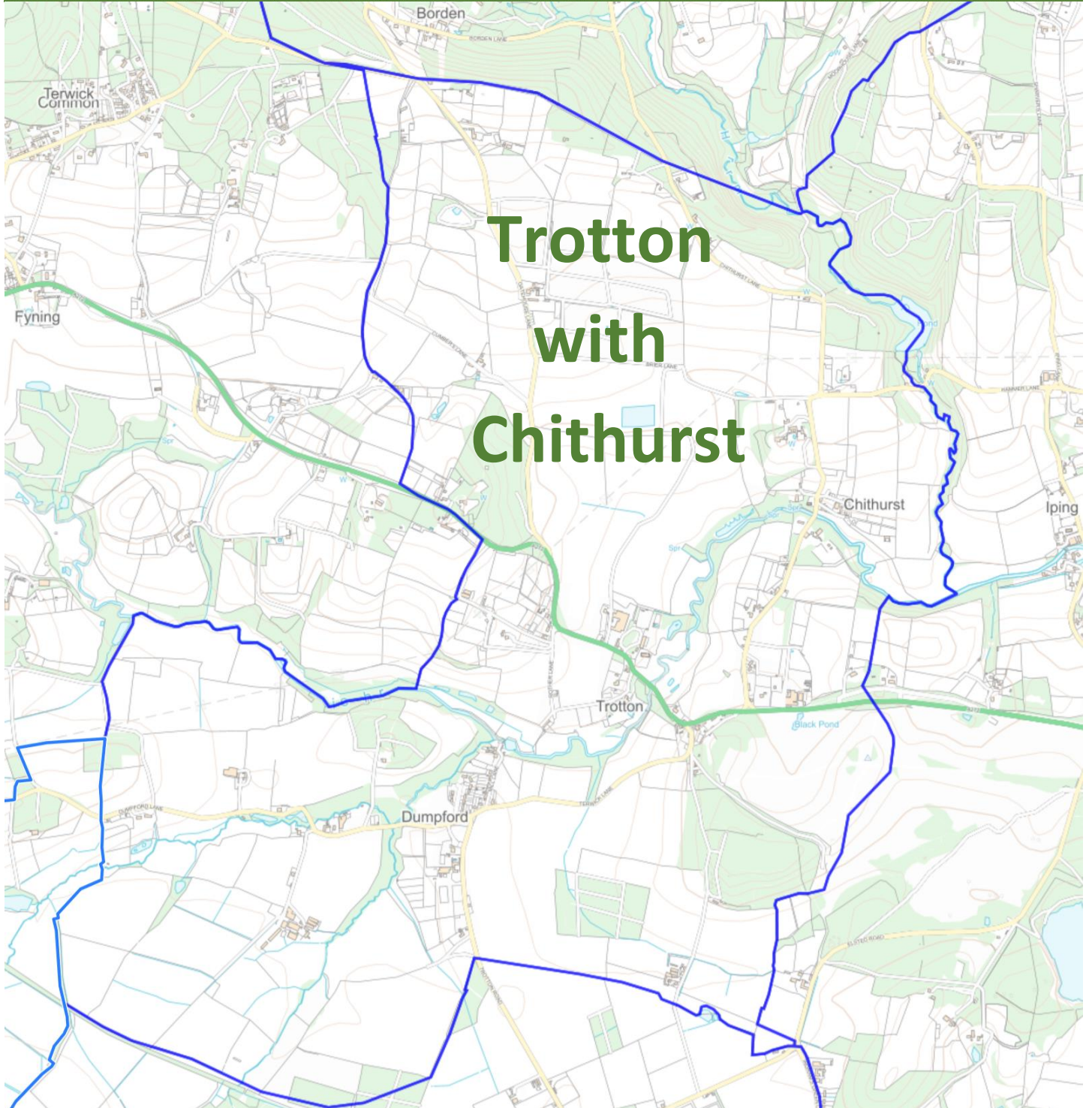




Trotton with Chithurst parish council  
Serving the people of Trotton and Chithurst

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# Parish priorities statement



## CONTEXT

### The parish

Trotton with Chithurst (“our parish”) is a small rural parish in the West Sussex portion of the South Downs National Park (SDNPA). It has ~330 residents in ~140 households, mainly in Trotton, Chithurst and Dumpford. It is divided by the river Rother and the A272 road (between Rogate and Midhurst), and borders Trotton & Iping common - owned by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and designated an area of Special Scientific Interest.

The parish includes a garden centre (Aylings) with a café and a range of other traders, but its pub closed down in 2014. The nearest other shops are in Rogate (2 miles away) and Midhurst (4 miles) both served by two bus stops in the parish along the A272.

It has a commercial wedding venue (Southdowns Manor) but no village hall or other communal facilities except for two churches: St George’s Trotton and St Mary’s Chithurst.

### Residents’ views

Like 2/3 of the parishes in the South Downs National Park, our parish council (PC) had decided it did not have the resources or the need to produce a neighbourhood development plan meeting the requirements laid down by the government in 2016. However, the 2023 *Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill* introduced a much less proscribed and onerous way for parishes to set out their visions for the future and to inform their local planning authorities. The South Downs National Park Authority actively encouraged parishes to do so - to contribute to the current review of its Local Plan and to funding and other policy decisions – and emphasised that “community engagement is key”.

Our PC therefore decided to produce a parish priorities statement and to use a survey of all residents to ensure that it reflected their views. This decision, and the planned survey, was publicised in the PC’s annual report to residents (which is hand delivered to every household), at its annual parish meeting, in the parish magazine and on its website. A working group of two parish councillors and two other residents produced a draft vision and priorities statement to stimulate ideas, and launched its survey in August 2023. Its report of the survey is available on its website (see ‘Linked documents’ below), including a description of the methods used to give every resident an opportunity to take part - the survey received responses from an estimated 25% of all residents and 36% of all households.

### Sustainability charter

Separately but in parallel with this exercise, the PC decided to produce a sustainability charter, in partnership with very active locally-based Eco Rother Action (ERA), and this was also linked to the draft priorities statement sent to residents. Whilst “Broader sustainability imperatives” such as global climate change and biodiversity initiatives were rated as the least important of the five parish priorities emerging from the survey, the PC believes this was only because these are considered very important but not within the local parish council’s powers. The PC has therefore approved a sustainability charter to guide its work, considers this to be an integral part of its priorities statement and has appointed a joint PC / ERA “sustainability working group” to keep the charter updated and monitor its implementation by the PC.

## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Our PC recognises the SDNPA local plan objectives shown below and, consistent with these, its vision is to do all we can to make our parish an ideal place to live and work.

### **SDNPA local plan objectives**

- To conserve and enhance the landscapes of the National Park
- To conserve and enhance the heritage of the National Park
- To conserve and enhance large areas of high-quality and well-managed habitat to form a network supporting wildlife throughout the landscape
- To achieve a sustainable use of ecosystem services thus enhancing natural capital across the landscapes of the National Park and contributing to wealth and human health and wellbeing
- To protect and provide opportunities for everyone to discover, enjoy, understand and value the National Park and its special qualities
- To adapt well to and mitigate against the impacts of climate change and other pressures
- To conserve and enhance the villages and market towns of the National Park as thriving centres for residents, visitors and businesses
- To protect and provide for the social and economic wellbeing of National Park communities supporting local jobs, affordable homes and local facilities
- To protect and provide for local businesses including farming, forestry and tourism that are compatible with and relate to the landscapes and special qualities of the National Park

## PARISH PRIORITIES

The PC's parish priorities working group has been tasked with drawing up an action plan to implement the views that emerged from our survey of our local community and reflect the residents' priorities. As the survey report shows, the community priorities were as shown by the numbered and lettered items below (but note that the bullet points are drawn from the suggestions and comments in the survey which are yet to be approved as part of an action plan):

### 1. Local environment

- a. Efforts to protect popular paths as rights of way
  - Consider "lost paths" identified by the Ramblers' "Don't Lose Your Way" campaign and by local residents and apply for changes to the "definitive map" for those which are considered to be worth pursuing as rights of way – especially if permissive paths cannot be established
  - Reconsider changes to right of way on Rectory Lane in exchange for land to provide walkways on A272
  - Engage with landowners to improve access / maintenance of rights of way (see also 2a below) – eg replace stiles with kissing gates
  - Monitor and engage with WSCC and SDNPA to improve maintenance of rights of way
  - Consider volunteer group to maintain paths / cut back undergrowth
- b. Efforts to protect / register views, trees, historic buildings and open spaces
  - Research possibilities of larger / more conservation areas – eg Chithurst bridge area, Terwick Mill area
  - Engage with local church to consider alternative maintenance funding
  - Look into possibilities to install double glazing, solar panels and other updates in more houses
  - Consider producing maps showing valued buildings, views and trees
  - Monitor applications to the Forestry Commission for tree felling licences to protect important trees
  - Liaise with the Sussex Wildlife Trust to improve residents' knowledge and support of biodiversity
  - Try to encourage better control of dogs, especially fouling and animal worrying
- c. Efforts to reduce traffic speed / noise
  - Liaise with Rogate PC and WSCC to study possibility of traffic calming measures on A272 – eg East of Aylings, and between Trotton Farm and Trotton Bridge – eg moving traffic lights from Trotton Bridge back to St George's church to provide pedestrian / cycle lane
  - Consider 20 / 30 mph speed limits
  - Liaise with local PCs and Sussex Police on motorbike noise
- d. Efforts to improve public transport (eg bus routes)
  - Work with local PCs, WSCC and bus service providers to improve bus frequency and use
  - Consider more / better bus shelters
  - Improve local bus services and bus information (eg bus-stop sign opposite the church, timetables) and support voluntary driver schemes ( eg: Midhurst Community bus, Rother Valley Together & Tandem).
- e. Other
  - Increase frequency of, and equipment for, community litter picking and/or encourage parishioners to become regular litter pickers – eg through CDC's 'Adopt an Area scheme'
  - Engage with residents and SDNPA to improve dark skies measures and reduce light pollution

### 2. Community facilities and infrastructure

- a. Pedestrian / cycling paths
  - Reconsider all possibilities to improve pedestrian / cycling routes between and within Dumpford, Chithurst and Trotton – eg pavement/ walkway between Terwick Lane and Trotton Bridge, between Rectory Lane and Rother Lane, and along Terwick Lane
  - Improve cycle routes and connect to neighbouring routes – liaise with Midhurst Area Cycling and Rother Valley Way groups
  - Ask landowners to keep verges low to improve visibility on narrow roads (eg Dumpford Lane)
- b. Better event / activity programmes and facilities – eg:
  - Engage with church (in lieu of village hall) to consider improved community facilities such as kitchen, toilet, wifi, heating, parking
  - Consider wider range of community activities such as walks / rides, yoga classes, farmers markets, tearoom, community shop / bank facilities
- c. Facilities to encourage tourists such as information boards, maps, parking, shepherd huts / B&B
- d. Other – eg better road drainage, improved broadband, facilities on wildflower meadow.

### **3. Community support**

- a. Community help services: Set up task group to look at help offered by residents' survey and consider needs of local community– eg:
  - o Volunteer driver service – eg shopping, doctor appointments – compare with existing services
  - o Volunteer visits to provide company and practical support
  - o Consider systems to match supply and demand
- b. Sharing tools, skills etc: task group to
  - o Consider how to identify and match supply and demand
  - o Research legal liability issues
- c. Enhance and broaden our existing event schedule to involve a larger proportion of residents and make our events as inclusive as possible
  - o existing event committee to consider suggestions from residents' survey
- d. Improve co-operation with statutory and voluntary support agencies and neighbouring parish councils:
  - o Signpost support agencies on our website and noticeboards (in co-operation with Rogate PC)
  - o Improve co-operation with neighbouring parishes to improve our influence on our surroundings, reduce overlapping workloads and take more advantage of skills within our communities.
  - o Establish and maintain relationships with county, district, and other agencies and charities
- e. Other
  - o Consider Neighbourhood Watch or similar schemes
  - o Continue / enhance Covid-era “buddy” scheme for vulnerable residents

### **4. New houses**

Engage with START Community Trust (our local community land trust) and the SDNPA to impress on them that 81% of residents believe we need new houses for local residents, with 63% supporting one specific site. Many residents expressed further views in the survey which should be of interest to START and the SDNPA.

### **5. Broader sustainability imperatives**

Through the joint PC-ERA Parish Sustainability Group (see “Sustainability Charter” on page 1) work with ERA to improve our impact and take a lead on sustainability and biodiversity – initially by considering the suggestions from the residents' survey and including relevant points in the parish priorities action plan, alongside all the work ERA is already doing.

## **CONCLUSION**

Creating this statement in consultation with residents will enable the parish council to map out an action plan reflecting parishioners' priorities, with the comments and suggestions from respondents giving it a wealth of useful ideas. The parish council approved the report on the survey, this priorities statement and the linked parish sustainability charter in time to submit them to the SDNPA by their deadline of October 2023. It also appointed a working group to produce a draft action plan for the parish council to consider.

### **Linked documents:**

Two associated documents form part of the evidence base for this statement and are available by clicking the links below or by visiting our website (see report header) and selecting “Documents” from the “About the council” menu.

1. *Report on parish priorities residents' survey*
2. *Parish sustainability charter*