



RODMELL PARISH COUNCIL

RODMELL PARISH PRIORITY STATEMENT

What is a Parish Priority Statement and why have we produced one?

Parishes in the South Downs National Park were encouraged to produce a Parish Priority Statement, outlining the priorities for development in their Parish in the next 15 years. These statements will be used in the preparation of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) Local Plan Review and will inform future decisions on policy development, land allocations and designations.

We decided to produce a Parish Priority Statement to find out about residents' views on their priorities for the future development of the Parish and the values underpinning their preferred 'direction of travel.' Although Rodmell Parish is very small, it is important that our voice is heard.

The process of producing a Priority Statement for Rodmell Parish (which includes Northease) has enabled us all to think about our priorities for the future and to define our values and outlooks (much of them shared). The Parish Priority Statement provides a framework for future decision making by the Parish Council and for the deployment of resources – both time and money.

How was the Rodmell Parish Priority Statement produced?

A questionnaire, based on an outline provided by the SDNPA, was delivered to every home in Rodmell and Northease, (194 households) which together comprise the Parish of Rodmell. Residents were asked to indicate what they value about the Parish and want to conserve and what developments they would like to see in the future.

A public meeting for residents was held in Rodmell Village Hall on 19th October 2023 to discuss the questionnaire. Many ideas were put forward and there was a lively debate with 48 villagers attending.

46 completed questionnaires were received representing 24% of households.

How will the Parish Priority Statement be Used?

Defining the development priorities of the Parish will enable the Parish Council to decide what objectives to work on and will shape activities such as responses to local planning applications, making applications for grant funding, responding to consultations and lobbying local bodies such as East Sussex County Council Highways on behalf of the Parish.

Next steps

- This Statement will be presented for endorsement at the Parish Council meeting in March 2024.
- Following endorsement by Rodmell Parish Council, the Parish Priority Statement will be sent to officers at the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) for information and to inform the preparation of the SDNPA Local Plan Review.
- Once endorsed, there will be a presentation at the 2024 Parish Assembly in April 2024.
- A further public meeting in May or June will be held for discussion of the Priorities Statement, and to explore how the priorities can be implemented, through the formation of working groups and the involvement of existing village committees and other groups.

The Parish Councillors, as local residents acting in a voluntary capacity, will not be able to achieve all the objectives set out in the Parish Priority Statement working alone. The active involvement of local residents, village committees and groups is invited.

SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES

Most Valued

The residents valued peace and quiet, the surrounding countryside and sense of community. The heritage of the area and buildings was also valued highly.

Future Vision

A safer C7 was top of the list, alongside improved public transport. There was a concern around climate change with the residents wanting greater use of renewable energy in the village.

Development in the Village

Residents would like a shop and café in the village as well as workshops for local artisans.

Accommodation and Housing

Overwhelmingly, there was a desire for affordable housing and smaller units of accommodation in all its forms.

There is also a need for more B & B type accommodation for tourists and visitors.

Natural Environment

Not surprisingly, given the love of our countryside, residents want more emphasis on enhancing biodiversity, as well as more access to the river.

Business in the Village

There was a lot of support for the pub as well as a wish for more tourist amenities (as commented under Accommodation above)

Infrastructure

Again, a Safer C7 is a major priority for the residents. Some residents are still struggling with wifi speeds despite the fibre broadband. There was seen to be a need for more play facilities for children, as well as comments around active outdoor spaces for adults, such as outdoor fitness equipment.

Summary

While there were some strong trends, recurring themes, and much common ground, residents also expressed a variety of other ideas. For example, there were several comments about active travel in various forms and about the desire for improved local access; for example, more stopping trains at Southease Station, improved connectivity with other villages and better access to the river. There was a strong theme of concern around Climate Change. There were also suggestions for a village pond.

A full summary of residents' responses is provided in the Appendix.

Appendix

Residents of Rodmell Parish who responded to the questionnaire identified their priorities as follows.

1. What aspects of the parish do you most value and want to protect?

Responses	Nos
Tranquility – peace and quiet	21
Surrounding countryside – views, easy access, in SDNP and AONB, green spaces	20
Sense of Community, neighbourliness, village life (panto, summer show etc)	18
Heritage/history, inc. vernacular architecture, flint walls etc (picturesque village)	13
Village amenities; eg. the pub, church, village hall, sports field, Monks House	11
Dark skies	7
Wildlife	5

Other features valued by residents included:

The sense of safety and security

The local pub

Proximity to the Newhaven ferry, Brighton, and London

2. Your Vision for the Future of Rodmell Parish - What should be the three key priorities for Rodmell in the next 15 years?

Responses	Nos
A Safer C7 (esp. Rodmell and Northease junctions and crossing points, reduced speed limit)	36
Improved public transport	29
Support householders to achieve greater use of renewable energy and less pollution	12
Improved Footpaths, walking, cycling	11
Support for householders to achieve greater use of renewable energy	9
A shop	9
Safe cycle route along the C7	5
Increased biodiversity	5

Other priorities identified by residents included:

Climate change resilience

An electric car club

Boosting local tourism

Improved connectivity to local communities

Support for local amenities – the pub, church, village hall activities

3. What type and level of development would you like to see in the parish?

Responses	Nos
Café/tea room/shop (e.g. with space to encourage community connection, a post office)	17
Workshops for artists/crafts people/light industry	8
Improvements to the village hall (e.g. improved access and heating, a permanent stage)	5
Tourist services (e.g. a welcoming tourist centre, accommodation)	5
Zero development/ as little as possible /protect green sites	5

Employment opportunities	4
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Other comments and suggestions included:

Better use of the green space at The Dicklands; e.g. orchard or play area
More use of the church for the community

4. What types of accommodation would you like to see within the parish and why?

Responses	Nos
Affordable homes - key workers and to get greater social mix	17
Smaller houses/flats for downsizing/the elderly; starter homes for local people	14
Rented affordable housing	9
B&B type accommodation for walkers, and cyclists	7
Workshops for ateliers/artists/crafts	5
Provision for those needing elderly care	5
Campsite/glamping	5

Other comments and suggestions included:

Keep development to a minimum
Protect the village character
Split larger houses in to flats

5. What developments to the natural environment in the parish would you like to see?

Responses	Nos
Enhanced biodiversity	11
Improved access (shorter route) to the river from Rodemll	11
Nature and nature corridors	6
Access to the river from Northease	5
A local pond/ restoration of the local pond (e.g. the one in the middle of the C7)	4

Other comments and suggestions included:

Nest boxes, bat boxes, butterfly banks
Clean Up the River Ouse/ Restore the original course of the river
More tree planting; e.g. willows along the river banks
Village compost tumbler to convert food waste to compost
More dog waste bins along walking routes
A footpath parallel to Mill Lane

6. What business opportunities would you like to see in the parish?

Responses	Nos
Support our village pub	7
<i>Glamping site /camp site (Quest 4)</i>	5
<i>B&B type accommodation for walkers, and cyclists (Quest 4)</i>	7
<i>Workshops for ateliers/artists/crafts (Quest 4)</i>	5
Preserve and support local businesses and encourage new ones	5

Other comments and suggestions included:

A shop selling the basics – milk, bread, etc – Is it possible to run a small shop from the pub?
Use redundant farm buildings for businesses
Provide homeworking facilities
Jobs in conservation
Cultural opportunities with the National Trust and Charleston

But

We don't need to encourage any more tourists.

We don't want more businesses because of the additional traffic this would generate and the negative impact this would have on the character of the village

We don't want a car park with a village round it!

7. Infrastructure - What shortfalls are there in local provision that you would like to see addressed?

Responses	Nos
A Safer C7 (see question 1)	36
Faster wifi/broadband for residents, home working and businesses	20
More/Improved activities and facilities for children (e.g. improved playground, a playgroup) and provision for teens	15
Maintain/increase the bus service	8
More parking (especially for the pub) and for the village (not just NT)	8
Improve surface water drainage. Extra drains in Rodmell and Northease or more frequent regular clearing	7
Community renewable energy projects; e.g. on community buildings	6
More footpaths and cycle paths – improved sustainable connectivity	6
Increase the frequency of trains stopping at Southease station	6
More effective use of the village hall for the whole community	6
Improve transport integration; e.g. footpath to Southease station,	5
Outdoor gym equipment; active spaces for adults, e.g. basket ball, petanque	5
20 mph speed limit on The Street and Mill Lane	2

Other suggestions and comments included:

Outdoor fitness equipment in the sports field; wider range of sports activities

Traffic management of The Street and bottom of Mill Lane

More community scale energy integration

Keep hedges and verges cut back along the C7 so that people are not forced to walk in the road

More reliable TV signal

More resilient services; e.g. water, power

Electric charging points at The Dicklands

8. Additional Comments and Suggestions included:

- Develop interaction with Northease Manor School; e.g. students doing voluntary work in the village; residents able to use school tennis courts and pool.
- Greater use of the sports field and pavilion for a wider range of residents.
- Car share and lift share schemes.
- A scheme for borrowing and lending tools and equipment.
- Set up a village working party on transport – e.g. to request the CTLA bus to come to Rodmell.
- A shared bike scheme for when the river path to Lewes is completed.
- The fenced off area between the village school and the wooden shelter belongs to the parish. This area needs to be opened up, cleared, made safe, and incorporated into the playground.
- More benches in and around the village and picnic tables (on the cricket pitch) in the sports field.
- Keep Rodmell as it is.

Rodmell Parish Council: Claire Dishington (Chair), Sue Carroll (Deputy Chair), Georgina Hickey,

Nicki Myers, Chrissie Toye, Fred Wettern

