
JEVINGTON & FILCHING VILLAGES, EAST SUSSEX

Village quality, safety and movement on a busy route



This report was prepared by **Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd**

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For Willingdon & Jevington Parish Council



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Introduction

Transport, traffic and movement are an integral part of rural life. For villages located along busy routes, the relationship between traffic and the built environment is the key factor in defining quality of life and patterns of movement. Across the UK and elsewhere, local communities struggle to maintain a balance between the realities of traffic and the need to maintain village coherence. Jevington in East Sussex is one such village. Its proximity to Eastbourne and the character of Jevington Road, its main street, means that traffic issues have dominated local concerns for many years. Speeds, safety, pedestrian comfort and the movement of horses are major issues. Jevington, together with the smaller hamlet of Filching to the north, is one of many villages where the interactions and activities of day-to-day life are being rapidly eroded by fear of traffic.

This project and our recommendations were prompted by a visit and community seminar held in July 2013, organised by the Parish Council. The event was attended by over 50 residents, and the broad principles underpinning the approach were generally welcomed and enthusiastically endorsed

by those present. The support of the South Downs National Park Authority at the event and subsequently has been vital to the project, aligning with their wider aspirations for villages and communities in the South Downs and for the critical issues relating to traffic in rural areas.

Thanks to energetic work by local residents and the Parish Council, information and suggestions as well as dimensional data was gathered, and the views and concerns of the community drawn together. This helped with subsequent visits and observations and with the selection of recommended proposals. Although there are no specific proposals planned or programmed for Jevington Road, the report is intended to guide the Parish Council in moving towards a establishing consensus for a long-term approach and set of principles for the route through the villages. This approach could not only benefit Jevington, Filching and Wannock, but may be of value to other linear communities needing to maintain village life and coherence in the face of increasing traffic pressure.



The policy context

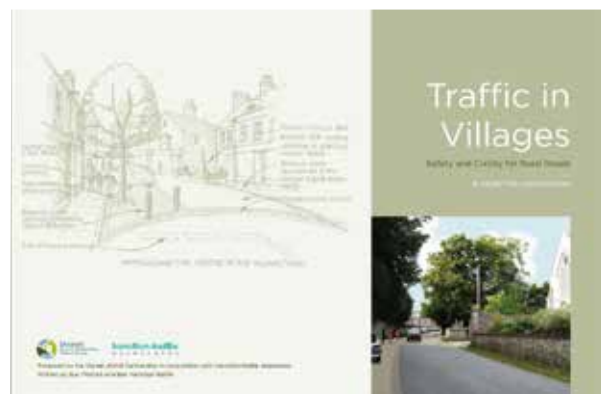
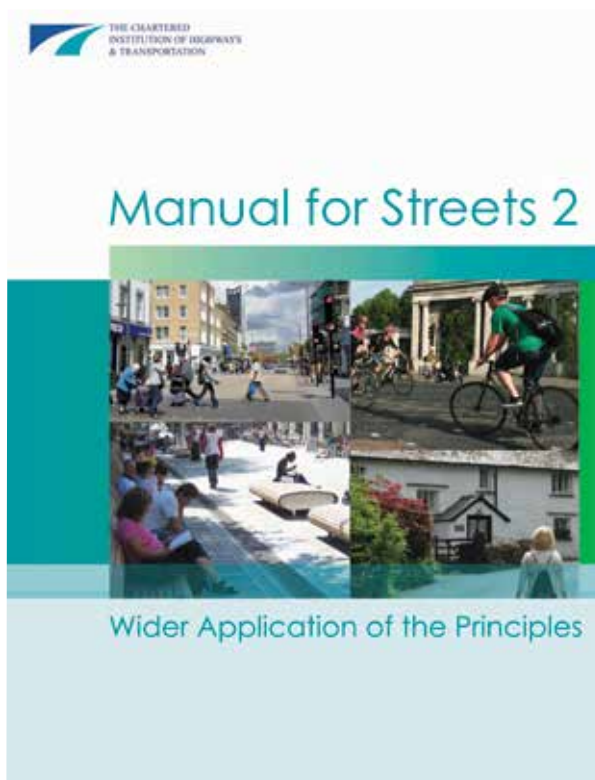
Jevington and Filching’s initiative to address traffic issues builds on a growing body of experience across the UK. The publication *Manual for Streets 2* and guides such as Dorset’s *Traffic in Villages* build on schemes in places such as West Meon and Buriton in Hampshire. More broadly the move towards greater localism encourages more communities to become directly engaged in key local issues.

Jevington and Filching’s engagement also coincides with severe constraints for highway authorities in their ability to fund major infrastructure projects as well as maintenance. Conventional traffic calming measures offer limited scope for busy through routes such as the Jevington Road where residents are struggling with the balance between traffic flow and village life. The policy context reflects the need to extend the palette of community-led measures to influence speeds and exploit the psychological messages conveyed by the presence of the village itself.

The Jevington Road serves as an important north south connection between the A27 to the north and A259 to the south. It is often used by

rat running vehicles avoiding congestion on the A27 entering Eastbourne. Speeds are generally between 30 and 40 mph in the village 30 mph limit, sufficiently high to make crossing the road difficult within the built-up area. The lack of footways for the majority of its length make Jevington Road unattractive for pedestrians, even for local journeys. Personal injury collision rates are higher than average, with an number of slight and serious incidents along the length of the route.

The clear need to re-balance the relationship between traffic and village life underpins the case for exploring additional measures, reflecting the policy context and learning from recent schemes elsewhere. Such measures could contribute to a set of principles aimed at accommodating existing and future traffic flows whilst significantly changing driver perceptions and expectations of the fabric of Jevington and Filching. Such expectations are essential to reducing speed. Such principles will contribute towards developing an approach that will benefit other villages located on busy through routes.



Jevington & Filching

Located at the very eastern end of the South Downs National Park, Jevington and Filching form part of a parish that includes Willington and Wannock, the latter consisting of around 300 suburban houses on a wide road south of the busy junction with the A2270 at Polegate Cross.

Stables and equestrian training form a key part of the local economy, and the valley is also associated with tea gardens - Gibby's still provides an important landmark opposite Filching Manor. The Eight Bells pub remains a focal point in Jevington, and there is a sense of the village centre near the junction with Green Lane, around the former site of the village pond. The extended and sporadic settlement pattern splits the village into several parts, separated especially by a narrow sunken hill south of Jevington Place Farm, where the village hall stands above a steep bank above the lane. With the church set back and concealed from Jevington Road, the village lacks a clear focus. Instead a sequence of buildings address the street in a variety of forms, with entrances and driveways often opening directly onto the alarmingly busy and speedy road.



Jevington Road



Jevington village



Village clutter



Gibby's restaurant, Filching

Initial observations

The uneasy relationship between village and road is very evident from our visits. Although not excessive in the context of the 30 mph speed limit, the speed of traffic feels uncomfortable and threatening throughout. Although lacking consistent footways, the presence of pedestrians or horses in the carriageway appears to be resented by many drivers, and one senses a surprising degree of aggression and hostility. Clearly the characteristics of the road and the village approaches establish an inappropriate expectation in the minds of drivers.

Jevington and Filching are not easy villages to define and perceive. Many of the houses and key buildings, such as the church and village hall, are concealed from drivers' view, and there is little to interrupt the linear continuity of Jevington Road. The presence of white lines and proliferation of highway signs accentuate this separation of highway from village space.

Jevington Road is the only coherent connecting route for the villages. Although The Glen and various footpaths provide some occasional sporadic links, they provide no continuous

alternative to the main street. Despite this, there are surprisingly few pedestrians or signs of informal activity through the village, and few cyclists. Most of the older residents seemed unwilling to brave the traffic for even short journeys, such as to the church or pub, and few children walk or cycle to school. The poor pedestrian environment contributes to the vicious cycle of an increasingly traffic dominated public realm, with the village effectively turning its back on the road. Links to the magnificent cricket field and the village car park and recycling site are not comfortable for pedestrians.

It is especially notable that those dealing with horses feel constrained in using the main road. For a village dependent on both equestrian activity, and upon the tourism associated with footpaths, bridleways and the South Downs Way, the need for a reduction in traffic domination of the single through routes is especially urgent.

Despite these difficulties, the energy and enthusiasm amongst residents to maintain the intrinsic qualities of the community were very evident from discussions and the evening event.



Jevington Road



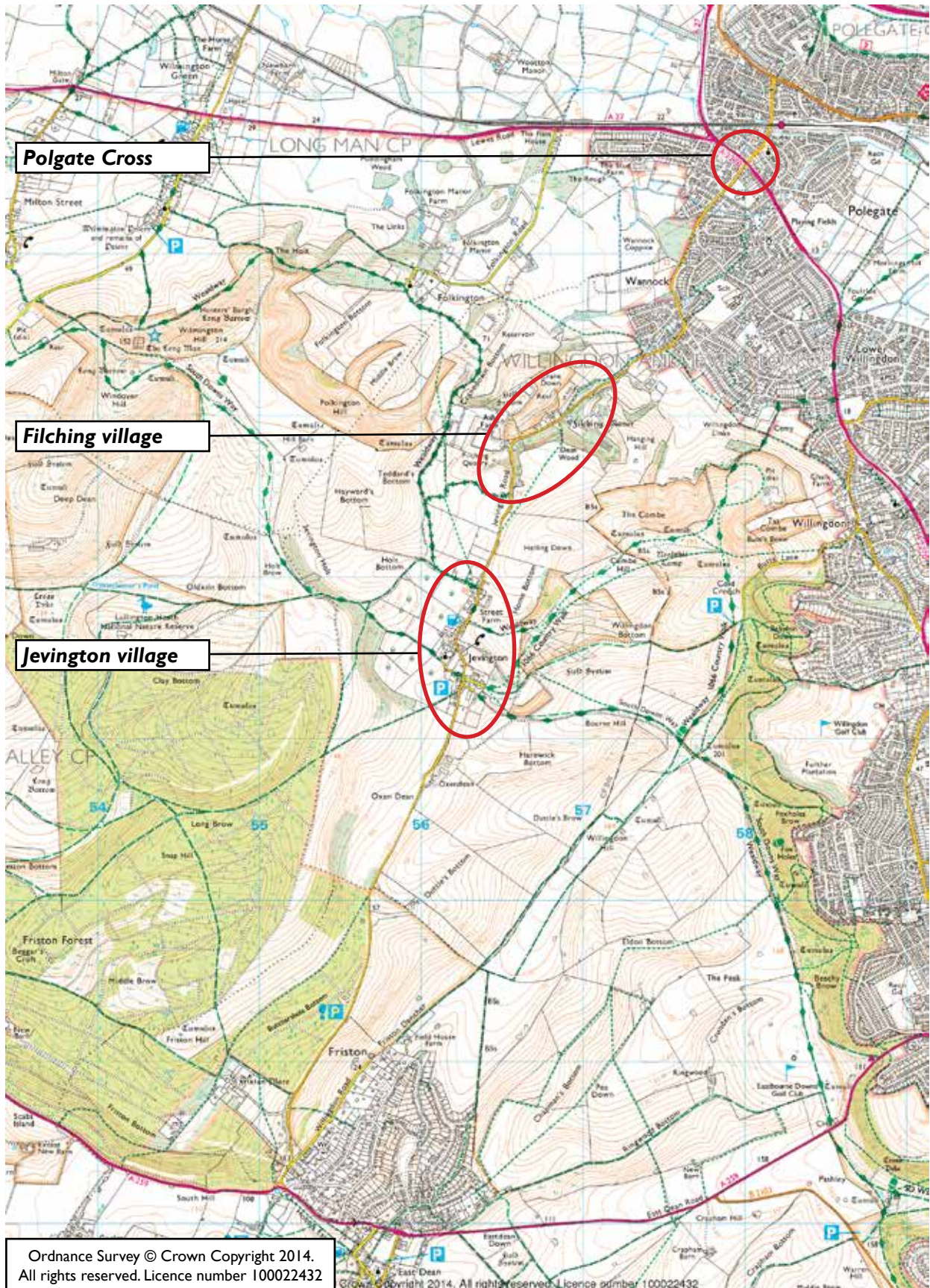
Existing southern village entry



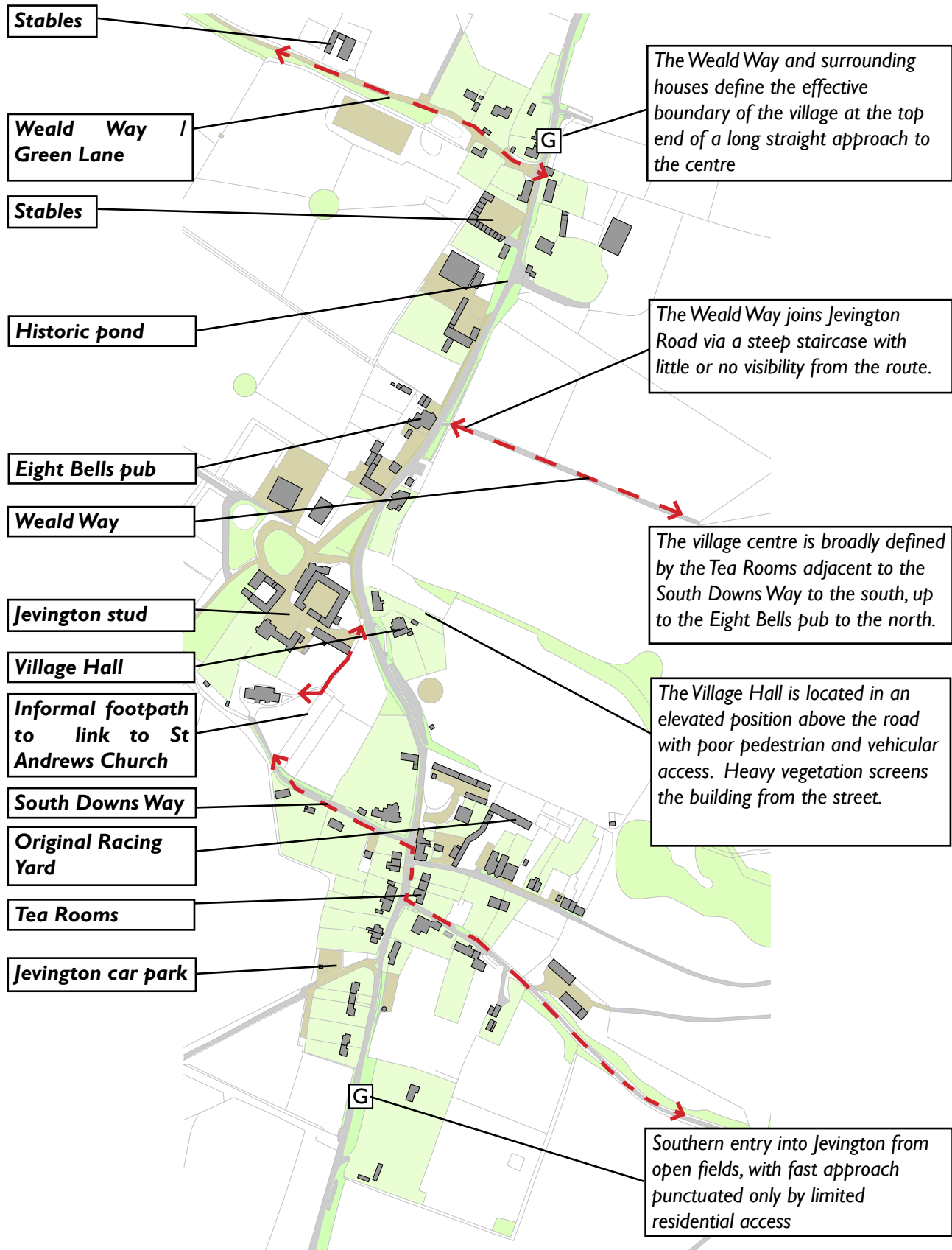
The Village Hall



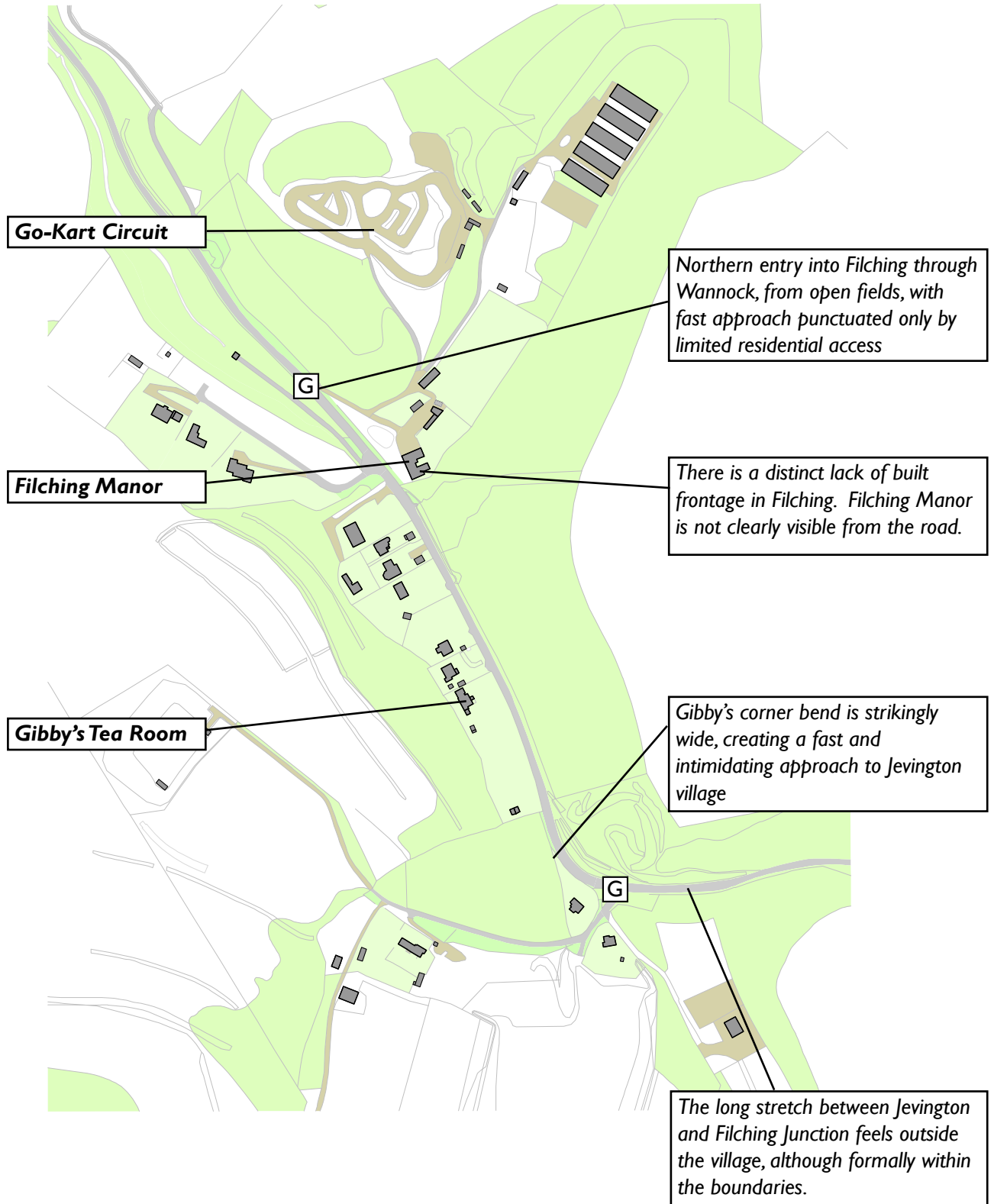
Jevington Tea Gardens



Jevington Village



Filching Village



Design Principles

Our recommendations for Jevington and Filching draw on a combination of basic principles that have been employed elsewhere in the UK and in mainland Europe to closely align highway engineering with good urban and landscape design. Such principles combine to help to foster lower speeds and to promote safety, efficient traffic movement and civility through maximising driver awareness of his or her surroundings.

Place-making and reinforcing context

Successful shared space streets benefit from a clear sequence of identifiable places. Such places may arise from the historic use or location of a particular building, or may simply consist of an intersection or bend in the road. Making sure that street design and highway measures reflect and reinforce such places is central to our approach.

Our proposals build on careful observations of the distinctive context of Jevington and Filching, and introduce a design language that highlights and celebrates the places where pedestrians are likely to pause. Such an approach is consistent with DfT guidance on Traffic Management and Streetscapes.

Place making serves to create legible and enjoyable focal points, but is also essential in maintaining the low-speed environment.

Standard highway measures tend to erode spatial quality. There is clear evidence that traffic speeds can be reduced and driver awareness improved through creating a clear sequence of distinctive spaces.

Any measures proposed for the public realm should therefore seek to create and reinforce a sense of place at key locations. This implies removing or reducing linear elements such as painted centre lines and edge markings, and using paving and materials to connect buildings and routes with adjoining streetscapes. Simple, identifiable spaces can be created at entry points, at changes in scale, changes in direction, at key junctions, or in response to significant landmarks or reference points.



Defining village entry points

Successful mixed-use public space requires clear transition points between the linear, high-speed world of the highway, and the spatial low-speed context of the public realm. Such transitions are essential in alerting drivers to the changed surroundings and transforming expectations of interaction and the need for negotiation and awareness.

Many settlements suffer from contradictory messages concerning entry, with highway signs located without reference to drivers' perceptions of the change in the built environment. Clear definition and careful design of the road context at specific entry points, particularly at the core of the village, is fundamental to the recommendations.

Design for slow speeds

Observations and discussions with residents in Jevington and Filching highlight that speed is a key problem in both villages, and that work needs to be undertaken to emphasise the essential low-speed context of the village core. The lack of pavements, prominent kerbs, highway marking and sweeping alignments marginalise the presence of pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists.

Generating a naturally low-speed traffic environment, where drivers are alerted to the unique circumstances of the environment, is a fundamental component of the approach. Low speed design may be reinforced through speed limits, but environmental cues are more significant in achieving this objective. Examples in the UK and elsewhere suggest that low-speed design need not compromise traffic capacity of flows, especially over relatively short distances

Vegetation and Tree Management

An overarching theme for both villages is the need for more extensive management and pruning of highway trees and vegetation in order to increase visibility and legibility of key spaces along the route.



Defined gateways and visual narrowing



Defined gateways and visual narrowing



Designing for slow speeds



Designing for slow speeds

Detailed Proposals - Southern approach

Entry points are vital. The fragmented nature of Jevington and Filching makes defining such boundaries particularly difficult. The existing southern nameplates and speed limits are concealed beneath a dense tree canopy and located before the village itself is evident. The first residential properties are concealed behind mature hedgerows, with no pedestrian footway, creating a tunnel approach.

To slow inbound traffic and to highlight the transition into the village context, we would recommend creating a clear start to the village at the entry point to the southern car park. This would give this important asset more prominence and marks a clear start to the village. The road would be visually narrowed from this point, and all centre-line markings removed.



Current view showing southern approach



Artists impression - southern approach to Jevington

Jevington Tea Garden / South Downs Way

The linear and fragmented form of Jevington results in it having a sequence of significant areas, rather than a single coherent centre. The points of arrival of the South Downs Way into the village, and presence of the historic tea gardens, create the first of these series of spaces. At present the centre lines and the width creates an uncomfortable relationship between place and traffic movement.

A modification in this area would be consistent with the recommendations of the Jevington Conservation Area appraisal for this location, produced by Wealdon District Council. It marks an important landmark on the route of the South Downs Way.

Despite the importance of this walking route to the village, and to the economy and assets of the South Downs National Park, its presence is remarkably understated. There is little to draw drivers' attention to its significance, or to the three important side roads which converge in this area.

We would recommend a simple scheme to this stretch as an important gathering and orientation point, with a notional footway to create additional visual narrowing, combined with identified on-street car parking spaces. A courtesy crossing with an element of place-making to highlight the junction with Church Lane would help to punctuate the long, linear form of this stretch and reassert the presence of the village.



Current view - Jevington Tea Garden / The Hungry Monk



Artists impression - Jevington Tea Garden / The Hungry Monk

Jevington Village Centre

In addition to such general approaches to the treatment of the centre of the village, we would recommend particular focus on a number of specific locations, outlined below. These could be introduced over time as opportunities and resources permit, creating both clearer entry points and village centre, as well as stronger crossing locations at critical points on pedestrian desire lines. To maintain a contrast with the higher speed highway outside the village, we would discourage the use of further signage, markings or physical traffic calming measures such as bumps or artificial chicanes.

Simple reliance on the 30 mph speed limit is not sufficient for the modification of traffic speeds in Jevington and Filching. To guide any future maintenance and modifications, we would recommend establishing a target design speed close to 20 mph for the historic core of the village. This would not significantly reduce the capacity of performance of Jevington Road, but would transform the impact of through traffic and greatly improve the use of the main street for other modes and activities.

Jevington and Filching both lack a strong visual relationship between the road and the presence of the village. Many relatively blank and featureless walls line parts of the route, much of which is heavily overgrown with trees and foliage. Wherever possible, opportunities should be taken for local initiatives to add touches of human presence - as quirky and intriguing as creativity stretches. Planting verges and adding human elements to the roadside space should be encouraged and supported throughout.

The approach to the village hall from the south is one such corner, where animation and activity is especially necessary. Our sketch suggests large-scale planting of the curving blank wall, combined with an element of place-making where the proposed new graded entrance to the village hall might be located.





Lockeridge village scarecrows



Lockeridge village scarecrows



Artists impression - village centre

Lane to St Andrews Church / Jevington Stud

The bend at the head of the slope down to the village hall is another important location. It marks the start of the footpath to St. Andrews Church, and a punctuation mark at the heart of the village. At present the sweeping corner does little to reduce speeds, adding to the reluctance to trim back existing vegetation.

Some simple surface changes at this point could change the nature of this corner. Simple paving treatments could both emphasise the change in direction, as well as highlighting the pedestrian link past Jevington Stud and stables, and the path to the church.



The stretch between the village hall and the pub is another important link where greater animation and village presence could help reduce speeds. Increasing the prominence of the footway and visually narrowing the carriageway are also useful elements. Any measures that can be taken to celebrate and humanise such spaces are to be encouraged.



Current view showing southern approach



Artists impression - Village centre

Eight Bells Pub / Weald Way

The Eight Bells pub is a popular destination for residents and visitors to Jevington and Filching. The footpath located adjacent to the pub is extremely narrow, and opposite the pub the Weald Way joins Jevington Road via a series of steps which are obscured from view by overgrown vegetation. There is also a bus stop located adjacent to the pub car park on Jevington Road.

This space is key to creating a focal point on the route, framing not only access to the Weald Way but also the pub itself. A relatively low cost solution to this space would be to carry a bonded gravel surface (or similar) across the car park and Jevington Road, breaking up the linearity of the route, with emphasis placed around the entry point to the Weald Way.



Steps to the Weald Way



Current view north adjacent to the Eight Bells



Artists impression - view north adjacent to the Eight Bells pub

Jevington Village Pond

North of the Eight Bells pub historic mapping of Jevington shows that there was a pond on the western side of Jevington Road.

Reinstatement of the pond in this location could serve as an important place-making feature on the route. In addition to the pond itself, concentric arches of stone setts that recall the waves formed by a thrown pebble could be introduced on the carriageway. There is also an opportunity to introduce some parking bays, formalising the adhoc parking that already occurs in this location.

In addition to its role in place-making, and in helping reduce approach speeds through interrupting the linear character of the main road, an intervention of this nature helps to connect this important group of dwellings and space with the rest of the village.



Highlighting Jevington

There is a real need to strengthen the identity of Jevington, and provide some element of surprise, intrigue and animation to mark the presence of the village. The importance of the village for horses and stabling might offer once possible theme for introducing some simple profile silhouettes to mark both village approaches. Such art elements should not be interpreted too literally, and there are infinite numbers of other possibilities and approaches. But an element that drivers always associated with the village would help to offset the linear mindset of drivers.



Artists impression - southern approach to Jevington



Current view northern gateway



Artists impression - northern gateway

The Northern Entrance to Jevington - Green Lane

The small collection of houses and buildings surrounding the junction with Green Lane suggests an opportunity to highlight the northern boundary of the centre of Jevington. When resurfacing is planned, a simple piece of place-making at this junction helps to highlight the buildings, and to break up the long, linear progression through the village. The location marks the point where the Weald Way enters from the west.

Our initial suggestion would create a simple, informal square, combined with a subtle narrowing of the perceived carriageway width, together with the removal of the road markings. The space helps to highlight the surroundings and mark this as a potential gathering and meeting point. Most importantly, it serves to provide incoming drivers with a strong cue to start of the village centre.



Current view northern gateway



Artists impression - Green Lane / Weald Way

Filching - Gibby's Corner

Travelling north beyond the sports and cricket club, Jevington Road continues to widen to approximately 6.8m at Gibby's Corner. The increase in road width and the wide sweeping of the bend, creating a fast and intimidating approach.

This space is key to creating a link between Jevington and Filching village and would benefit from modification to reduce the linearity of the route and reduce the drivers expectation for speed.

It is important to reduce the highway characteristics of this stretch through Filching, and to slow traffic on the link between the two villages. There may be opportunities for an entry point to Filching from the north close to Filching Manor. Our sketch shows an approach to breaking the continuity of the route at the sweeping bend south of Gibby's Restaurant and Tea Gardens to help cut speeds at this point and announce the presence of the village context.



Current view Gibby's Corner



Current view Gibby's Corner



Artists impression - Gibby's corner

Wannock Village

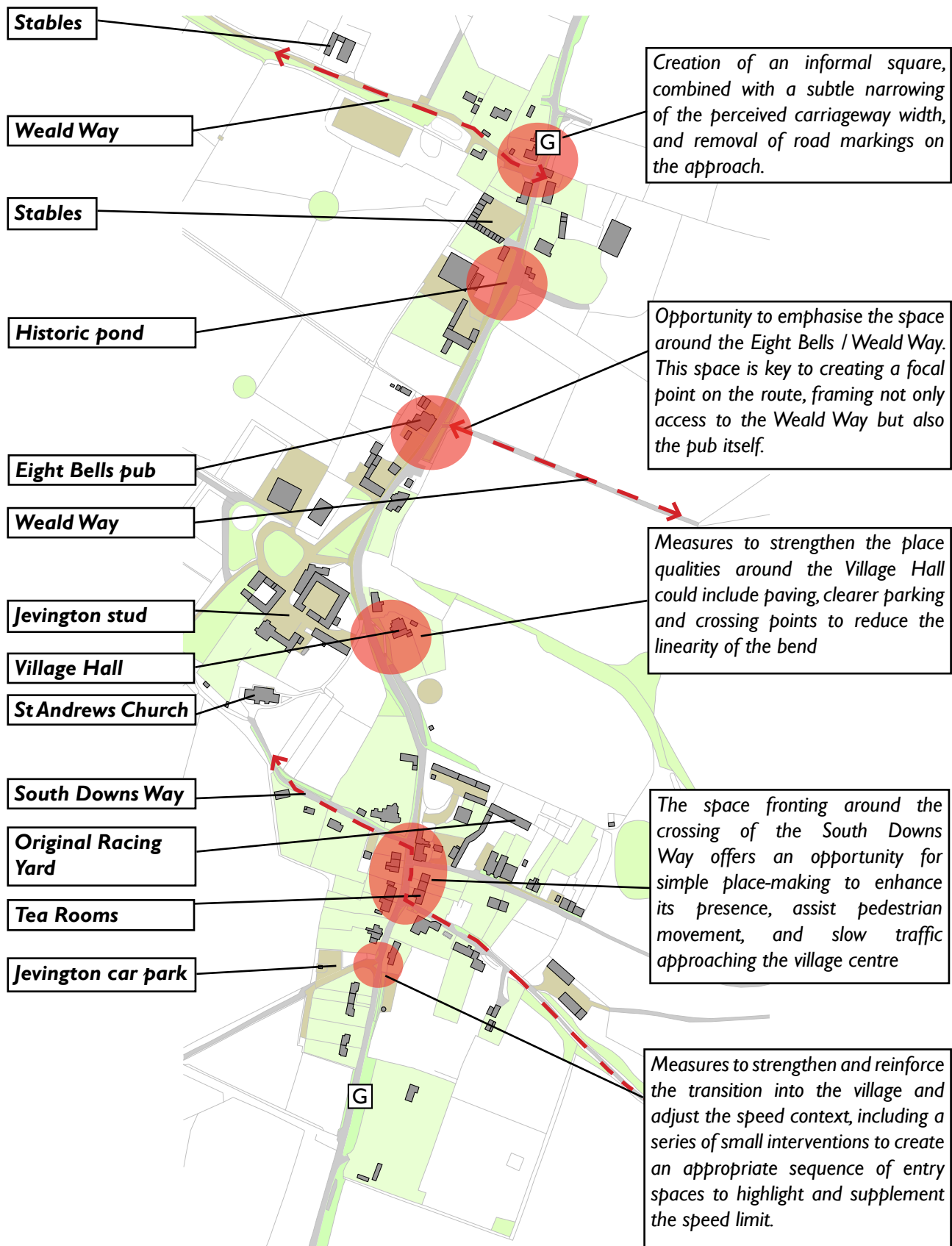
Driver expectations, and the resulting speeds, are often established beyond the actual boundaries of villages. In the case of Jevington and Filching, the wide sweeping northern approach through Wannock gives especially inconsistent messages about the narrow rural nature of the route ahead. Although outside the boundary of the study area, it is worth exploring the longer-term potential for modifying the characteristics of this critical approach.

We would recommend reducing the perceived width of the carriageway to 6 metres, allowing distinct space for parking and wider footways. Removal of centre lines, and extending the presence of Wannock as a distinctive settlement with a clear focus on its village hall, would both transform the quality of Wannock itself as well as providing the appropriate speed context and scale before the road enters the narrow wooded valley. Such changes could be incorporated into any planned surface renewal programmes, or as a supplementary scheme for Wannock.

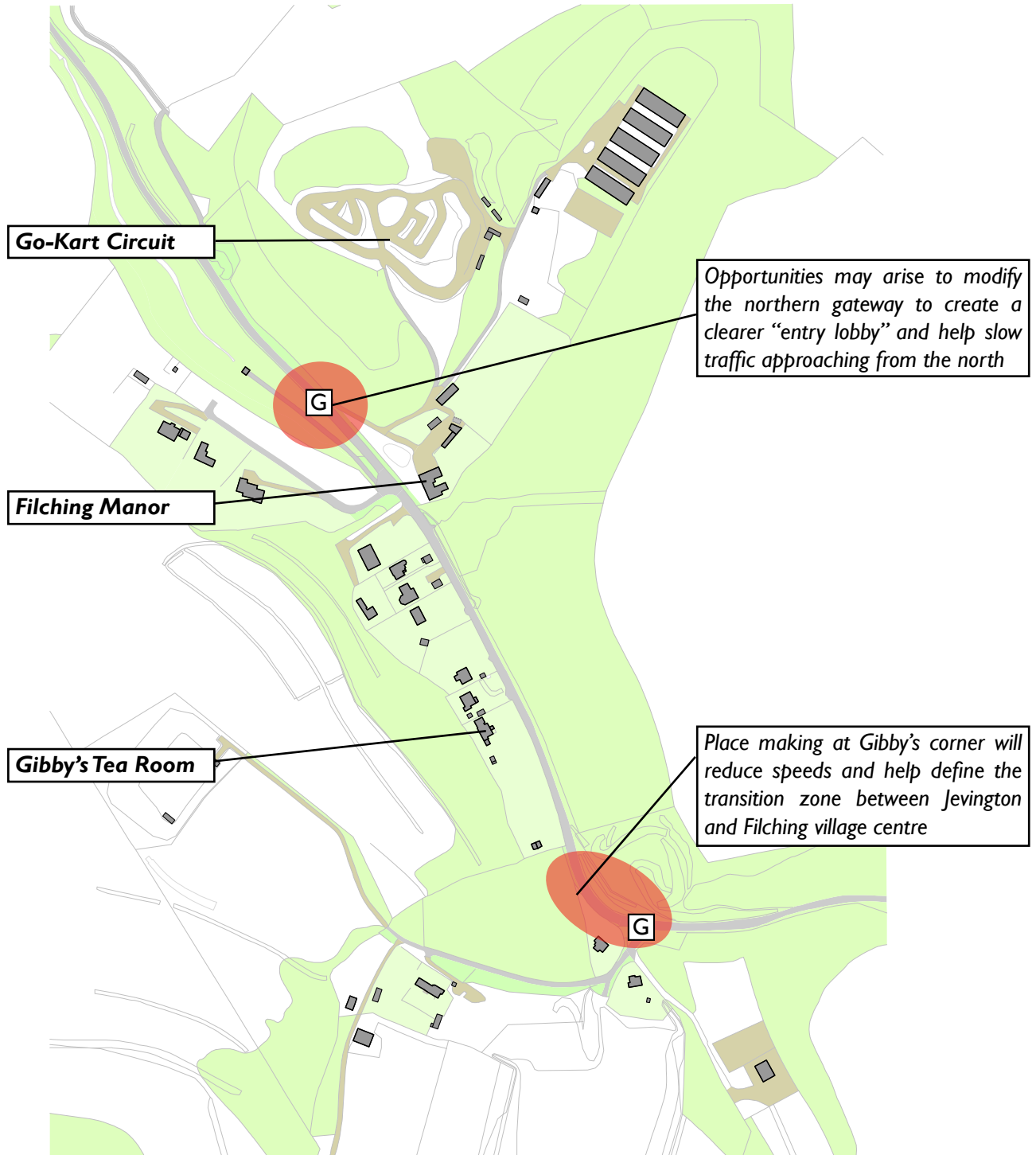


Artists impression - Wannock Village Hall

Summary of key modifications - Jevington Village



Summary of key modifications - Filching Village



Conclusions and way forward

Jevington and Filching are villages on a main traffic route. This reality is unlikely to change, and the task facing its residents, the local authorities and the individuals and organisations that represent them is to find a means to reconcile significant traffic flows with the need to maintain a viable, and coherent community. The current relationship between main road and village has developed gradually over many decades, and has significantly reduced the safety, connectivity and quality of life in Jevington and Filching. As well as seriously eroding the extent of public space in the village, existing traffic speeds and driver expectations have increased car dependency by reducing the willingness of residents to walk or cycle. The discomfort and its effect on travel choice and movement in the village has a significant impact on the economy of the village and other local activities.

These initial notes intend to sketch out an approach based on lower speeds and stronger definition of places and suggest a means to address such issues without significantly reducing the capacity or performance of the Jevington Road as a key route. They draw on principles established elsewhere to reinforce the particular qualities and characteristics of the village in order to influence the relationship between through-traffic and local circumstances. Although traffic volumes will continue to impact on Jevington and Filching, the reduction in the linear highway characteristics of the main road, the strengthening of entry and transition points, and stronger place-making in the centre will alleviate the key problems more effectively than conventional signs, markings and enforcement.

The approach outlined suggest a longer term strategy for Jevington and Filching which would combine early measures with longer term proposals that may relate to future developments as well as investment and maintenance in Jevington Road. The principles can be adapted and refined for application to other settlements similarly impacted by traffic volumes and speeds, consistent with broader policy directions both nationally and within South Downs National Park Authority. Jevington and Filching provides a

possible model for establishing a revised approach to traffic and place-making.

The next steps require thorough discussion of the key principles, building on the initial observations in August 2014 to help establish a consensus for the approach. Input from the local authorities and a wider range of residents and stakeholders will be particularly important. The sketches and outline ideas touched upon in this report will require substantial design input and refinement, and further consideration of priorities and phasing will be needed. Early measures, such as allowing centre lines to fade or be removed, could be supplemented by more detailed working up of one of the courtesy crossings south of the centre.

Realistic time scales are important to emphasise; although the approach can inform any imminent proposals, it may be many years before all the various measures are in place to shift the balance of Jevington and Filching from traffic dominance to place-making. The principles give scope for continued and growing engagement by the residents and communities of Jevington and Filching, and offer the basis for a broad consensus on a long-term strategy for the route, to be implemented in partnership with the highway authority.

This study has focused on the key places and elements that could be achievable at a time of budgetary constraint and greater local input. Although significant highway improvements could be implemented, especially for the major junctions south of the village, these lie beyond the immediate remit of this stage. There are additional issues such as parking, school access and traffic routing that will continue to require attention. But the approach outlined provides a start for addressing the central issue of speed and safety in the village, and provides a starting point for the Parish Council to help re-establish a coherence and quality for Jevington and Filching whilst coping with the realities of rural traffic.

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