

# Hawkhurst Golf Club Proposals

## Update

Revised plans for a long-awaited relief road – first proposed more than 20 years ago – and new homes at Hawkhurst Golf Club have been submitted to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

The revisions follow ongoing consultations with local residents and businesses as well as environmental, highways and other organisations following the submission of a planning application in July 2019.

The changes are in addition to those that were made in the wake of feedback from visitors to the public exhibitions we held in February last year.

These explained why development of the golf course is the only realistic option for delivering a relief road to take traffic away from the centre of Hawkhurst.



The changes include:

- Further environmental enhancements
- Improved pedestrian safety
- Reduced housing

### Environmental benefits

The new revisions offer a number of significant environmental benefits, with additional development-free buffers to ancient woodland in

and around the golf course, as well as an extended area of parkland at the heart of the development.

The relief road has been realigned so that it joins Cranbrook Road further south than was originally proposed. This is to avoid the loss of around half an acre of woodland with ancient characteristics on the 45-acre site – and directly addresses comments made by Natural England and others. Furthermore, a substantial area of new, additional woodland planting is now proposed.

Together with previously proposed measures, these enhancements will ensure a Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10% can be delivered. In addition, the better traffic flow brought by the relief road should improve the quality of life of people living in the centre of the village.

### Improved pedestrian safety

The revised plans include a new pedestrian crossing point at the planned new roundabout where the relief road joins the A268, together with an additional stretch of footway on the southern side of the High Street. These steps will improve pedestrian safety and address comments made by Marlborough House School.

### Reduced housing

The total number of proposed homes on the golf course has been reduced by 43, from 383 to 340 (including 35% affordable housing and some 50 sheltered accommodation units), with a further 34 on the adjoining Springfield site, which has a longstanding allocation for residential development.

### The proposals at a glance

The proposals to redevelop the golf course would see:

- The long-overdue relief road linking the A268 High Street with the A229 Cranbrook Road, and associated works to the Highgate crossroads including the closure of the Cranbrook Road arm. These steps would help reduce traffic and thus improve air quality in the centre of Hawkhurst
- Measures to improve traffic flow at the A21 Flimwell junction
- New community facilities/public car parking
- Parkland, open spaces and play facilities
- New homes of various sizes, including 35% affordable social housing
- Pedestrian and cycle routes linking to the village centre
- Environmental improvements to enhance biodiversity on site

# Proposed masterplan

The proposed development would be split into four areas – North, South, Springfield and Gills Green Park – each with its own distinct characteristics.

Together they provide the opportunity to provide a mix of good-quality housing, close to existing village services, alongside community facilities, extensive open space and environmental enhancements.

The new units would include detached, semi-detached and terraced homes, apartments, sheltered

housing units and self-build plots. Just over a third (35%) of the homes would be affordable, giving a stock of lower-cost housing for people who would otherwise be barred from getting on the local property ladder.

The golf course would accommodate 340 of the new homes, with a further 34 on the Springfield site, giving a total of 374 homes.



The southern and Springfield parts of the development would be separated from the northern area by Gills Green Park, a new parkland zone with pedestrian and cycle links to the village centre. This will open up an area of existing green space that is currently not accessible to the public, while maintaining the natural gap between Highgate and Gills Green.

The illustrative plan on the facing page, drawn up by Canterbury-based landscape architects ETLA, shows how much of the site would remain as open green space or woodland.

The natural contours of the land on which the golf club sits, in combination with the established vegetation and the proposed layout of the development, means there will be little visual impact on the wider landscape.



**ETLA**

Project: 0139 - Hawkhurst Golf Club  
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# Background to the proposals

There are two key issues that underpin our proposals:

- The Government-imposed housing allocations that Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has to meet
- The traffic disruption caused by the crossroads and traffic lights at Highgate

## Housing allocations

The lack of housing in the UK has pushed up prices and made home ownership an impossibility for many younger people trying to get on the housing ladder. To address the situation, the government has imposed tough new housing quotas on local authorities.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) has seen its quota jump from 300 homes a year to 678 – a total of 13,560 by 2036. This is particularly challenging as more than three-quarters of the borough lies within the Green Belt, but not Hawkhurst.

In its draft Local Plan, TWBC allocates 706 new homes to Hawkhurst. Our proposals offer a unique opportunity for Hawkhurst to meet a substantial proportion of this quota at a location that is at the heart of the village, rather than via piecemeal development on surrounding farmland. The plans would also deliver a much-needed relief road, something a series of smaller developments could not offer.

In addition, we plan to improve the Flimwell crossroads on the A21 to accommodate the increased traffic from the golf course development and other planning permissions in the area. This work is the subject of ongoing discussions with Highways England.

## Traffic disruption

Although the need for a relief road for Hawkhurst was identified more than 20 years ago, no progress has been made in providing one, despite the increased traffic arising from new housing developments in Cranbrook and surrounding villages. Kent County Council has acknowledged

there are no other viable improvements that can be made to the crossroads in isolation.

Traffic surveys show Hawkhurst crossroads operates well above its design capacity during both the morning and evening peak periods. It reaches maximum queue lengths of 42 vehicles in the morning peak hour on the Highgate Hill arm of the junction, with an average delay per vehicle of three-and-a-half minutes.

We have carried out extensive modelling to understand the impact the new relief road would have when combined with the proposed closure of the Cranbrook Road arm of the crossroads. These show an improvement in traffic flow – even when allowing for the new homes on site – with immediate and ongoing reductions in delays and queuing.

## If nothing is done

By contrast, if nothing is done, by 2033 the peak period queue lengths on both the Highgate Hill and Cranbrook Road arms of the junction could increase to in the region of 100 vehicles, with average delays predicted to reach an unacceptable nine minutes per vehicle as a result.



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## Further information

The revised submission can be found at [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/residents/planning). It includes revisions/additional information to the Environmental Statement, and responses to many of the issues raised in the consultation to date. The application reference number is 19/02025/HYBRID.

Further details about the proposals can also be found at [www.hawkhurstreliefroadandhomes.co.uk](http://www.hawkhurstreliefroadandhomes.co.uk).