

Northchapel Parish Plan

Version 3

February 2026

Introduction

The Parish Council is pleased to present an updated version of the Northchapel Parish Plan. Originally published in December 2009, the Plan remains a vital document that outlines our community's aspirations for the future, identifies current challenges, and proposes strategies to address them. It also serves to inform external agencies of Northchapel's intentions within the framework of the South Downs National Park Authority.

This updated Plan reflects our achievements to date and sets out our goals for the next five years. It will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of our parish.

Northchapel continues to thrive, with a well-regarded primary school (rated Good by Ofsted in July 2023), a vibrant Village Hall, and a valued Village Shop and Post Office. Our aim is to build on the excellent work of local community groups to ensure Northchapel remains a welcoming and sustainable home for current and future generations.

Core Objectives (as established in 2009)

- Ensure the provision of appropriate and affordable housing to meet future needs.
- Improve transport links to nearby towns.
- Enhance leisure facilities for younger residents.
- Advocate for effective traffic speed control throughout the village.

Background

The original Parish Plan was developed in response to the Government's Rural White Paper (2000), which encouraged communities to articulate their priorities within the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Since the establishment of the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) in 2010, the planning policies for Northchapel are included in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Parish Council actively engages with SDNPA consultations and receives regular policy updates.

This Plan is intended to be a living document, regularly updated and used as a reference by all stakeholders.

Geographical Location & History

Northchapel is located in the north-west corner of Sussex, just south of the Surrey border. Historically a chapelry of Petworth, it became a separate parish in the late 17th century.

Covering approximately 3,500 acres, the parish lies predominantly on Low Weald clay, with the western boundary rising to the greensand hills of Blackdown—the highest point in Sussex at 280m. The entire parish is now within the South Downs National Park.

The landscape reflects centuries of rural development, with small fields, woodlands, and a history of industries such as ironworking, glassmaking, and brickmaking. The village developed around the green and church, extending along the A283. Architectural highlights include timber-framed houses, Georgian and Victorian buildings, and the Toll House. The Parish Church of St Michael & All Angels, rebuilt in the 19th century, is a central feature.

Despite some infill development and increased traffic, Northchapel retains its rural character.

Housing & Environment

The most recent housing development was St Michael's Close. Most planning applications now involve extensions or conversions.

Land south of the village, near the sewage works, has been identified for potential development under the LDS. Any new housing must include adequate parking to prevent congestion.

Development must remain proportionate to the village's scale and infrastructure to avoid social and environmental strain.

Chichester District Council manage the planning applications on behalf of South Downs National Park Authority.

Pre-School and Primary Education

Northchapel Primary School plays a vital role in community sustainability. It was rated Good by Ofsted in July 2023.

Little Oaks Nursery provides excellent early years education for children aged 2–4.

The school is committed to building on its success and actively encourages local families to enrol. It benefits from an active PTA and excellent facilities, including a swimming pool.

Transport

Current bus services do not adequately support commuters to Midhurst and Haslemere, leading to reliance on private vehicles and increased road congestion.

School Bus (Route 422): Operated by Stagecoach South, this service connects Northchapel to Midhurst Rother College during term time.

Book-a-Bus: A flexible, on-demand service available via the Ride Pingo app or by phone.

Voluntary Drivers: Local volunteers assist residents with transport to medical appointments. Contact the Parish Clerk for details.

Local taxi services are also available.

Telecommunications

There have been several applications for mobile phone masts. While improved coverage is welcomed, concerns remain about visual impact and safety. The community supports mast-sharing among providers to minimise disruption.

Crime & Emergency Services

Northchapel is considered a low-crime area. A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) is assigned to the village, though response times can be slow due to distance.

Fire and ambulance services are primarily provided from Petworth and Haslemere, with additional support from Guildford and Chichester during serious incidents.

Major hospitals include: Royal Surrey (Guildford), St Richard's (Chichester), Haslemere Hospital (minor injuries, weekdays).

Village Facilities

Village Hall: Hosts regular activities including fitness classes, dog training, lunch clubs, and the annual Flower & Vegetable Show.

Playground: Located near the Village Hall, recently upgraded with a new slide.

Sports Club: Offers football, stoolball, and netball. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) opened in June 2025, with online booking in development.

Youth Club: For ages 9–15, meets during term time.

Working Men's Club: Located on Pipers Lane, hosts darts, music nights, quizzes, and bingo.

Allotments: 23 plots east of the A283, with a waiting list. Members participate in village events.

Village Events

Village Fair: Held annually in July, organised by volunteers from the School, Sports Club, and Church.

Flower & Vegetable Show: Hosted by the Church, includes crafts, photography, baking, and more.

Bonfire & Fireworks: Held in October, managed by community volunteers.

Running Club: Meets Saturdays at 9am, hosts an annual Santa Dash fundraiser.

Parish Church

St Michael & All Angels Church serves the entire parish and is part of a united benefice with Ebernoe and Lurgashall. Though currently without a rector, services continue thanks to visiting clergy and dedicated Church Wardens.

The Church publishes the Parish News, a key communication tool for Northchapel and Ebernoe. It also hosts bellringing, choir performances, and flower arranging.

Local Services & Businesses

The Half Moon Pub: Offers music nights, quizzes, and darts.

Village Shop & Post Office: A vital community hub offering lottery, PayPoint, mobile top-ups, COOK meals, fine wines, groceries, fresh produce, hot drinks, snacks, and 'Free From' products.

Opening Hours: Mon–Fri: 6am–8pm, Sat: 7am–8pm, Sun: 8am–4pm.

Other Businesses: Coal yard (family-run), car sales, haulage company (Hortons Farm).

Road Safety

Traffic volume and speed on the A283 are major concerns, particularly for pedestrians and residents exiting driveways. Hills and bends reduce visibility, increasing risk.

A community-led Speed Watch initiative is underway to collect data for future traffic calming measures.

A proposal is in consultation to reduce the speed limit on Pipers Lane to 20mph from the A283 junction past the school, with a 30mph zone extending eastward.

Future planning must prioritise road safety and allocate funding for effective traffic management.

New 20MPH zone from Junction with A283 on Pipers Lane, down to 50M past the entrance to the Village Hall. 40MPH zone ended from 50M past the entrance to the Village Hall to 200M past the turning for Frith Wood.

Further information

Parish Council	https://www.northchapel-pc.org.uk/
Chichester District Council	https://www.chichester.gov.uk/
Northchapel Primary School & Little Oaks Pre-school	https://www.northchapel.w-sussex.sch.uk/
Stagecoach	https://www.stagecoachbus.com/
Book A Bus	https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travel-and-public-transport/bus-travel/plan-your-journey/bus-it/book-a-bus/
Sussex Police	https://www.sussex.police.uk/
Northchapel Village Hall	https://www.northchapelvillagehall.co.uk/
St Michael's Church	https://northchapelebernoe.co.uk/st-michaels-northchapel/
Village Post Office	<u>Northchapel Post Office</u>

Document History

Date	Version	Details
December 2009	1	Original Parish Plan
August 2025	2	Updated to reflect current status
February 2026	3	Updated to include recent changes to 20MPH zone; addition of website links; Moved actions to separate document