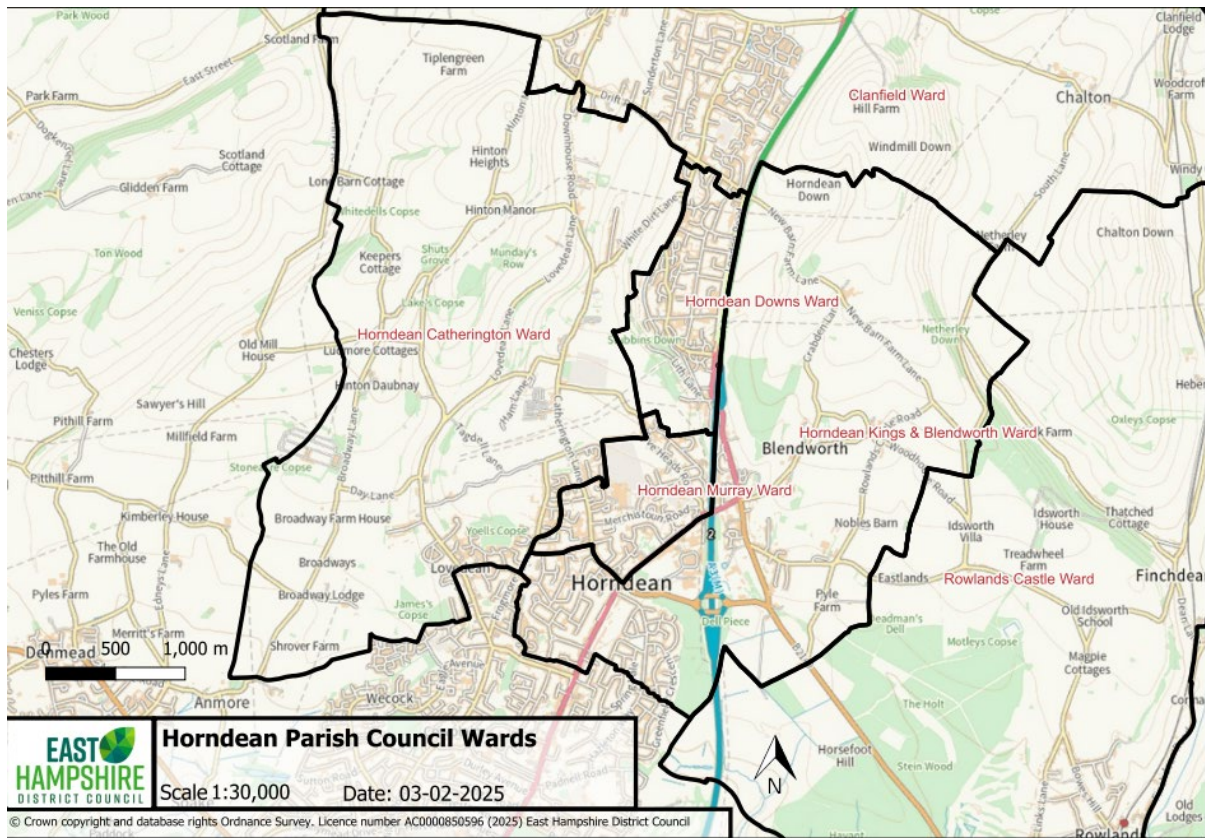


Horndean Parish Council

Five Year Strategic Vision 2025-2030

1. Horndean in Context

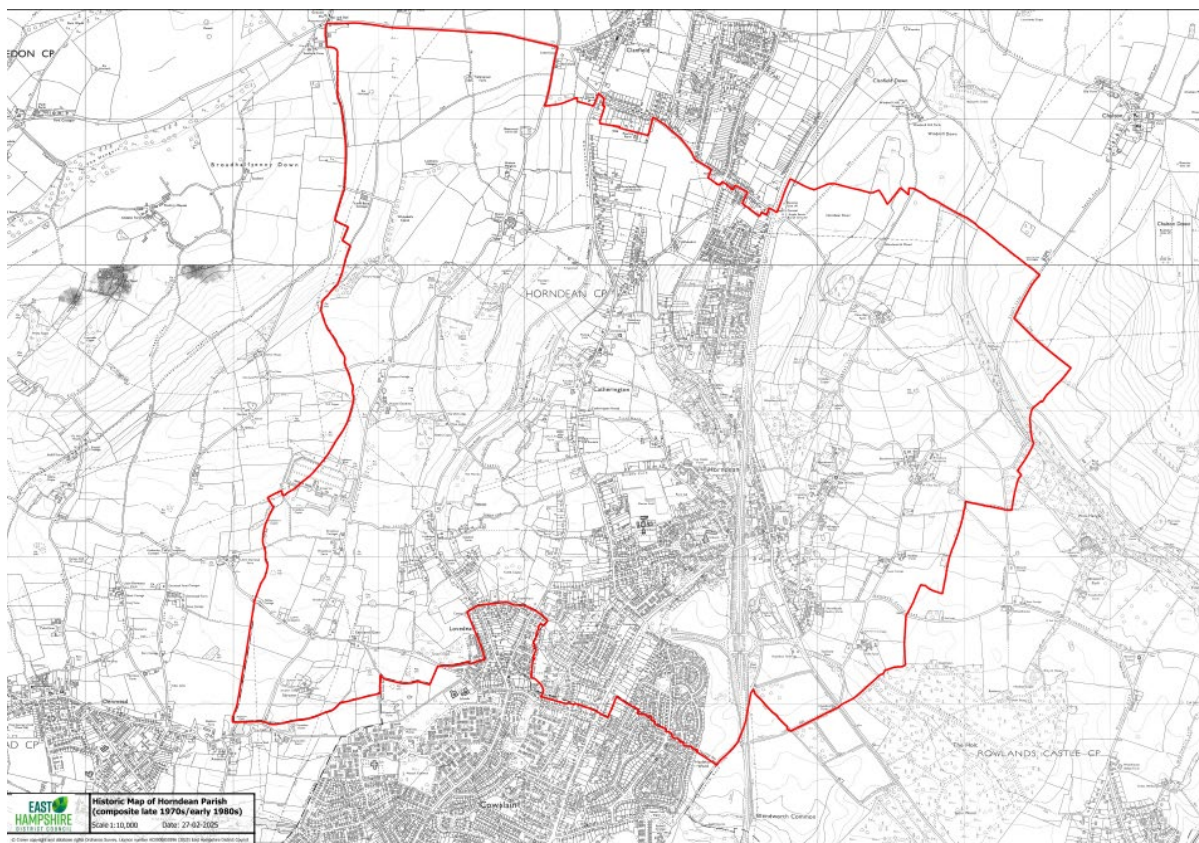


Horndean Parish today. Map courtesy of EHDC

Although under one overall Horndean umbrella, there is a diverse collection of communities, who may not primarily think of themselves as being in Horndean. Residents of Catherington can see themselves as being entirely distinct and hold strong views on sustaining settlement gaps. Those living in the north of Horndean (Downs Ward) may feel torn between looking south to Horndean and north to Clanfield. As they will be sited beyond the southern A3 junction, residents of the new developments known as Land East of Horndean (LEOH) may feel they are separate from any settlement. There is much to be done to ensure that the whole community can feel a level of unity, whilst respecting and maintaining the settlements and the communities within.

The Horndean Parish Council area contains a population of around 13,500, in 5,600 households (approximately 2.4 persons per household).¹ This represents a massive increase versus 50 years ago, when the Parish was predominantly rural, with clear divides between settlement areas.

¹ Draft EHDC Local Plan for 2021-2040 quoting the 2021 census



Horndean Parish at the end of the 1970s. Map courtesy of EHDC

There is good access to the road networks but, within Horndean, there are significant traffic problems, including congestion, speeding and limited parking. There is also good access to our nature reserves and parks and to the countryside generally, including the South Downs National Park.

There is no public transport link for the 3 miles from Horndean to Rowlands Castle railway station, but there are some bus services heading north toward Petersfield and south toward Havant or Cosham and Portsmouth.

There are a number of convenience stores in and around Horndean, but for a “weekly shop”, there is only the Morrisons on the edge of Horndean.

The centre of Horndean has some catering outlets, small shops and a doctors’ surgery, but the shopping precinct is commonly seen as an outdated “eyesore” and lacks either an anchor to draw people in, or specialist shops to keep their interest. In any event, very limited parking would make this difficult. A heavily graffiti’d BT exchange also towers over the centre.

There is a level of Anti-Social Behaviour – by both young and old – from drug use and vandalism (including to the only public toilets in Horndean, now closed by EHDC) to speeding. The lack of youth provision may explain some of this, but speeders will only realistically be checked by monitoring and by police intervention.

Overall, we have retained many of the positives of being a rural settlement, but these are increasingly combined with a number of the negatives of being a rapidly expanding, and increasingly urbanised, one.

2. The Changing Landscape

Recent Government proposals are expected to replace existing County, Borough and District government with very different models, changing the whole landscape. Locally, the new Hampshire and The Solent Strategic Authority will be one of the first to be created, under the proposed programme of devolution. It will take on some powers from central government, giving a more local focus and some from existing authorities, which may reduce the local focus.

At the same time, there is a programme of Local Government Reorganisation, addressing the level below this new Strategic Authority. In our area, we will see Hampshire County Council (HCC) and East Hants District Council (EHDC) replaced by new, and potentially more remote “unitary” authorities. All will be larger than existing District and Borough Councils, with a target population of 500,000 or more.

These changes will be happening in a very short timescale, with consultations on the new unitaries closing in March 2025 and on the Strategic Authority by April 2025. Decisions are due to be made in time for elections to be held in May 2026, with the new structures fully in place by April 2027.

New residential developments will continue to be a significant issue for Horndean. The latest draft EHDC Local Plan contained 443 additional homes, on top of 981 outstanding permissions. With more recently increased government targets, this number could exceed 2,000 households and 5,000 additional residents, taking Horndean's totals up by over a third to 7,500 households and to 18,500 residents.

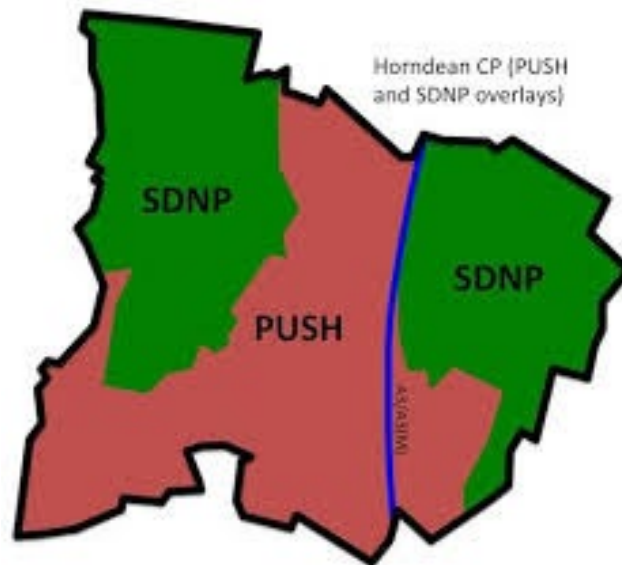
With a “tilted balance” being used in deciding on applications, local designations, such as “local gaps” are unlikely to outweigh the “benefits” of development, as “new housing” is taken as a benefit in its own right, before CIL money, additional open space and other infrastructure improvements are taken into account.

It appears that every site identified as “developable” in the “Land Availability Assessment” is at risk of allocation in the updated Local Plan and/or being granted planning permission for speculative applications.

The next 3 years must be seen as a golden opportunity for speculative development applications, as virtually all local planning authorities are both short of government targets and – at least to some degree – distracted by Local Government Reorganisation.

Such growth in developments can be seen as a threat, as it cannot be accommodated without massive infrastructure improvement in transport, GP Surgeries, education, youth provision and more, but it can also bring opportunities to improve things for Horndean.

At present, developments are largely restricted to the strip alongside the A3M, due to the South Downs National Park area.



3. Some Issues for Horndean Parish Council to seek to address

As Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation begins to impact, we must lobby and represent local views. We must also identify any current EHDC and HCC assets that we feel must be preserved by the incoming bodies, or which we might usefully take on – to maintain existing services, enhance them, maintain open space and reduce the prospect of opportunistic development – again provided that doing so makes financial sense and is within the Parish Council's capacity and capability.

The Parish Council is a statutory planning consultee and must also continue to engage early with residential (and commercial) developers, getting them to public meetings for the public to engage too. Discussing improvements to their proposals that may enhance Horndean and limit negative impacts.

Developer contributions (CIL) can be used to enhance existing infrastructure. We can draw on Neighbourhood CIL as a matter of course (up to 15% can be drawn on directly).

The Parish Council should establish whether it is worth the cost of developing a Neighbourhood Plan to directly secure 25%, instead of 15% of CIL funding. A Neighbourhood Plan would also need to be taken into account by the planning authority, provided it is less than 5 years old and meets local housing requirements.

In the same way that land, and other assets, may be released by Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation, any assets arising from residential developments may be considered for adoption by the Parish Council, if they add to local amenities, reduce the risk of further development, or both – again provided that doing so makes financial sense and is within the Parish Council's capacity and capability (both officer and member).

The Parish Council must continue its efforts to improve the more urban parts of Horndean, both directly and through the work of the Horndean Improvement Project

and its Horndean Forum, addressing long standing problems to improve the village, including:

- Encouraging businesses to fully play their part in the village centre,
- Pressuring authorities and utility companies to address flooding issues
- Lobbying to improve car parking and general public amenities
- Working with the Police to address Speeding issues
- Working with others to improve bus services, including to allow access to Rowlands Castle station and to connect new developments to the rest of Horndean and beyond.
- Supporting the creation of youth provision in the Parish.

The Parish Council should seek to enhancing halls and other venues, with schools, HCA and others and work to influence infrastructure improvements, including doctors' surgeries, schools, drainage and pedestrian and cycle routes

There is no doubt that people want to get out more, both cycling and walking. This has been recognised in strategies pursued by County, District and Parish Council.

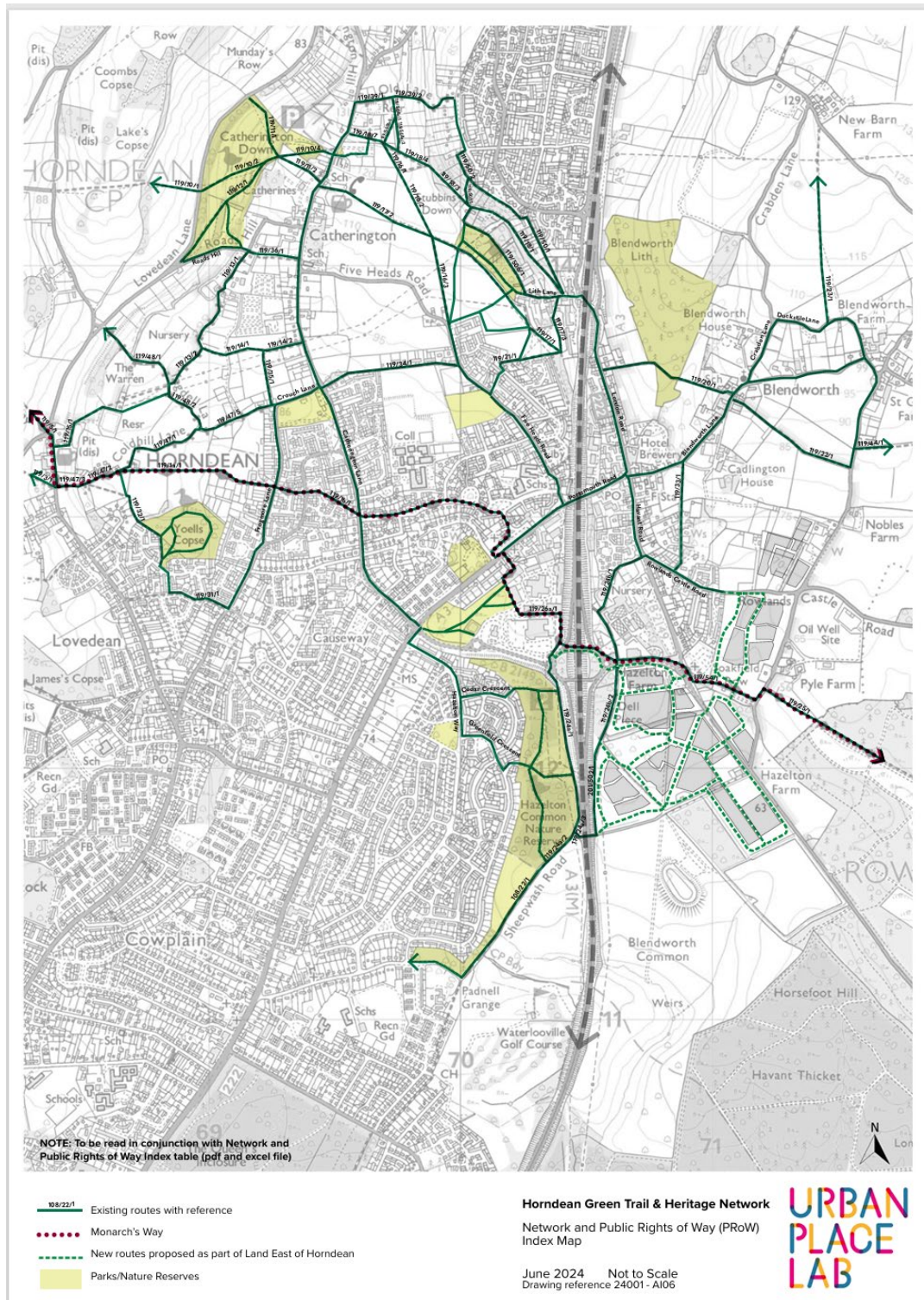
The Parish Council has supported local volunteers maintaining footpaths, is an active stakeholder in the Havant Thicket Reservoir Project, which should offer more walking and cycling trails, educational and recreational opportunities, including a new Visitor Centre.

The Parish Council already looks after a large number of parks and nature reserves and other open spaces, amounting to around 150 acres and must continue to lead, and coordinate, efforts to preserve and enhance our rural setting, protecting and improving our open spaces, nature reserves and parks, thereby offering both structured and natural assets.



The recently upgraded Jubilee Play Area in Horndean – part of a programme

But even more can be done to make cycling and walking more attractive and accessible, to encourage visits and to move people from cars, including building on our current work on the Parish Council's own Green Trail & Heritage Network.



Some of the Rights Of Way being opened up by the Green Trail & Heritage Project



Recent work to make Catherington Lith a more accessible and interesting destination

It has never been more important for Horndean Parish Council not only to continue its "day job", but also to engage with developers and other public bodies, as the local, apolitical and independent voice of Horndean, both during the change process and in the new world, making its increasing scale and voice count. All of this work is led by volunteer Parish Councillors, who seek to act in the best interests of Horndean.

Although low on numbers, we have a committed and enthusiastic cohort of Councillors, supported by a strong team of officers and volunteers who look after our current assets to make Horndean a better place to visit, to live and to work, building a stronger local community and establishing a greater feeling of cohesion notably across Catherington and Downs Wards and the new developments, including LEOH.

All of this will be most effectively accomplished by further improving relationships and joint working with stakeholders, including other councils and public bodies and by cultivating the new, higher tier, authorities