Dear Mr Phillips,

Subject: Application for Hartfield Parish as a Designated Neighbourhood Area under Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

Hartfield Parish Council hereby applies to designate the parish of Hartfield as a Designated Neighbourhood Area under Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as a first step towards the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Plan will cover the whole of the parish of Hartfield as shown on the attached map.

A paper is attached which sets out the background to the application and the reasons why Hartfield should be designated.

Yours sincerely,
Hartfield Parish proposed Neighbourhood Area Designation – Supporting Information

Hartfield Parish

Hartfield is a rural parish in the north of Wealden District, east of Forest Row and north west of Crowborough. Its boundaries are shown on the attached map. The whole of the parish lies within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the south of the parish includes part of the Ashdown Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest.

The population of Hartfield as recorded in the 2011 census was 2,179 in 892 households (source http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk).

In the Spatial Development Options Background Paper prepared by Wealden for the Local Plan, Hartfield is described as a Local Service Centre, which classifies it as a settlement which is self-sufficient and would also be able to accommodate some growth.

The facilities of Hartfield Parish include:

- A community owned play school
- A primary school
- A new doctor’s surgery, opened in 2009, with its own dispensary
- A convenience store
- A selection of public houses
- Two C of E churches – St Mary the Virgin in Hartfield village and Holy Trinity at Colemans Hatch
- A community owned village hall
- A new parish council meeting room and office, opened in January 2012
- Centres of local employment, particularly in farm locations (e.g. Hodore Farm, Lines Farm, Bassetts Manor, Old Crown Farm, Castle Farm)
- A sports pavilion, playing fields, tennis courts and childrens’ playground on the Town Croft, golf clubs at Holtye and bowling and cricket at Colemans Hatch
- Two registered Village Greens available for informal recreation – The Town Croft (owned by Hartfield Parish Council) and the Corner Field adjacent to the primary school, which is owned by the Buckhurst Estate.
- A Memorial Garden purchased by public subscription in the early 1990s.
- The Forest Way Country Park runs across the parish, providing a linear route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to link to Forest Row and East Grinstead to the west, and to Withyham and Groombridge to the east.
- Social housing was developed at Castlefields and Mottefield in the 1970s, with some remaining under District Council control despite “right to buy” legislation. Two new social housing schemes of 9 houses each were recently completed at Old Crown Farm and at the former Coal Yard at Hartfield Station.

Why Should Hartfield be Designated?

At a strategy meeting on 26th March 2012 Hartfield Parish Council approved proceeding with a Neighbourhood Plan project and agreed an initial budget. At the Annual Parish Meeting on 16th April 2012, Cllr Jo Edwarde in her Chairman’s Report publicly announced the intention to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish.

On 22nd August 2012 parish councillors met to complete an initial questionnaire on Neighbourhood Planning issued by Wealden District Council. The meeting identified issues that merited a local planning policy for Hartfield parish as well as the desire to designate Assets of Community Value. The response was ratified at the Parish Council meeting held on 3rd September 2012 and at the following meeting on 1st October the parish council set up a steering group to plan a Neighbourhood Plan public consultation. On 3rd December 2012 the council agreed that the consultation would take place immediately following the Annual Parish Meeting.
On 15th April 2013 just under 100 parishioners attended a Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Event held in Hartfield Village Hall. The feedback received at that meeting provided a clear mandate to the Parish Council to proceed with preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

Potential areas for a Neighbourhood Plan to address were grouped under the following headings:

**Housing**
- There appears to be a “gap” between demand and supply of certain types of housing – e.g. there is a shortage of lower cost homes for first time buyers to purchase and with an aging population we also have a lack of suitable housing that people can move to as they plan for their retirement.

**Business and Employment**
- There is a desire to maintain and support local employment

**Tourism**
- There are diverse views on whether a growth in tourism should be encouraged or discouraged. Consultation should help to establish whether a specific policy would have widespread support.

**Hartfield Parish Design Guide (and Conservation Area Policy)**
- To influence the design of new building it may be helpful to have our own design policy for Hartfield parish and for the village Conservation Area, complementing the existing Wealden Design Guide.

**Local Facilities and Assets**
- There is a need to identify and protect Assets of Community Value

**Car Parking**
- Although there was no clear consensus on whether or not we have sufficient car parking in the parish (and particularly in Hartfield village) to meet day to day demand as well as for village events, this was a topic that many people commented on.

On 17th July 2013 a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group comprising both parish councillors and members of the public met for the first time to identify the initial questions to be included in seeking more detailed input from parishioners.

Hartfield Parish Council now seeks approval from Wealden District Council for Hartfield Parish to be a Designated Neighbourhood Area.

**Context of a Neighbourhood Plan**

“**Hartfield Future**”: A Neighbourhood Plan for Hartfield would be developed alongside a wider Community Plan, for those items which do not have planning policy implications. This builds on the previous public consultation which led to the publication of a Hartfield Parish Action Plan in 2008.

**Government policy:** The publication of the National Planning Policy Framework supports “sustainable development”, which promotes economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan will also be able to benefit from part of the proceeds of Community Infrastructure Levy paid on new development. A Plan provides an opportunity to identify how the parish might use CIL receipts.

**The Wealden Local Plan:** On 28th November 2012 Wealden District Council adopted its new Local Plan, covering the period to 2027. It is proposed that the Neighbourhood Plan will address the same time period.

**The Ashdown Forest Special Area of Conservation:** In 1992 the European Community adopted Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive). Under the Directive, the Ashdown Forest was one of the sites designated as a Site of Community Importance (SCI) and a Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). With Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EC Birds Directive, these form a network of protected areas known as Natura 2000. In the UK the Directive has been adopted as the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 (as amended), known as 'The Habitats Regulations'. Wealden’s 2012 Local Plan introduced a 7km protection zone around the Ashdown Forest, which is currently subject to legal challenge. The whole of Hartfield Parish falls within this 7km zone. It is hoped that in the time it takes to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and put it to public referendum there will be further clarification of the constraints on development within the 7km zone.
Hartfield Parish Council - application for designation as a Neighbourhood Area
Figure 6.1: Zones of influence around Ashdown Forest