

PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENT

Catsfield Parish Council

1. Your Details

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Details of public consultation and engagement used in the preparation of the PPS

The Parish Council undertook a 4-week public consultation on the Parish Priority Statement.

Engagement methods included:

- Public questionnaire (paper and digital)
- Parish noticeboards
- Social media
- Email circulation list
- Posters in village locations
- Advertisement in the local paper

A total of **31 responses** were received.

Engagement was open to all residents. Paper copies were made available to ensure inclusion of residents without digital access. The survey format enabled participation from older residents and those less likely to attend in-person events.

What percentage of the community engaged?

Catsfield has approximately 300–350 households.

31 responses represents approximately **9–10% of households.**

The Vision for the Future

Catsfield will remain a small rural village, distinct from surrounding settlements, with a strong community identity, protected countryside setting, improved road safety, resilient infrastructure, and carefully managed small-scale development that reflects local needs.

The Three Key Priorities for the Next 15 Years

- 1. Protect and enhance the rural character and natural environment of Catsfield**
 - Safeguard green spaces, flood plains and the High Weald landscape
 - Protect dark skies
 - Prevent urbanisation and coalescence with neighbouring parishes
 - 2. Improve road safety and infrastructure resilience**
 - Traffic calming and 20mph limits in key areas
 - Address flooding and drainage issues
 - Improve broadband and mobile connectivity
 - Ensure infrastructure capacity is addressed before development
 - 3. Support small-scale, locally appropriate housing to meet local need**
 - Affordable homes for local people
 - Small infill or modest developments within the settlement boundary
 - High-quality, sustainable design reflecting Sussex character
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Development and Management of Land

What type and level of development would you like to see?

The community strongly opposes large-scale housing estates.

Supported development includes:

- Small-scale infill within the settlement boundary
- Developments of modest size (generally 5–15 dwellings maximum)
- Affordable housing prioritised for local people

- Sensitive community-led housing if genuinely affordable

Development should:

- Be phased gradually over the plan period
 - Be infrastructure-led
 - Avoid flood-prone land
 - Protect the village's linear and clustered form
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Are there any areas of the Parish you would like to see developed?

If development is required, it should:

- Be located within or immediately adjacent to the existing built form
 - Avoid isolated greenfield sites
 - Avoid land known to experience surface water flooding
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Are there any specific areas you want protected for other uses?

The following areas are strongly valued and should be protected:

- Normanhurst Estate and associated public footpaths
- The 1066 Walk and surrounding countryside
- Land within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Flood plains and water management land
- Recreation Ground and village green spaces
- Agricultural land surrounding the village
- Woodland and mature hedgerows

Reasons for protection:

- Biodiversity value
- Flood mitigation
- Landscape character
- Community recreation
- Historic setting of the village

Homes

What type of homes would you like to see?

If housing is required, priority should be given to:

- Affordable homes for people with local connections
- Starter homes (first-time buyers)
- Smaller homes for downsizers
- Bungalows suitable for older residents
- Modest family homes (2–3 bedrooms)

There is limited support for:

- Large executive housing
 - Estate-style development
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What size of home is needed locally?

- Primarily 2 and 3 bedroom homes
- Some smaller 1–2 bed units
- Limited 3-bedroom family homes

The emphasis is on smaller, attainable housing rather than large detached properties.

Any other requirements?

New homes should:

- Meet high energy efficiency standards
 - Incorporate renewable energy (e.g., solar panels, heat pumps)
 - Provide adequate off-road parking
 - Minimise external lighting to protect dark skies
 - Be designed to reflect Sussex vernacular materials
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Design

Areas of Local Character

Particularly important areas include:

- The central village cluster around The Green
- The White Hart pub
- St Lawrence Church
- The Village Hall
- Normanhurst Estate
- The 1066 Walk corridor
- Open grazing fields surrounding the settlement

The linear and clustered settlement pattern is highly valued.

Particular Features of Local Character

- Sussex tile and timber boarding
- Varied, non-uniform house designs
- Hedgerow boundaries
- Dark skies and minimal street lighting
- Mature trees and historic landscape setting
- Absence of estate-style layouts

Development should reinforce village character and avoid suburban form.

The Natural Environment

Opportunities to Make Nature Bigger, Better and More Joined Up

- Protect and enhance wildlife corridors
- Plant native trees and hedgerows
- Establish wildflower verges
- Reduce mowing in selected areas
- Explore opportunities for a community nature reserve

- Promote community allotments or orchard
 - Protect flood plains from development
 - Maintain and improve footpath connectivity
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Jobs

Catsfield is a rural parish with limited commercial land.

Priorities include:

- Protecting the village shop, post office and pub
- Supporting rural businesses and farming
- Supporting home working through improved broadband and mobile signal
- Potential for small-scale markets (e.g., farmers' market)
- Small rural enterprise consistent with village character

There is no community support for industrial-scale employment development.

Public Spaces

Important green spaces include:

- Recreation Ground
- Normanhurst Estate
- Public footpaths and bridleways
- 1066 Walk
- Churchyard
- Surrounding farmland and woodland

Opportunities:

- Biodiversity enhancement
 - Improved accessibility
 - Potential allotment provision
 - Enhanced recreation facilities (without urbanisation)
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Infrastructure

Key infrastructure priorities identified by residents:

Road Safety

- 20mph limits near school and key roads
- Traffic calming measures
- Speed enforcement
- Safer pedestrian routes
- Improved signage

Roads & Drainage

- Address potholes
- Improve drainage and flood resilience
- Protect flood-prone land

Utilities

- Improved water pressure and sewage capacity
- Improved power resilience
- Removal of outdated infrastructure (e.g., lead piping where present)

Connectivity

- Faster, more reliable broadband
- Improved mobile signal

Sustainable Infrastructure

- Renewable energy on community buildings
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Dark sky compliant lighting

Residents strongly emphasised that infrastructure capacity must be addressed before significant development occurs.
