

Policy 13 – The Village Environment

Environmental Objectives

1. To protect and enhance community and recreational facilities that support the social, cultural, and physical wellbeing of residents.
2. To maintain and improve access to high-quality recreational space, walking and wheeling routes and rights of way throughout the Parish.
3. To preserve important green spaces that contribute to the character, biodiversity and wellbeing of the community.
4. To support accessible, inclusive and sustainable recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities.
5. To ensure development contributes positively to the long-term vitality, connectivity, and environmental quality of the Parish.

Policy 13a – Community and Recreational Facilities

Policy Background / Justification

1. Sedlescombe benefits from a range of valued community buildings, recreational facilities and public spaces which support village life and contribute significantly to community wellbeing.
2. Facilities such as the Village Hall, recreation ground, sports pavilion, play areas and other shared community assets form an important part of the social infrastructure of the village.
3. The continued protection, improvement and renewal of these facilities is essential to ensure they remain accessible, inclusive and capable of meeting current and future community needs.
4. This policy seeks to support investment in current and new community and recreational infrastructure and ensure that development contributes positively to the long-term prosperity of community life within the Parish.

Policy

Development proposals that protect, enhance or provide community and recreational facilities will be supported where they contribute positively to the social wellbeing and sustainability of the Parish.

- 1. Support the improvement, renewal and long-term viability of existing community buildings, recreation facilities, and associated infrastructure.**
- 2. Support dual-use or flexible use of facilities where this would strengthen community benefit and would not undermine the primary function of the facility.**
- 3. Support new community facilities within the development boundary and exceptionally outside the boundary where there is a demonstrated local need and where landscape, environmental and other relevant policy considerations are satisfied.**
- 4. Ensure facilities are accessible and inclusive for residents of all ages and abilities.**
- 5. Support continued investment in community assets through appropriate funding mechanisms, including the use of Community Infrastructure Levy receipts where appropriate.**

Policy 13b – Rights of Way and Recreation

Policy Background / Justification

1. The Parish contains an extensive network of public footpaths, recreational spaces and informal walking routes which contribute significantly to the rural character, accessibility and health and wellbeing of the community.
2. These routes provide important connections between different parts of the village, surrounding countryside, community facilities and areas of ecological and heritage interest.
3. Protecting and enhancing the network of public rights of way supports active travel, recreation and opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the landscape of the High Weald.

Policy

Development proposals must protect and, where possible, enhance public rights of way, recreational routes and open recreational space within the Parish.

- 1. Protect and maintain existing public footpaths, bridleways and walking routes and avoid unnecessary diversions.**

2. **Support the creation of new or improved walking and wheeling routes where opportunities exist to improve connectivity and accessibility.**
3. **Ensure the coherence, safety, and environmental quality of the footpath network is maintained.**
4. **Avoid the diversion of footpaths through development where this would reduce their amenity, rural character or usability.**
5. **Protect existing sports, recreation and play spaces and support the provision of additional facilities where there is identified need.**

Policy 13c – Local Green Space

Policy Background / Justification

1. The Parish contains several green spaces that are demonstrably special to the local community because of their recreational, ecological, landscape and community value.
2. Street Farm and Red Barn Field are important local green spaces that contribute to the setting of the village, biodiversity, public enjoyment and the wider landscape character of the Parish.
3. National planning policy allows local communities to designate Local Green Spaces where they are demonstrably special, local in character and hold particular significance to the community.

Policy

The Street Farm and Red Barn Field are designated as Local Green Space. The Parish Council continues to consider the land meets all the necessary criteria for designation.

Development on current or future Local Green Space:

1. **Will only be supported in very special circumstances.**
2. **Must preserve and enhance the openness, character and function of the designated space.**
3. **Protect the ecological, recreational, landscape and community value of the site.**
4. **Avoid adverse impacts on public access, views, biodiversity or the rural setting of the village.**

- **The adjoining school has requested that the longer-term possibility of extending its playing fields into the open space is consistent with the Local Green Space designation. The Parish Council considers that proposal to be an exceptional circumstance in principle, as may be any necessary utilities works.**