhurst, of natural landform and agricultural fields interspersed with oasts, farmhouses and hop gardens.

Elsewhere the intervening valleys and wooded land cover create contrasting patterns of enclosure, suggesting a more secluded landscape with only occasional long views out.

The built form of the Goudhurst village and arrangement of streets and lanes create a number of pleasing vistas. The sparsely settled Teise valley and Bedgebury Forest dominate the wider views, creating a sense of remoteness countered by the strong, pastoral landscape surrounding the village of grazing pasture, orchards, hop gardens and shaw woodlands dotted with farmsteads cottages and church spires.

Preserving these views and vistas, and the spaces that permit them, is a priority. Full account should be taken of the sensitivity of views and viewing locations in the consideration of any development proposal.

Equally important to views from the village, and of great importance to the local landscape, are views of Goudhurst from the surrounding countryside. In an area where settlements are often well screened with woodland, Goudhurst is a prominent skyline feature from the surrounding lower land and provides an important and unique local landmark.

With our settlements perched high on sandstone ridges it is not surprising that views form an important part of life in the Parish. The landscape setting provides outstanding panoramic views out of and into all our settlements and hamlets. Goudhurst Church acts as a key landmark and its tower is a focal point for most views to, from, and within the village. From the tower there is a 360° view of the successive dark wooded ridgelines of Bedgebury Forest creating a sense of being on the 'roof' of the High Weald.

There is a network of open spaces in Goudhurst following the medieval routeways that shaped the village, linking important historical sites, houses and

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<sup>15</sup> Goudhurst NDP Views Assessment document

# Views from, into, and across the Parish

estates. The countryside melts away from the hilltop settlements through these spaces and they afford views within and out of our settlements. Walking routeways centuries old is a key attraction for visitors and residents.



Figure 6 St Mary's Church tower offers a panorama across the Parish and Borough

The arrangement of buildings, roads and lanes creates a series of framed, long distance views from within Goudhurst village across the rural landscape of the Teise valley to St Margaret's Church, Horsmonden, Bewl Water, Finchcocks, Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst and to the Bedgebury Forest

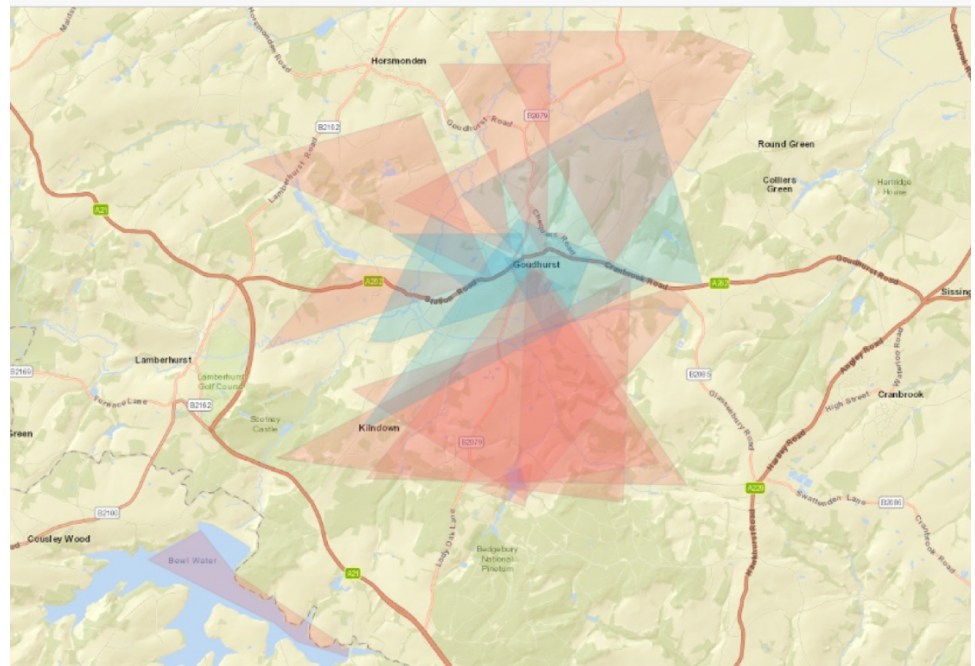


Figure 7 Map of Goudhurst View

*Many of our key views are to and from the Goudhurst ridge line*

Although many people stop and walk through the Parish, most are driving through and experience fleeting glimpses of the landscape and then extensive long views across the Parish from the ridgetop. In all cases, views within the Parish are rarely from a single viewing point, but rather from a wide selection of viewing points which enhance the enjoyment of the landscape, particularly when travelling through the Parish.

Our landscape is extremely important to our residents with 97% of residents wanting to protect and conserve it<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Goudhurst NDP questionnaire questions 45-49.



# Views from, into, and across the Parish

Kinetic iconic – view Goudhurst – kent in one village -

Goudhurst has many views. The views of our landscape include: natural and man-made features, rivers and streams, woodland, orchard and pasture, all of which provide an historic and cultural context and are important to visitors and residents alike. Our intent is to conserve the scenery, wildlife and the natural and historic landscape for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

The following are considered important views from:

1. Curtisden Green south to the Goudhurst Ridge
2. Horsmonden Churchyard south east to Goudhurst<sup>17</sup>
3. Church Road by Maypole north to Curtisden Green and Ridge
4. The footpath behind Old Bank northwest towards Horsmonden
5. Cranbrook Road approx. 200m West of Greentrees north to Curtisden Green and the Ridge
6. A262 junction close to Peacock Inn southwest to Kilndown
7. Junction of Lurkins Rise and the A262 northwest towards Horsmonden Church
8. Junction of Lurkins Rise and the A262 west towards Finchcocks and Spelmonden
9. Maypole Lane South west towards Kilndown and Bedgebury Forest and Ridge
10. 100m east of Lime Trees Farm south to Bedgebury Forest and Kilndown Ridge
11. Top of New Burial Ground south towards Bedgebury Forest and Kilndown Ridge
12. Roadway approximately 300m east of Finchcocks views east and east/northeast towards Goudhurst
13. Footpath approximately 400m east of Smugley Farm north towards Goudhurst and the Ridge
14. Kilndown Cricket Field northeast towards Goudhurst and the Ridge
15. Footpath just north of Bedgebury Great Lake southwest across Lake and beyond
16. Bewl Water from Rosemary Lane Dam westwards along Goudhurst Parish shoreline
17. West from Round Green towards Ladham House
18. West from Great Horden toward Curtisden Green
19. REFERENCE POINTS/VECTOR ANGLES -

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<sup>17</sup> Horsmonden Church is a grade 1 listed building which is just outside the Parish boundary. There is a clear line of sight between Horsmonden Church and the Grade 1 listed St Mary's church and is a key local landscape feature.



## Section 7 Facilities

Goudhurst has a range of shops and services, including a bakery, general store, local pubs and restaurants. Community facilities in the form of doctors' surgery, village hall and playing fields are also well provided for. The prosperity and vitality of local business and facilities of this 'self-sufficient community' are a characteristic feature that is very important to the local residents.

Kilndown, is much smaller but retains a pub and restaurant and has a community shop on Saturdays.

There is a strong sense of community reinforced by many clubs and societies, the social facilities offered by the Parish and village halls, three churches, two coffee shops, four pubs, Local History Society, U3A, Tennis Club, Scouts and numerous other clubs and societies that support major community events such as the annual village fete.

We are a dispersed community and, although residents of Goudhurst village live within reasonable walking distance of pre-schools, the primary school, the Doctor's surgery, churches, the post office and retail outlets, the remaining 47% of the residents in the Parish rely on private transport to access most of these services.

Less than 50 years ago all three settlements in the Parish had at least one general shop. There are now no shops in Curtisden Green or Kilndown, although the Quarry Centre provides Kilndown with a community-run, weekly general shop.



Although Goudhurst still retains a range of facilities there are no similar services in Kilndown or Curtisden Green. These are important assets within the Parish and any diminution will see the decline of the sense of community.

*There is a strong sense of community*

*The facilities we have are valued by residents*

*Just one community shop in Kilndown and no shops in Curtisden Green*



*Our community values and uses these places*



Figure 7 Residents from all three settlements regularly use the facilities in Goudhurst village. Community Assets

Questionnaire responses showed that residents of Goudhurst Parish value the sense of community (429), which is strengthened by the services and facilities that are available and the existing range of clubs and societies. The clubs and societies hold regular meetings in, among others, the Parish Hall, the Church Room, the Social Club, the Quarry Centre and Kildown Village Hall. Without these buildings alternative, local, and suitable meeting places would be extremely difficult to find.



Any loss of an asset or amenity of value within our Parish will diminish our community cohesion. The two smaller settlements, Kilndown and Curtisden Green, have already lost so much. We cannot allow this to happen in Goudhurst as the whole Parish will suffer the consequences and a community will not exist for future generations.

Our plan identifies considers the following to be assets of the community and will need to be retained:

1. Social Club
2. Parish Hall
3. Church Room
4. Car Park
5. Public Toilets
6. Scout HQ Hut – Tattlebury
7. Quarry Centre
8. Kilndown Village Hall
9. GP Surgery
10. Green Spaces

The landscape has importance for formal and informal visitor attractions e.g. Finchcocks Musical Museum, Scotney Castle and Bewl Reservoir, and there are numerous countryside and woodland trails.

The area has many distinct and unique buildings, frequently associated with the small waterways. Foremost amongst these is Scotney Castle owned by the National Trust, which is commonly used as a promotional image of the Kent Weald and together with its wider estate is a popular visitor attraction. The associated early 19th and mid 20th century gardens are listed Grade I on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. Finchcocks House is also located in the area, near a tiny stream close to the valley of the Teise. Finchcocks, an early Georgian Manor House, once home to a musical museum but now a private house, is a significant local landmark set in parkland.

The Bewl Reservoir – a regionally important visitor attraction that offers sailing, rowing, fishing, riding and biking, occurs at the periphery of the area, but remains largely hidden from view by a basin of rolling ridges.

1. Scotney Castle was built in 1377 and reduced to ruins in 1840. This romantic moated castle on the River Bewl, with attached ruins of a 17th century house, is a Scheduled Monument in the care of the National Trust. Finchcocks House is the most notable baroque house in the county. It is a Grade I listed, three-storey red brick country house with brighter red brick dressings and chimneys dating from 1725. Glassenbury Park comprises early 18th century formal gardens set within woodlands and a park with lakes laid out around a 15th century moated mansion.
2. Part of Lamberhurst Down Conservation Area lies within the character area. The Down is located on a sandstone knoll above Lamberhurst village which is situated in the valley below. It was historically a common used for pasture and grazing.

3. The old Hawkhurst Branch Railway Line cuts through the area. Known locally as 'the hop-pickers line', it operated between Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst, opened in 1892 until the line was closed in 1961. It was known for bringing hop-pickers each season from London's East End. The line remains conspicuous in the landscape, being demarked by hedgerows, boundaries and earthworks. There is a particularly well-preserved stretch located between Finchcocks and Ranters Lane.
4. The Wealden iron industry was an important part of the area's history, with nearby furnaces near Bedgebury (indicated in the names of nearby Furnace Wood and Forge Farm) and Chingley Forge (now under the Bewl Reservoir).
5. An ancient droveway between Smugley Farm in the north of the area, and Goudhurst, is known locally as a smugglers' tunnel, crossing through the ridge. Many of the historic farmsteads date from the medieval period, possibly originating from former 'dens'.



## Section 8 Issues Within Our Community

### 8.1 Modern Intrusion

Although the main road through Goudhurst is extremely busy beyond this there is a lack of intrusion by modern development. The result is a quiet rural landscape of relatively dark skies despite the presence of Goudhurst village.

Further to the south the main A21, a route that originated as a medieval ironway, bisects the area north of Bewl and is a major generator of noise and traffic in the area.

These grasslands are an important feature although they are vulnerable to encroaching and infill development.

#### Traffic and Parking

The rural character of Back Lane has been eroded by the use of standard highway road markings. The absence of road markings is an important part of the rural character and they should only be applied where absolutely necessary.

The A262 is a busy road that provides access for important trade and tourism to the village. However, the High Street and Church Road, with its 'dog leg' bend and churchyard wall, are problematic for larger vehicles and high volumes of traffic. The proximity of traffic jams and large commercial vehicles and coaches to the buildings and spaces associated with the church and High Street are detrimental to the setting, fabric and appreciation of this important group of buildings.

*Traffic is the single most important issue in our community*

*Large HGV having difficulty negotiating the double bend eastbound on the A262 in the centre of Goudhurst village*



Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs): 90% of residents are concerned about the number of HGVs and 93% concerned about their size. Our village still has the road layout set in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and modified at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and this is not easily adapted to modern traffic flows.

## Issues Within Our Community

*Long HGVs negotiating the bend by the church gate*



Figure 8 Goudhurst High Street is the road that concerns the most residents (79%).

It must also be recognised that the relaxed attitude to parking and the shared pedestrian/vehicular surfaces of the High Street provide a natural traffic calming effect, whilst allowing good access to shops and services. In addition, it must be recognised that alternative routes and/or controlled parking may be more damaging. Signing on the wider road network may discourage some larger vehicles, but many need to pass through the village to service local rural businesses.

*We want to encourage walking & cycling*

Although the main road through Goudhurst village is classed as an 'A' road, there are many points along this route within the built-up area where HGVs cannot pass each other without mounting the footway and similarly two areas where cars cannot pass. Most roads within the built-up area, and particularly the conservation area, do not have footways. The High Street was designed by Kent Highways as a hybrid area to be shared by pedestrians and traffic, including for parking, which may have benefits in terms of traffic calming but the route is often impassable to wheelchairs, prams etc. without venturing from the footway into the road. Increase in on-street parking would have the effect of exacerbating the existing danger to pedestrians who need to negotiate parked vehicles while at the same time avoid moving traffic.

*Crossing the road is not easy*



Figure 9 Crossing the high street can be difficult

The public car park and toilet block on Balcombes Hill is out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Area and, in contrast to the High Street, is poorly detailed. Within the village there is pressure for off-street parking to the rear of properties, which is having a detrimental effect on character and quality. The large car park of the 'Club House' is particularly noticeable. It should also be

## Issues Within Our Community

recognised that the sub-division of the road into pedestrian, vehicle and parking zones by the use of kerbs and different hard surfaces detracts from its older character as a wide, informal and unstructured public space.

Picture - Road Markings

The rural character of Back Lane has been eroded by the use of standard highway road markings. The absence of road markings is an important part of the rural character and they should only be applied where absolutely necessary.

Picture - Signs

Road and way marked signs that do exist often use inappropriate materials and/or design. In some cases there are several posts where one would suffice, which adds to the visual and physical clutter of the streetscape.

Picture - Footpaths and Alleyways

Condition is variable, with a number of poor details and surface treatments. The interface between village and country is often abrupt and poorly detailed. Junctions with lanes give priority to vehicular traffic and make little provision for the safe transition of pedestrians between footpath and highway.

Picture - Traffic on High Street

Picture - Balcombes Hill Car Park and toilet block

Picture - Poor quality and cluttered signs

Picture - Pathway onto North Road

Damage has regularly been caused to the Churchyard wall by long vehicles attempting to turn the tight corner at the top of the High Street.

*HGVs are  
damaging our  
heritage*



The damage to the Grade 1 listed wall of St Mary's Churchyard in the centre of the village demonstrates one of the impacts HGVs are having on our community. The vehicles frequently hit the wall while turning the bend by the church gate.

Figure 10 Damage to listed buildings

Church Cottage, a grade II listed property on the opposite side of the road, was hit by an HGV reversing in order to get around the right hand bend out of the village.



*Traffic queues make crossing the road difficult and dangerous*



Figure 11 Everyday queues

The queueing vehicles also make it difficult for pedestrians, especially the elderly, people with restricted mobility and those with young children in prams and pushchairs, to negotiate the High Street.



### Boundaries

Within the built area, closeboard fencing has been used and now encloses several sections of lanes and alleys. Brick walls are prominent in a number of locations, but often suffer from neglect.

The ragged post and wire fence and utilitarian five-bar metal field gate that fronts the paddock in Church Road opposite Queen Anne's is a detracting feature.

### Inappropriate Planting

Ornamental shrub planting associated with the School Yard development is out of character with the rural locality and generally harder formal treatment of street frontages. Two young beech trees at the front of Manor Cottage in the High Street appear to have replaced more traditional planting of lime or chestnut. Beech is difficult to manage in such a location as a tree rather than a hedge and may in time become either too large and dominating, or, because of necessary pruning, unattractive. Limes and chestnut respond more readily to pollarding, which would be appropriate in this location.

### Alterations

Throughout history, owners have repaired and modernised their properties, sometimes ill-advisedly, using whatever materials and techniques were available to them. Such alterations need not be large to alter the character of the building and cumulatively have serious implications for the quality, character and perception of the area. In the past, the nature of such improvements was limited by cost and the availability of non-traditional materials, at least to the majority. Recent fashions for improvement, however, including UPVC windows and doors, UPVC rainwater pipes, Velux windows and solar panels, are much more damaging. Modern plasticised paints, with a much wider range of colours, effect a subtle alteration of the appearance of buildings and of an area that often goes unrealised.



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