

Objective D. Promoting Healthy Communities

The Neighbourhood Plan will aim to protect the current high standard of living and low crime rate in Bridge. It will endeavour to ensure that sufficient leisure and community facilities are maintained to serve the village, and to promote new provision as the village develops. Facilities and groups that promote a sense of community and maintain these values will be supported and encouraged. The Neighbourhood Plan will protect existing green spaces within the village and encourage walking and enjoyment of the open spaces in and around the village.

Project D1

To ensure that sufficient community and leisure facilities are maintained to serve the village.

Government guidelines (NPPF 8.73) state that 'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well being of communities.' The NPPF states that open spaces, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields should generally not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, building or land to be surplus to requirements. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect existing open spaces and recreational facilities within the village and on its outskirts. Open spaces such as the recreation ground and allotments and natural open space located both within and outside the village will be protected for the health and benefit of villagers and visitors alike. (See Map of Important Local Green Spaces on p.23).

Bridge is fortunate to have a strong community spirit, as reflected by the number and scope of groups and activities which take place within the village. These groups have strong co-ordinating bodies such as the Parish Council, the Parochial Church Council, sports clubs, school based activities and uniformed organisations as well as many interest groups. Bridge has few places in which such groups can meet. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that existing facilities are retained and where possible improved for the use of the community.

The Bridge Village Sports Pavilion will be retained for use within the recreation ground.

Policy D1

The loss of community services and facilities of use to the community will be permitted if:

- a) they are to be replaced with services and facilities of an equal or higher quality and value to the community on the same site or another equally suitable site within the parish; or
- b) where the services and facilities can be demonstrated to be no longer needed or viable, any proposed alternative use would provide equal or greater benefits to the local economy and community, including through contributions to development on other sites.

Project D2

To work to support KCC policies that give local children priority in obtaining places at the local primary school.

The primary school is the hub of activity for the children in the community. It has expanded rapidly in recent years and now many of the pupils have little or no connection with the village. This policy would assist us in achieving our Environmental and Transport objectives by reducing commuting and congestion and encouraging walking and cycling. It would also promote a stronger feeling of community among our children and young people.

Bridge Health Centre is a modern and purpose built accessible premises on the edge of the village. It provides a wide range of GP services, therapies and treatments. Bridge is also fortunate to have a private dental practice. It is important that these facilities are maintained and supported as the village grows and more pressure is placed on services by development in South Canterbury.

The Neighbourhood Plan supports the deployment of a shared Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) within the village and would welcome more involvement of a PCSO within the community. It seeks to strengthen links with the police. It supports the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and would encourage its expansion. It also supports the Speedwatch Scheme, which is organised by the Parish Council with local volunteers and helps to make our village streets safer. It supports the introduction of a 20mph speed limit within the village.

Policy D2

Development proposals must retain and where appropriate, enhance, public rights of way and important local green spaces and green infrastructure around the village which contribute to the health and well being of the residents.

Enjoyment of the countryside and preservation of its peace and quiet is important to the well-being of our rural community. The Plan will maintain green spaces both within the village and on its outskirts. Public footpaths will continue to be maintained, supported by the parish council and volunteers, as a supplement to the limited work of Kent Highways Authority. The enjoyment of green spaces and the effect that loss of access to it will have on the community will be a material factor to be considered should any proposal be put forward for whatever purpose which reduces the existing green spaces round the village. Any proposal which would reduce the potential for such enjoyment will be opposed.

(See Map of Important Local Green Spaces on p.23)

The Neighbourhood Plan envisages the retention of the Mill Centre and the use of it and other village assets for the use of its youth groups which draw young people from the south of the District to participate in a range of sporting and cultural activities.