

Community Facilities Evidence Report

for Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan



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Audit of Community Facilities

An audit of community facilities in Fawkham Parish is set out below.

Guidance provided to Parish Councils by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) for their 2021 audit of community facilities states:

“The survey is only intended to include services and facilities within the confines of the settlement, or those which are safely accessible and within reasonable walking distance [and] have a particular link with the settlement”¹.*

**This is normally considered to be within 400m of the settlement area centre”².*

In relation to the District Council’s definition, Fawkham Parish has no defined settlement confines in an adopted development plan as it is washed over by the Green Belt. Fawkham is not a single linear hamlet that stretches continuously as a contiguous built-up area with a substantially built-up frontage. Rather, it comprises three distinct clusters of development within/adjoining the valley which make up the hamlet: Fawkham Green, Baldwins Green/Castle Hill and a small area by Fawkham Primary School/Village Hall. Consequently there is no obvious settlement centre or cluster of facilities from which a 400m distance can be measured.

None of the facilities listed is safely accessible and within a reasonable walking distance of the majority of the Parish’s c.230 dwellings due to the nature of the roads and the lack of footways or cycle paths. However, in practice, some residents will walk to some facilities along the road carriageway, despite safety concerns. The number of dwellings within 400m in terms of road carriageway distance (measured from the curtilage) of each facility has been assessed and is included in this report. This represents the maximum number of dwellings which are within a reasonable walking distance, albeit not necessarily via a safely accessible means.

Despite the fact that the dispersed community facilities do not meet the definition set by Sevenoaks District Council, and are not generally accessible by sustainable modes of transport, those submitted as part of the audit to SDC in 2021 are listed below:

Fawkham CE Primary School

The Rising Sun Inn

Fawkham Village Hall

Mobile library outside the pub, once a fortnight for 30 minutes

St Mary’s Church

2 x bottle banks and 1x charity clothing recycling bank within Corinthian Sports Club car park

¹ SDC audit 2021 covering email 8.10.21

² SDC audit 2018 covering letter 6.1.17

Since the 2021 audit, a small cafe has opened in the Parish.

Sevenoaks District Council identifies eight services and facilities as key to settlement sustainability³. Fawkham Parish has only two of these key facilities: a village hall and a primary school. Details of these, together with the other facilities within the Parish, are given below.

Details are also given of the distances to the closest community facilities and services which are absent from Fawkham but which are considered by SDC as key to settlement sustainability: bus service, rail service, doctors' surgery, Post Office, small convenience store and recreation ground/park.

Details of Facilities within Fawkham Parish, considered by SDC as key to sustainability

Fawkham CE Primary School

- Fawkham CE Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school with a Planned Admissions Number (PAN) of 15 (0.5 form entry) and a total capacity of 105 pupils.
- Ofsted conducted a short inspection in November 2023 which judged that the school continued to be good and that safeguarding was effective.
- The information contained below has been included after discussions with the head teacher and the Local Education Authority, Kent County Council (KCC).
- The school has close links with St. Mary's Church, and the Rector of the Parish of Fawkham and Hartley is traditionally a Governor of the School, taking an active role in the school's daily worship pattern and planning.
- The school is full in all but two year groups, with around 30% of pupils living in Fawkham Parish. Others live in nearby villages including New Ash Green and Longfield.
- Two of the 17 members of staff lives in Fawkham; all staff travel by car.
- Approximately three families walk their children to school; the remainder travel by car.
- 4 hectares of woodland owned by the school adjoins the school site and every class spends an afternoon a week in 'Forest School', which includes being taught about local wildlife, reflecting the rural nature of school and its setting.
- The school operates under the Admissions Policy of KCC. This includes place allocation criteria of nearness of children's homes to school, measured in a straight line using the National Land and Property Gazetteer (NLPG) address point. Some addresses in New Ash Green are closer in a straight line to the school than some addresses in Fawkham Parish. The school also operates a sibling link policy which can affect admissions. It is known that some people move to Fawkham specifically to obtain a place for their child at the school.
- In 2020, one pupil with a Fawkham Parish address close to the Parish boundary with Longfield did not obtain a place at the school and was held on a waiting list. A place became available ahead of the start of the school year. This was unusual and most children with an address within Fawkham Parish currently do obtain a place at the school. However, this is unlikely to continue to

³ Sevenoaks District Settlement Hierarchy 2022, Table 7

be the case following completion of two housing developments within the Parish which have planning permission at Salts Farm depot and Fawkham Manor. Those at Fawkham Manor will be close to the school and may displace some who are located further from the school. Those at Salts Farm depot are considered unlikely to be close enough to guarantee places.

- Kent County Council has advised that currently there is a surplus of primary places across Sevenoaks District, and so they would need to be very certain of new forecasted demand before making a planning decision to commission more primary places. KCC advise that a key factor that determines whether an existing school can be expanded is the physical size of the site. In the opinion of the Area Education Officer (North Kent), the site size of Fawkham CE Primary School would make it unlikely that KCC would look to expand the school, even if there was new housing in the vicinity, and that there are other schools nearby which have sites that could better accommodate an expansion.
- The school feels it has insufficient space for playgrounds, especially before school when the playground needs to be used as a car park by parents dropping children at school. Neither KCC nor the school has plans or proposals to address this. KCC has not identified any other issues which need to be actioned.
- The headteacher has advised the school's PTA is raising funds for an inclusive adventure playground, both to support learning and for having fun.
- There have been long standing concerns over the 40mph speed limit outside the school; the school is very pleased that Fawkham Parish Council has obtained agreement from KCC to a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph outside the school, the implementation of which is awaited at the date of this report. Minor accidents, with and without personal injury, regularly occur outside the school.
 - KCC traffic counts from 2019 showed an average weekday volume of 3,397 vehicles, and 85th percentile speeds of 33.1mph northwards/33.3mph southwards outside the school site.
 - Valley Road in this location has several blind bends and signage for the school is not visible until close to the school.
 - The main playground is used as a car park/drop off area during school run times, when it is unavailable for use by pupils. The village hall car park is also used at these times, and a pathway has been created by FPC from the car park to the school with a locked gate providing entry to the school grounds.
 - There is a footway which commences on the opposite side of the road to the school and runs southwards for 0.5 miles, terminating to the north of Michaels Lane. There is no footway or verge to the north of the school.
- 13 dwellings are within 400m of the school, although it is only safely accessible via sustainable transport from seven of those dwellings due to the lack of a footway.

Fawkham Village Hall

- Fawkham Village Hall is a registered charity of which Fawkham Parish Council is the sole trustee. The hall was rebuilt in 1989 with funds raised by residents, when the charity was established.
- It is hired to regular users for clubs and classes and also to ad hoc users for one-off events; a reduced fee is charged to residents.
- The hall is used every week day by six regular hirers for 13.75 hours a week (as at September 2022) with activities including adult dance, karate, taekwondo, children's dance and furniture restoration. It is also used for Parish Council and other meetings, as a polling station when required, plus ad hoc hires for birthday parties and other events, especially at the weekends.

- The hall's income is currently sufficient to meet its running costs.
- It was extensively refurbished in 2020. The hall is not used to full capacity and there are no plans to expand it in size. At the time of writing the hall is closed for structural repairs and is expected to reopen in spring 2024.
- The hall has a car park with 24 spaces (including one disabled space) plus 14 spaces reserved for the residents of 1-7 Six Acre Cottages. The car park generally provides sufficient parking for hall users and residents and is also used, by arrangement with the PC, for drop off and collection during school run times.
- It also has three cycle parking hoops, installed as part of the 2012 Olympics legacy, although these are not observed to be used.
- 14 dwellings are within 400m of the village hall, although it is only safely accessible via sustainable transport from seven of those dwellings due to the lack of a footway.

Details of the closest facilities and services considered by SDC as key to sustainability, not found in Fawkham

Shown below are details of services and facilities defined by Sevenoaks District Council as key to settlement sustainability but which are located outside Fawkham Parish, with the distance to them shown from the three clusters of development within the Parish. None can be reached by sustainable means of transport.

Doctors

There are three GP practices which accept Fawkham residents, depending on location of residential address within the parish:

- Jubilee Medical Group, which has a surgery in Longfield DA3 7QD and also at New Ash Green DA3 8RH, with the team of doctors and nurses covering both surgeries. The catchment area of this surgery covers Fawkham Parish addresses, with the exception of Gabriel Spring Road East at the eastern end of the Parish. Distance from:
 - Fawkham Green - 2.41 km (1.5 miles)
 - Village Hall - 3.22 km (2.0 miles)
 - Baldwins Green - 3.06 km (1.9 miles)
- West Kingsdown Medical Centre, TN15 6EJ, accepts patients from Fawkham. Distance from:
 - Fawkham Green - 3.54 km (2.2 miles)
 - Village Hall - 4.99 km (3.1 miles)
 - Baldwins Green - 6.60 km (4.1 miles)
- Braeside Surgery, Farningham DA4 0JU, only accepts patients from the few addresses at the very south of the parish; the catchment area does not extend as far as Fawkham Green.
- Distance from:
 - Fawkham Green - 4.83 km (3.0 miles)

- Village Hall - 6.12 km (3.8 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 8.21 km (5.1 miles)

Small Store

The closest small convenience store is located in the Parade, Hartley (Costcutter) or New Ash Green Centre (the Co-operative), depending on a dwelling's location within the Parish. The distance from the three clusters of development are:

- Fawkham Green - 2.41 km (1.5 miles)
- Village Hall - 2.74 km (1.7 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 0.97 km (0.6 miles)

Post Office

The closest Post Office is located on the Ash Road in Hartley, Station Road in Longfield (McColls) or in New Ash Green Centre (McColls), depending on a dwelling's location within the Parish:

- Fawkham Green - 2.41 km (1.5 miles)
- Village Hall - 2.74 km (1.7 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 1.13 km (0.7 miles)

Public Transport: Bus and Rail

There are no public transport services in the Parish. Details of the closest services are provided in the evidence report Sustainable Transport.

Recreation Ground/Park

The closest recreation ground or park is located at Longfield Community Park in Longfield or The Pavilion in New Ash Green depending on a dwelling's location within the Parish:

- Fawkham Green - 2.74 km (1.7 miles)
- Village Hall - 3.22 km (2.0 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 1.45 km (0.9 miles)

Details of other Facilities within Fawkham Parish

Rising Sun Inn

- This public house has a bar and a restaurant.
- Its opening hours are 12pm-11pm every day. At the time of writing, the pub is closed on Mondays for maintenance.
- There are five guest rooms.
- The pub changed hands in 2023 and subsequently underwent refurbishment.
- The landlords have advised there are no plans for any changes at the pub, nor any issues which a Neighbourhood Plan could help to address.
- 55 dwellings are within 400m of the public house, although it is only considered safely accessible from three of due to the lack of a footway.

St. Mary's Church

- The Ecclesiastical Parish is combined with Hartley.
- At St. Mary's, up to two Holy Communion services are held per month on Sunday mornings and Morning Prayer takes place on Tuesdays and Thursdays, as well as **the usual festival services. It is a busy church for** funerals, weddings and school services such as the Fawkham Primary and Steephill Independent School carol services, Easter services and leavers' services.
- Thirty people on average gather at each of the Sunday services with approximately three attendees being from Fawkham Parish itself. It is important to note that the Ecclesiastical Parish of Fawkham and Hartley is part of the Rural North West Kent Group of Churches which also includes Longfield Parish and Ash cum Ridley Parish. This means that all three parishes are encouraged to attend services throughout the Group and not just at one particular church.
- The church building is sometimes used for other functions such as choir practice, meetings of the charity the Friends of Fawkham Church and occasionally Rural North West Kent children's groups have activities at the Church, either outside in the meadow or in the church, for example Ash Saplings. The Church is an integral part of the annual Fawkham and Hartley Church Parish Fete which traditionally takes place on its meadow every summer to raise funds for the Ecclesiastical Parish.
- Demand is high for burials at St. Mary's and for the interment of ashes. It is currently anticipated that there is space for burials in accordance with the right of burial rules for the next 10 - 15 years, although this is difficult to assess. After this time it is expected further land for burials will be required, and a further Garden of Remembrance is also likely to be required. The Church owns further land adjoining the current burial ground and Garden of Remembrance which is anticipated to be sufficient for perhaps 30 years, although this would be required to be consecrated with the consent of the Diocese of Rochester.
- In addition to its use by church visitors, the church car park is used as a facility for walkers and dog walkers to park their cars when walking in the surrounding area. It is also used by Steephill Independent School, by agreement, for parents to park at drop off and pick up as the school does not have its own parking ground. The surface of the car park is in need of repair but the Church itself does not have the funds to pay for this. There is an ongoing issue with the car park being used on occasion as a meeting place for the exchange of illegal drugs and use of gas canisters, which has been reported to the police and community warden. **The maintenance and upkeep of the church car park is an expense which the church struggles to afford; FPC contributed Community Infrastructure Funding towards resurfacing in 2023.**

- 35 dwellings are within 400m of this facility, although only two of these can safely access it due to the lack of a footway.

Mobile Library

- This service is provided by Kent County Council.
- The mobile library visits for 30 minutes every other week, parking outside the Rising Sun Inn.
- The librarian advises there are two regular users (was three pre-Covid pandemic).
- 55 dwellings are within 400m of the public house, although it is only considered safely accessible from 3 of due to the lack of a footway.

Recycling Facility

- Two mixed bottle banks provided by SDC, and one charity clothing bank are situated within Corinthian Sports Club's car park.
- 10 dwellings are within 400m of this facility, all of which can access it safely.

Electric Vehicle Charging Point

- An electric vehicle charging point available for public use can be found at Brands Hatch Place Hotel.

Outdoor Sports and Leisure Facility

- Details can be found in the Open Spaces Evidence Report.

Cafe

- A small cafe operates from Speedgate Farm serving breakfast, lunch, tea, coffee and cake. Opening hours are Monday and Tuesday 8.30-2.30, Wednesday to Saturday 8.30-4.30 and Sunday 9-4.
- 20 dwellings are within 400m with access via the highway (no footway),

Details of other important facilities, not found in Fawkham Parish

Shown below are details of the closest other important facilities, although not considered by SDC to be key to sustainability.

Secondary Schools

Kent operates a selective secondary education system.

Longfield Academy is the closest non-selective secondary school, in Longfield, and is part of the Leigh Academy Trust and within Dartford Borough.

- Fawkham Green - 5.63 km (3.5 miles)

- Village Hall - 4.02 (2.5 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 2.41km (1.5 miles)

The closest selective secondary (grammar) schools are in Gravesend (Gravesham BC) and Dartford (Dartford BC):

- Mayfield Grammar (girls) more than 8km (5 miles)
- Gravesend Grammar (boys) more than 8km (5 miles) (Gravesham BC)
- Dartford Grammar School (boys) more than 11 km (7 miles) (Dartford BC)
- Dartford Grammar School for Girls more than 11 km (7 miles) (Dartford BC)
- Wilmington Grammar School for Boys more than 11 km (7 miles) (Dartford BC)
- Wilmington Grammar School for Girls more than 11 km (7 miles) (Dartford BC)

Other Health Facilities

Other health facilities are shown below for completeness, although not considered by SDC as key to sustainability.

The nearest A&E hospital is Darent Valley Hospital DA2 8DA. Distance from:

- Fawkham Green - 10.94 km (6.8 miles)
- Village Hall - 9.66 km (6.0 miles)
- Baldwins Green - 8.05 km (5.0 miles)

The closest dental practices, listed by distance, are:

- New Ash Green Dental Centre DA3 8PR - accepting children aged 17 or under as NHS patients
- Hartley Dental Practice DA3 7EG - accepting children aged 17 or under as NHS patients
- Bupa Dental Clinic DA3 7QZ - not accepting new NHS patients
- Kreate Dental DA4 9HP - not accepting new NHS patients