

A black and white photograph of a residential street. On the left, a two-story house with horizontal siding and a brick base is visible. A path leads down the street towards the background, flanked by trees and bushes. The sky is clear.

Parish Council Strategy and Plan 2006 - 2026

Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council

Parish Council Strategy and Plan 2006 - 2026

Produced by the

Development Committee

on behalf of Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council

April 2008

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SECTION 1

Introduction

- 1.1 Mayfield and Five Ashes are located in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and at present has a total population of 3651. The villages benefit from a vibrant and thriving community supporting many local businesses and trades, including a wide range of shops, educational establishments and well-equipped public areas. Together with the history attached to our villages it is understandable that Mayfield and Five Ashes retain their position as one of the most sought after areas to live within Wealden.
- 1.2 This all sounds very idyllic, but times are changing. The coming years could radically change the way we live are lives, whether environmentally, in employment and transport, or from our local economy to our village amenities and facilities.
- 1.3 One example is Government plans to increase house building. Mayfield has already been targeted for an extra 160 houses over the next 20 years, which raises a number of challenges. Where do we build them? What type of buildings do we accept? Can our present infrastructure cope with the increased population? Will our schools be able to cope and where will everyone park their cars?
- 1.4 It is with these, and many other issues in mind, that the Parish Council has taken steps to create a Development Committee to devise and develop a long-term strategy and plan for our communities until 2027.
- 1.5 At present Mayfield and Five Ashes the Development Committee comprises four parish councillors and four lay members who represent various facets of village life and its organisations. The committee is of advisory status and the full council, at their regular meetings, considers its recommendations for action.
- 1.6 The following strategy and plan document is intended to span the next twenty years with four yearly regular reviews and is the result of a series of studies carried out within the community over the last two years. It will generate a comprehensive Parish Plan covering the policies of the Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council over the years of the strategy.

Background

- 1.7 The first work of the Committee was twofold:
- A brainstorming session amongst the Committee.
 - A consultation questionnaire with all the listed organisations within Mayfield and Five Ashes.
- 1.8 The result of this work was the production of some 46 actions, some long term and some short, which were deemed necessary for the survival of our villages. They classified naturally into four categories from which the strategic thinking is based.
- I Social and Community
 - II Housing and Planning
 - III Transport and Traffic
 - IV Environment
- 1.9 This research was followed by a questionnaire launched through the Mayfield and Five Ashes newsletter asking members of the community to prioritise some of the issues arising. At the same time the questionnaire was sent to Mayfield Primary School and Five Ashes Primary School both of which gave their views.

The results are given below, showing in ranking order how all residents and primary school children view the key issues affecting our villages.

Support rating of all participants in rank order	Mayfield Primary School	Five Ashes Primary School	Mayfield and Five Ashes Residents
Environment and Conservation	2	2	1
Retirement accommodation	5	4	2
Health	4	5	3
Village Halls	7	6	4
Affordable housing	3	1	5
Parking	6	7	6
Youth	1	3	7
Tourism	8	8	8
Number of participants	25	29	90

- 1.10 Taking this intelligence into account the Development Committee produced an outline strategy for each of the four categories in paragraph 1.8 above.
- 1.11 Following this work, the development of the Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council vision was published and exhibited in both Mayfield and Five Ashes in 2006/2007.
- 1.12 Finally in connection with the Local Development Framework (LDF) the Parish Council submitted its views on how the Parish Council strategy compared with Wealden District LDF and updated the strategy as necessary.
- 1.13 The strategies and plans formulated in sections 2-4 of this document are entirely based on this work.

SECTION 2

Mayfield and Five Ashes 2007

The following tables give some background statistics together with a list of services and service needs that were used in the production of this document.

2.1 Number of electors and dwellings for the years 2006 – 2008

Over the last five years the number of properties has increased by 4.1% and the number of electors by 127 (4.59%). The completion of the Mayfield Grange development will add substantially to these numbers.

Electoral roll 2006		
Ward	Properties	Electors
Mayfield and Rushers Cross	1152	2226
Five Ashes	261	543
Total	1413	2769
Electoral roll 2007		
Ward	Properties	Electors
Mayfield	1062	2075
Five Ashes	273	563
Rushers Cross	102	207
Total	1437	2845
Change between 2006 - 2007		
Mayfield and Rushers Cross	+ 12	+ 56
Five Ashes	+ 12	+ 20
Total	+ 24	+ 76
Electoral roll 2008		
Ward	Properties	Electors
Mayfield	1086	2107
Five Ashes	283	580
Rushers Cross	102	209
Total	1471	2896
Change between 2007 - 2008		
Mayfield and Rushers Cross	+ 24	+ 32
Five Ashes	+ 10	+ 17
Total	+ 34	+ 2

2.2 Population breakdown by age

The figures below are the latest available.

- The population of Mayfield and Five Ashes shows a predominance of females (55%), to males (45%).
- 1 in 5 of the population of our villages is over 65, that is 19.8% or 722 persons.
- Those up to and including age 18 total 914 persons and represent 25% of our population.
- The 'working population' those age groups from 19 - 65 represent 2015 persons; some 55.2% of our population
- The percentage split between Mayfield and Five Ashes is analysed below (2006 data)

	Mayfield	Five Ashes
Whole Population	73.3%	26.7%
Dwellings	81.5%	18.5%
Electors	80.4%	19.6%

* Includes Rushers Cross ward

Age (UV04)					
Apr-01	Mayfield	Five Ashes	Total	Males	Females
Total 0 - 4	116	41	157	71	86
Total 5 - 10	186	66	252	113	139
Total 11 -18	410	95	505	227	278
Total 19 - 30	220	79	299	135	164
Total 31 - 50	674	266	940	423	517
Total 51 - 65	541	235	776	348	428
Total 66 - 100+	528	194	722	326	396
Total	2675	976	3651	1643	2008

Taken from 2006 census data

2.3 Services provided by our villages

This table is based on the village matrix, which is sent to WDC on a periodic basis, and is used for planning proposals. In WDC, Mayfield and Five Ashes are classified as a large village with growth potential.

Type of service	Mayfield	Five Ashes
Nursery/pre school	Yes	Yes
Primary school	Yes	Yes
Secondary school	No	No
*Mayfield St Leonards	Yes	No
*Skippers Hill	No	Yes
Doctor	Yes	No
Dentist	Yes	No
Dispensary	Yes	No
Convenience store	Yes	No
Post office	Yes	No
Library	Yes	No
Place of worship	Yes	Yes
Community hall	Yes	Yes
Business areas	No	Yes
Other locally significant employment opportunities.	Yes	No
Within two miles of a railway station	No	No
Hourly bus service to nearest main centre	Yes	Yes
Petrol filling stations	No	No
Children's play area	Yes	Yes
Playing pitches (all types)	Yes	Yes
Sports pavilion/changing facilities	No	No
Multifunctional green spaces	Yes	Yes
Within five miles of a main town	Yes	Yes
Broadband available	Yes	Yes
Fire station	Yes	No

*Note: These schools are privately funded

2.4 Service needs identified

Need	Mayfield	Five Ashes
No of households identified in the Rural Needs Survey as being in need of affordable housing.	82	82
	Mayfield and Five Ashes combined	Mayfield and Five Ashes combined
No on housing register who have identified the village as their first choice.	13	*
No of those expressing a preference already living in the village.	10	*
Identified need for new, additional or improved GP premises.	Yes	Not known
Identified need for new/improved community halls.	Yes	Yes
Identified need for additional public open spaces.	Yes	Yes
Is there an identified need for additional or upgraded play space?	Yes	Yes
Is there a threat to the viability of local services?	Yes	Yes
Is there a need for an improved local bus service?	Yes	Yes
Is there an identified need for allotments?	Yes	Yes
Is there a need for additional public car-parking?	Yes	No
Is there a need for local employment opportunities?	Yes	Yes
Other needs.	-	-

* Separate figures not available for Five Ashes

2.5 Active groups in the community

The villages of Mayfield and Five Ashes are highly active communities, using their own resources to provide many of the services and activities the community enjoys.

At the time of publication there are no less than 55 organisations in the community and these are summarised below:

Churches	5
Sports Clubs	7
Scouts and Guides	5
Organisations for Youth	2
Organisations for Elderly	5
Clubs and Societies	24
Other	7
Total	55

A list is available in a number of places within our village. Each organisation has a contact name and telephone number.

SECTION 3

The Mayfield and Five Ashes Vision and Plan

The Vision for the future for the Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council is outlined in this section of the Parish Strategy.

3.1 Vision and sub-elements

- The strategy will cover the next 20 years, 2006 to 2026 being constantly reviewed.
- To ensure that the Parish remains an attractive and vibrant area in which to live and work.
- Maintain the Parish as a beautiful historic location in an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB).
- Protect and enhance the natural and built environment which we have inherited.
- Share the knowledge and understanding of these assets with others including the younger members of the community.
- Maintain the active community and be seen to welcome visitors and newcomers.
- Be inclusive of all members of the community.
- Create a safe, sustainable community where people will want to live and work.
- Develop our existing programme of performing arts and extend our reputation in the area for these activities.

3.2 Mission

- There are many action plans leading to the achievement of this vision.
- The mission is to ensure that all these individual actions are co-ordinated and benefit from an integrated and holistic approach.

3.3 Overall goal

To maximise the quality of life for all who visit, live and/or work in Mayfield & Five Ashes. Maximising 'quality of life' necessitates addressing each of the following individual areas:

- I Environment and Conservation
- II Economy
- III Employment
- IV Tourism
- V Transport
- VI Recreation
- VII Facilities and Amenities
- VIII Culture
- IX Security
- X Health
- XI Education
- XII Housing and Planning
- XIII Communication

Our Goal and plans in detail

I Environment and conservation

Goal: Protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

Action Plans:

1. Maintain and regularly review the boundary for the existing AONB, but where necessary to expand for vital growth.
2. A policy to be developed allowing small scale development to take place outside the existing boundary subject to strict rules and criteria which are sympathetic to the surroundings.
3. Ensure the conservation area is regularly reviewed and developments within it being under Parish control.
4. To ensure planning permission is required for all alterations etc within the conservation area.
5. Develop pro-active approaches to conserving the unique features and heritage of the village, including buildings, trees, hedgerows, open spaces etc.
6. Help maintain the physical appearance of the environment throughout the Parish.
7. Ensure new development and modification of existing buildings and village features.
8. To consider and develop a renewable energy plan for Mayfield and Five Ashes
9. Recognising that cars will not go away, ensure that adequate parking provision is made for residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors with a minimum of 2 parking spaces per new dwelling.
10. Restrict the proliferation of mobile telecoms masts by insisting on operator-shared masts.
11. Encourage the conversion of derelict farm buildings, albeit in keeping with the local environment.

II Economy

Goal: Promote a vibrant village economy.

Action Plans:

1. Provide support and guidance as appropriate to village businesses.
2. Encourage inward investment in conjunction with appropriate regional business support bodies.
3. Encourage the establishment of small business units within the Parish boundary (although not in the High Street itself).
4. Help to ensure that the existing shops are retained as economically viable businesses.
5. There should be a policy of restricting change of use from some local village services (shops, pubs etc.) and that the business classification policy should be kept as it is. The policy to be reviewed on a regular basis.
6. Encourage a broad range of retail outlets.
7. Help maximise the advantage to the village of having a large and successful private secondary school in Mayfield and a private preparatory school in Five Ashes Parish.

III Employment

Goal: Endeavour to maximise employment for all who seek it within the village.

Action Plans:

1. Encourage business start-ups.
2. Help to provide support for businesses that may require it through either existing or new village expertise and/or regional business support agencies.
3. Identify skills of any significant numbers of unemployment in the Parish and encourage the establishment of businesses that might employ those with skills.
4. New business development should focus on small/medium sized/ medium-sized premises in suitable locations.

IV Tourism

Goal: To encourage a level of tourism which can be suitably accommodated and accepted by the village.

Action Plans:

1. Promote Mayfield as a centre of excellence in appropriate areas (e.g. music and theatre).
2. Endeavour to retain successful character pubs in the village.
3. Encourage and co-ordinate music and arts events throughout the year.
4. Encourage promotion of theatrical performances.
5. Encourage provision of suitable eating facilities and overnight accommodation to cater for tourists.
6. Encourage tourism through maintaining the environment (see environment actions).
7. Consider establishment of a suitable location for coach parking.

V Transport

Goal: Ensure that the transport requirements of the village are met.

Action Plans:

1. Ensure transport is available for the elderly and others without private transport.
2. Encourage sharing of transport wherever possible - for shopping runs and school runs etc.
3. Endeavour to ensure an adequate public bus service.
4. Ensure the continuation of the community car service.
5. Encourage the provision of a local bus service to Wadhurst and/or Buxted railway stations
6. Help publicise the free bus fare scheme for villagers sixty and over.

VI Recreation

Goal: Ensure adequate recreational activities for all villagers.

Action Plans:

1. Encourage the provision of adequate recreational facilities for villagers of all ages including in Court Meadow and Five Ashes Field, community halls etc.
2. Help publicise, support and encourage the existing and new sports and recreational clubs.
3. Promote and publicise off-road horse riding by opening up existing and new bridleways.
4. Promote use of public footpaths for walkers/ramblers throughout the parish.
5. Oversee development of cycle routes so as to minimise any adverse impact on the village/residents.
6. Promote other country sports as may be appropriate.
7. Indoor and outside sports and recreational facilities should be protected, unless suitable, equally accessible and high quality replacement provision is made.

VII Facilities/amenities

Goal: To ensure appropriate facilities and amenities are provided for the benefit of all villagers.

Action Plans:

1. Ensure appropriate and adequate facilities and amenities are provided for all stakeholders in the village, i.e. residents, businesses and visitors.
2. Encourage the re-establishment of a village shop in Five Ashes insofar as this is possible and economically viable.
3. Promote and support plans for building of new Community/Village Halls.
4. Work with the appropriate bodies to ensure adequate parking provision.

VIII Culture

Goal: To ensure a vibrant and socially responsive village culture.

Action Plans:

1. To encourage the provision of adequate entertainment for all ages.
2. To encourage an appropriate and broad range of village groups i.e. clubs, youth groups (scouts, guides etc).
3. To encourage social responsibility throughout the community.
4. To ensure the continuation and promotion of places of worship

IX Security

Goal: Promote a safe and desirable community in which to live and work.

Action Plans:

1. Ensure a pro-active 'Neighbourhood Watch' service.
2. Promote a retail security arrangement, whereby shops/businesses share knowledge of suspicious behaviour etc.
3. Support and improve the activities of the Police Community Support Officer.
4. Identify adverse trends and work to rectify them.
5. Liaise with the police and other bodies to minimise anti-social behaviour, vandalism and drug abuse.

X Health

Goal: To endeavour to ensure a healthy society.

Action Plans :

1. Encourage the provision of a modern GP facility and medical centre.
2. Promote the publication of local health advice and issues in, for instance, the Mayfield and Five Ashes newsletter, and the Parish Council website.
3. Encourage the growth of locally produced organic foods both on farms, in gardens and in allotments.

XI Education

Goal: To promote an educated village populace.

Action Plans:

1. Endeavour to ensure that there is at least one thriving playgroup/ pre-school group in the Parish.
2. Help ensure the long term existence of primary education in the Parish, ideally in both Mayfield and Five Ashes.
3. Help promote those village societies with an educational bias.
4. Help promote village cultural events having even a modest educational content.

XII Housing and planning

Goal: to ensure adequate housing provision for villagers.

Action Plans:

1. The strategy for the size of future development should be focused on small size scales, of about 8 houses per year for both Mayfield and Five Ashes to prevent an over demand on the infrastructure and character of the village.
2. Housing density for new developments to be 30-35 houses per hectare as stated in the Non Statutory Plan.
3. Ensure sufficient affordable housing is provided to meet the needs of those who require such accommodation and who have a connection with the village(s).
4. Ensure all development schemes include not less than 25% affordable housing /general development.
5. Encourage sufficient retirement accommodation to meet the specific needs of the villages' older population.
6. Ancillary dwellings for elderly /disabled relatives or carers should be allowed provided appropriate controls are in place and these controls are totally enforceable.
7. To ensure that any building development is within the Planning Guidelines and is not to the detriment of the appearance and character of the villages.

8. Encourage the development of rural businesses which would use, and improve the condition of existing rural buildings.
9. Ancillary dwelling to businesses, providing key rural services, should be permitted providing appropriate controls are in place and enforceable.
10. Ensure that the plans for new village/community hall(s) are in keeping with the local environment.
11. Housing development since 2006 must be counted in the total of new development and build rates should not exceed 10% of the proposed dwellings in one year, over a 10-year period.
12. Housing Developments to be completed after 2 years from planning approval, then enforcement to complete by 5 years or withdrawn.

XIII Communication

Goal: Promote an appreciation of the history and appearance of the village within the context of the surrounding countryside.

Action Plans:

1. Maximise the knowledge of Mayfield and its heritage.
2. Help promote an appreciation of the physical appearance of the environment, including local wildlife throughout the Parish.
3. Arrange production and distribution of a Parish/Village 'Welcome Pack' for new residents.
4. Communication channels to include inter alia:
5. Local presentation
6. Features in regular publications, e.g. Mayfield and Five Ashes newsletter, local newspapers etc.
7. Encourage a regular 'surgery' to listen and act upon local issues raised by the public
8. Encourage support for the Historical Society
9. Promote the establishment of a village museum
10. Suitable notice-boards with pertinent information.
11. Single quality website for villages and Parish Council.

Top ten actions

(Not in any particular order of importance.)

1. Promote building of new village/community hall(s). VII.3
2. Encourage the building of a new health centre. X.3
3. Increase awareness of Mayfield in the South East. XIII.1
4. Encourage modern tourism with promotional schemes. IV.3
5. Encourage the provision of improved parking facilities. VII.4
6. Encourage greater support for local businesses to ensure their longevity. III.2
7. Ensure ongoing effective communications within the village(s) of local news and activities by ensuring suitable and adequate ongoing funding for the Mayfield and Five Ashes newsletter and publishing of a 'welcome pack'. XIII.3 and XIII.4
8. Foster a safe environment in which to live and work. IX.4
9. Support the building of affordable housing to meet the local needs. XII.3
10. Encourage the establishment of a village museum. VIII.4

SECTION 4

A twenty year strategy

To achieve our vision for the future, our strategies for the next twenty years are outlined below, topic by topic. This section takes into account the Parish Council responses to the Local Development Plan made public in June 2007.

4.1 Settlements in the High Weald area of outstanding natural beauty.

- The Parish Council consider, that if necessary, some minor adjustments should be made within the AONB boundaries to accommodate future needs.

4.2 Renewable energy

- The Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council strategy for the development of renewable energy would be to set a high target of 20% in view of Wealden's potential. However such energy should be commercially viable. The strategy is dependent on more data being made available and notes the long payback times that such a strategy would incur. It rejects the South Eastern Region Plan target of 10%.

4.3 Employment land

- Land allocated for employment purposes, but which is underdeveloped should be considered for mixed use, or possibly other uses if there is no realistic prospect of employment development.
- However existing premises should be protected from development where there is evidence of market need.
- For new business, development should focus on securing small/ medium sized business space and general industrial premises in suitable locations.
- New housing development should be balanced with an appropriate level of new business development.

4.4 Settlement boundaries

- Settlement boundaries should be maintained, but where absolutely necessary should be expanded to allow for necessary growth.
- Develop a policy to allow small-scale development to take place outside the settlement boundaries subject to strict criteria and be sympathetic to the surroundings. Such changes will be agreed in full consultation with the parish.
- The Parish Council Strategy envisages that the urban rural split should be focused 80% in and around towns with the remainder distributed to villages.

4.5 Settlement classification and settlement strategy

- The Parish Council considers that settlement strategies should be classified according to services and accessibility. The classification should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis (see part two).
- The Parish Council considers that the WDC policy of classifying villages according to their growth potential, criteria used, and the size limits on additional housing growth proposed, is reasonable subject to being reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
- The Parish Council considers that development should take place in such a way so that the large majority of planned village housing would take place in villages with growth potential with less development in villages in lower categories. Such a policy should be reviewed on a regular basis.
- The Parish Council agrees to a policy of restricting change of use from some local village services (shops, pubs etc) and that the business classification policy should be kept as it is.
- The whole of this strategy should be used on the retention of the existing business classification as it is, and the village classification criteria should be reviewed on a regular basis.

4.6 Developments for the rest of Wealden

- The Parish Council's Strategy considers that future developments in towns should be focused on Uckfield/Crowborough split.

4.7 Site allocation thresholds

- The Mayfield and Five Ashes Strategy for the size of development should be focused on small size scales, of about eight houses per year for Mayfield and Five Ashes, because there will be an impact on infrastructure and the character of the village and social cohesion needs must be protected.

4.8 New settlement options

- New settlement developments should be considered and all options explored.
- The Parish Council consider that there is possible growth potential in these villages.
- Rotherfield (including Town Row) – subject to road layout, traffic calming and access considerations.
- Wadhurst and Sparrows Green
- Mayfield – subject to additional primary care provision, new village hall, improved transport links and enhancing schooling provision, and needs for general infrastructure improvements. Use of other private school facilities. Car parking and ensuring safe lanes. Maintenance of shopping. Improvement of leisure facilities. Improvement in Rights of Way and walking opportunities. Transport of shoppers to village.
- Housing development since 2006 must be counted in the overall total, and build rates should not exceed 10% of the total dwellings over a 10 year period.
- Lesser roads, rather than the A roads will take the impact of housing.

4.9 Housing density

- The Mayfield and Five Ashes Strategy for housing density for new development will be 30-35 dwellings per hectare as stated in the Non Statutory plan, which is in keeping with Parish requirements.

4.10 Housing policy

- The Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council Strategy for housing policy should be in the form of small dwellings (flats and terraced houses).
- Outside of Wealden's five towns, schemes should include at least one affordable unit and match one to one general market units with affordable units and the proportion should be held at 25%.
- Sites solely for affordable housing should be allocated in towns only, and a policy of rural exception should be maintained with appropriate criteria.
- Ancillary dwellings for elderly relatives/disabled relatives or carers should be allowed provided appropriate controls are in place, and these controls are completely enforceable.
- Ancillary dwellings to businesses providing key rural services should be permitted provided that appropriate controls are in place, and these controls are completely enforceable.

4.11 Gypsies and travellers locations

- Such sites should be distributed throughout the Wealden area, ideally close to towns. Concentration in the north of the district council area is not agreed.

4.12 Transport policy

- Development should be located where it would or might improve the viability of bus services to and between towns.
- The reinstatement of the Lewes/Uckfield/Tunbridge Wells train services should be given the highest priority and if necessary include development at certain sections along its routes to help fund missing links.

- Parking standards should derive from the car ownership levels of different types of household, with a minimum of two spaces per dwellings.

4.13 Open space and leisure policy

- The Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council Strategy considers that:
- Developer contributions should be secured for recreational facilities to meet local standards, and this should be done before development is completed.
- Indoor and outside sports and recreational facilities should be protected, unless suitable, equally accessible and high quality replacement provision is made.

4.14 Housing delivery

- Housing developments must be completed after two years then enforcement to complete by five years or withdrawn.

4.15 Infrastructure requirements

- The following developments are needed with regard to infrastructure requirements:
- New General Practitioners Surgery facilities in Mayfield and Five Ashes.
- Improved rail and bus services with links to local towns.

4.16 Rights of Way

- The major theme for Mayfield and Five Ashes Parish Council are the enjoyment of Wealden countryside by improving Rights of Way.

SECTION 5

Conclusion

This Parish Strategy and Plan is an important document in that it sets out the future framework relating to the needs and desires of Mayfield and Five Ashes. Now the plan exists, it gives us a sound base on which to negotiate with local authorities about any future changes they may want to enforce.

As mentioned in the introduction, we are in a rapidly changing world and the plan that exists today may well not be completely relevant in ten years time. The Development Committee along with the Parish Council undertakes to ensure that the Parish Strategy and Plan remains current and as a consequence will ensure that it is reviewed at regular intervals.



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