



# UDIMORE ACTION PLAN

2010-2012

# INTRODUCTION

The Udimore Action Plan has been produced by a group of residents on behalf of the whole village. The group was set up at the request of the Parish Council and has had their support and backing throughout the period of meetings and consultation exercises. This has ensured that all the villagers have had the opportunity to express their opinions as to the contents.

Its production has been funded, in part, by a grant from Rother Local Action Plan Development Programme and it has been endorsed by the Parish Council.

The Plan records a brief history of the village, together with its current identity, and the following key issues which have been identified for action.

Traffic and Transport

Natural Environment-Wild Udimore

Communications

Community Support

Interest Groups

Young Residents' Facilities

The aim will be to implement the key issues in the Plan during the period from January 2010 to December 2012 and progress will be reviewed annually at the village meeting in May. The plan is a working document, subject to periodic re-assessment. We must be clear and transparent in communicating to our fellow residents when we are unable to satisfy their needs.

## THE VILLAGE

Udimore is a small Sussex village which is reputedly the second longest in England. Situated in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, just west of the historic port of Rye, the village sits astride the ridge running between the River Tillingham to the north and the River Brede to the south, providing beautiful views over pastoral Sussex.

The Brede and Tillingham valleys were once seawater estuaries and conduits for cargoes of timber, iron ore, coal and implements. The waterways have, over the last 500 years, been channelled, sluiced and drained, providing broad, fertile valley bottoms for pasture and arable farming. Above, along the ridge, the characteristic Wealden pattern of coppiced woods and seasonal pasture, has hardly been disturbed since pre-historic times.

The identity of the village is primarily rural residential. There are many beautiful old dwellings dating from the 15<sup>th</sup> Century through to the Victorian era and beyond, some of which are of significant architectural and historical interest.

Several working farms exist in the village, producing various crops, sheep, cattle, soft fruit and hops, with one orchard growing apples and pears.



Although there is no village centre and no longer a Post Office, shop, restaurant, garage, or many buses, there is a nursery school, a number of Bed and Breakfast establishments and other small enterprises including several artists who live and work in the village.

In 2008 the population profile was:

- 382 people, occupying 170 households of which those aged
  - 0 to 14 years was 17.3% (66);
  - 15 to 64 years was 58.9% (225);
  - 65 and over was 23.8% (91)

The population has changed little in the last 150 years. In 1851 it was 374 and in 1965 it was 391

The area of the village is 1,171 hectares, with a population density of 0.3 persons per hectare.

## UDIMORE – OUR HISTORY

Evidence has been found at various sites in the area that Neolithic people settled in the Brede and Tillingham valleys and that by 450 BC bloomeries were producing iron ore.

Although there is no record of Romans in our local history, a Bronze Age track from Rye to Uckfield, passing through our village, was certainly used by them. Before the Normans arrived, Danes had rampaged through the countryside and it is possible, in Saxon times, that there was a building on the site of St Mary's Church.

Twenty years after the Norman Conquest, our village is recorded in the Domesday Book under the name of Dodimere – having been severely wasted following the Battle of Hastings. The name was spelt in various ways including Udymer and Uddimer before it settled down to Udimore, its present form.

The oldest building in the village is the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, early Norman church of St Mary The Virgin. The chancel architecture is pure Early English and although modest in size, is unique.



St Mary's Church

Court Lodge was the site of the original Manor and was eventually moved and re-erected at Groombridge in 1912. From medieval times to 17<sup>th</sup> Century, we are fortunate to have some fine old houses, such as Billingham and Knellstone, still in existence.

The village was always basically a farming community, although this has changed with modern farming methods and machinery. With fewer workers, oast houses, barns and cottages now house people of many different callings. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Mill was finally dismantled in 1922 although the Forge still stands. The school was built in 1875, at one time having 90 pupils, but closed in 1970.



Billingham



Knellstone

The recently established Udimore History website, has revealed some fascinating themes, notably the mechanisation of farming and horticulture. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, farms with wealthy absentee owners, which perhaps employed 40-50 workers, are now typically run by the owner with the help of just two or three others. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the face of horticulture changed and hops virtually disappeared, being replaced by high-density apple and pear orchards.

Further investigation into Udimore history will include the inter-related themes of the rise and suppression of the Sussex smuggling tradition, the transportation of Udimore smugglers to Australia, the intensification of rural poverty after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the dramatic outbreak of the “Captain Swing” riots of 1830/31, and the creation of planned emigration schemes from 1837 – 1844 which saw many farm workers and workhouse poor emigrate with their families from Udimore and neighbouring sheep-rearing parishes principally to the great pastoral estates of the McArthur family at Camden Park, New South Wales.

Today modern communications and cyberspace are restoring these long-lost family links. The website [www.udimorehistory.org](http://www.udimorehistory.org) will facilitate such research and contacts.

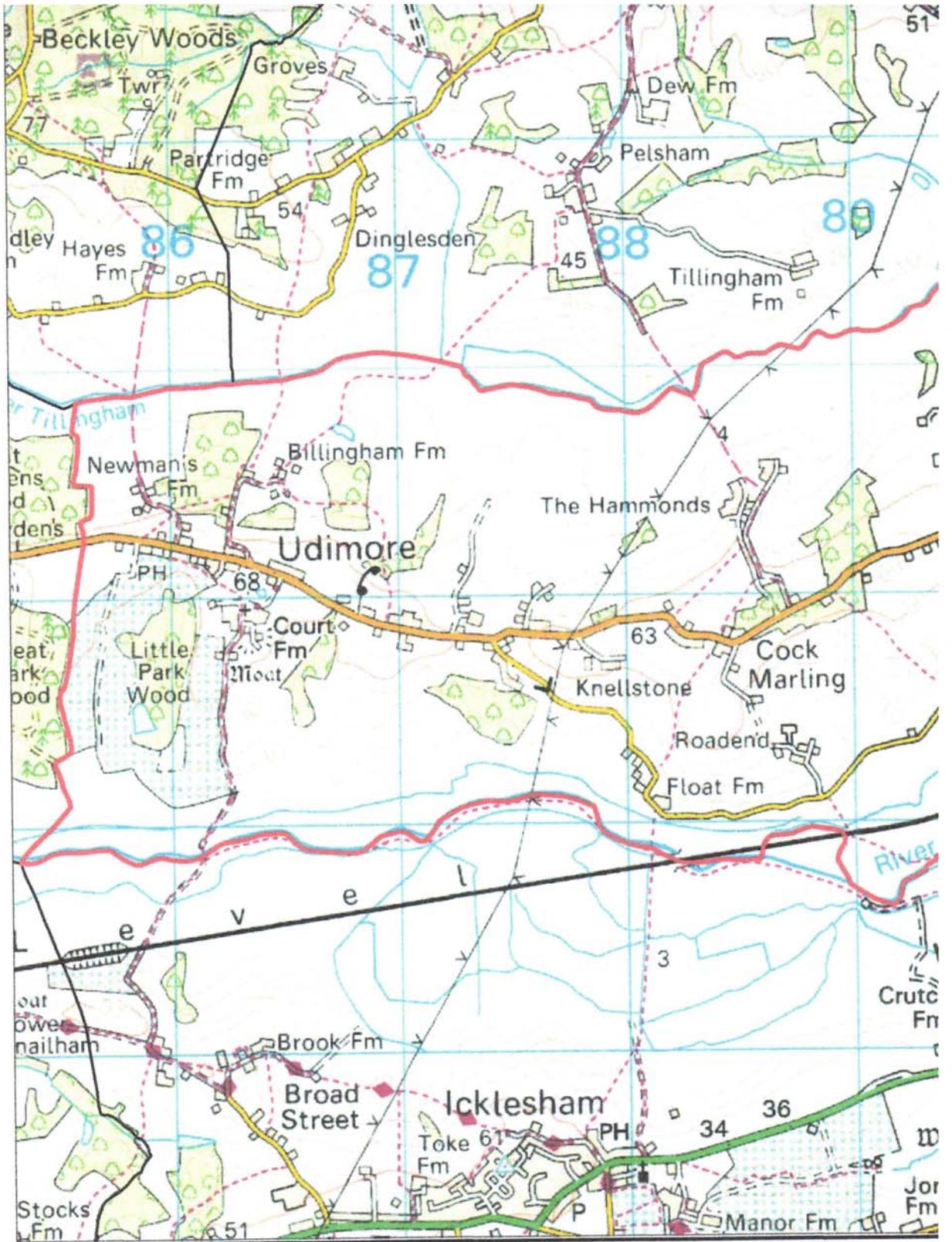


Udimore Road c 1910

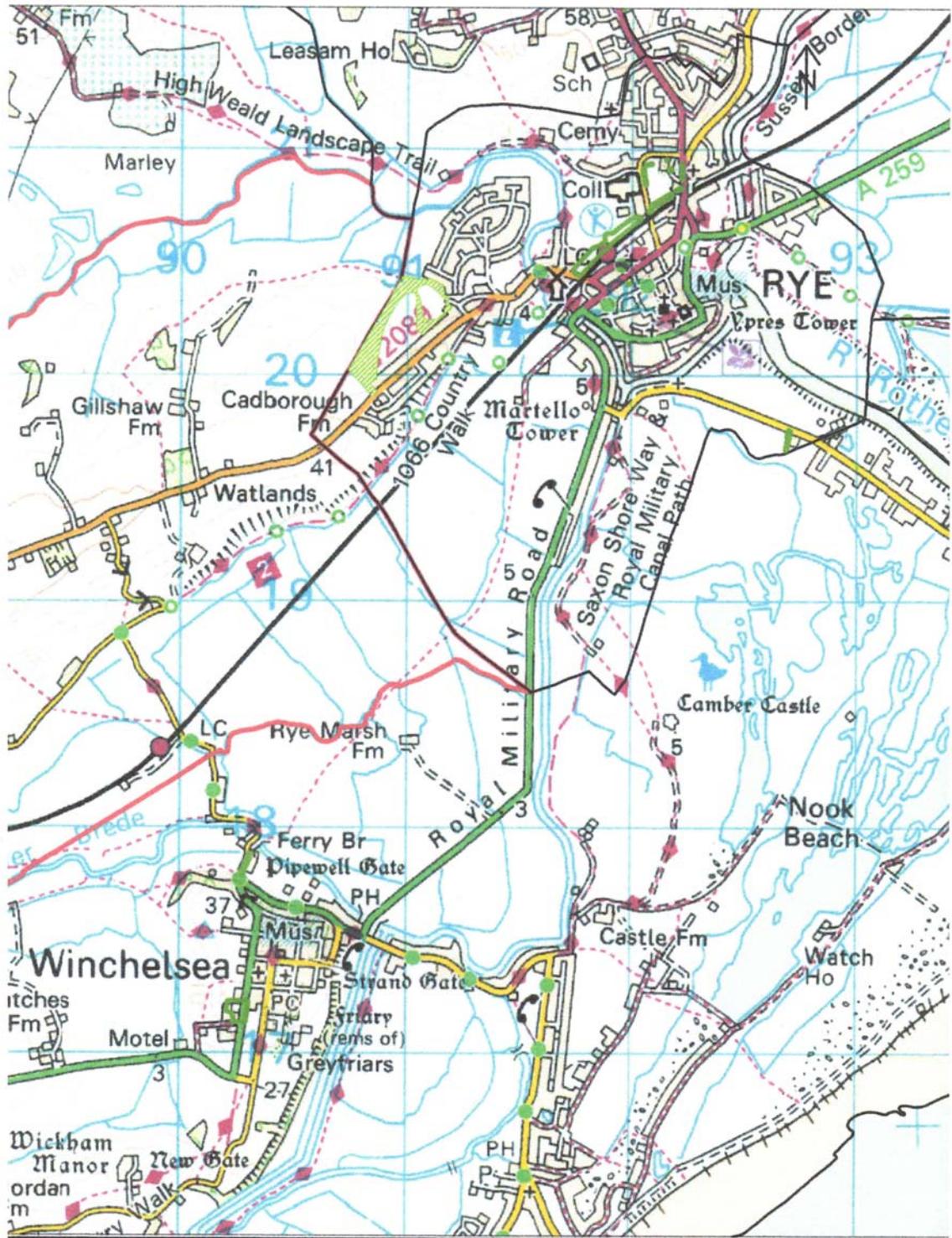


Udimore Mill & Field's House c 1920





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# THE ACTION PLAN

## TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT

### Action 1 Reduce speed and noise on the B2089

- Enforce motor vehicle speed and noise nuisance legislation
- Deal with bad driver behaviour
- Extend the current 40 mph speed limit zone to the boundaries of the parish and reduce the current 40 mph speed limit zone to 30 mph
- Install vehicle activated signs
- Explore ways of improving pedestrian safety

#### How

- Lobby the Police
- Explore Police financial grant availability
- Lobby Police Roads Policing Department
- Lobby East Sussex County Council - ESCC
- Villager use of Speed Indicator Device - SID
- Villager use of speed device with Police

#### Who

- Colin Knight
- Bob Turgoose
- Udimore Parish Councillors
- Local Rother District Councillor

#### When

- Lobbying the police and East Sussex County Council has been in progress for some years and will continue.
- By 2014 is the target for the speed limit reduction programme



## Action 2 Restore the train service at Winchelsea station and the car park

Winchelsea station, which is in the parish of Udimore, has effectively been closed for over a year. The introduction in 2009 of high speed trains from Ashford to London St Pancras has provided residents of Udimore with a very fast route to London. As part of the re-franchising discussions for the rail link to Ashford Marshlink Line Action Group ("MLAG") has made representations to the new franchisee to provide a service to Winchelsea Station.

How

- Pressure new franchisee to introduce stopping or request stops at Winchelsea
- Pressure franchisee to set up the infrastructure for a car park with security systems
- Liaise with other adjacent parishes and MLAG

Who

- Stuart Harland

When

- Discussions have been taking place with the franchisee and MLAG and will continue



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - WILD UDIMORE

In its small area Udimore has many habitats. The ridge, the valley, water meadows, orchards, scattered ancient woodlands, ponds and gardens each provide different conditions for wild plants and animals. As a result Udimore is rich in mammals, birds, reptiles, insects and wild flowers.

The aim is to protect and enhance the natural environment of Udimore

### Action 3 Form the Udimore Wildlife Group

How

- Publish the intention to form the Group with an outline of its aims
- Arrange a public meeting to gather views and seek volunteers

Who

- Colin Knight
- Stella Knight
- Bob Turgoose
- Matthew Denny, an ecologist with strong links to Udimore
- 

When

- By April 2010



## **Action 4            Produce a Bio-diversity Plan**

How

- Carry out a systematic survey of habitats and wildlife in the parish and prepare a bio-diversity map
- Pay particular attention to ponds and watercourses, ancient woodlands and watercourses
- Seek advice from experts and existing groups in Sussex concerned with rare and threatened species

Who

- The Udimore Wildlife Group

When

- By the end of 2010

## **Action 5            Community tree and flower planting**

How

- Establish which landowners wish to be involved and respect their wishes
- Agree with landowners the best practice for wildflower management on their land and nearby
- Explore opportunities for planting wild vegetation especially wild flowers on the roadside
- Encourage collection and redistribution of seeds of annual and biennial wild flowers and plants
- Explore the option of wildflower corridors
- 

Who

- Stella Knight
- Geraldine Edwards
- Bob Turgoose
- Roadside verge landowners

When

- 2010



## Action 6

### **Create a map of footpaths and permissive paths within the parish and ensure they are well marked.**

Udimore has nine miles of bridleways and footpaths within the parish and a long footpath south of the River Brede allows circular walks in the Brede valley. In addition we have permissive footpaths and bridleways along part of the Tillingham valley.

#### How

- Obtain a current map of paths and permissive footpaths from East Sussex County Council and reproduce it in a form suitable for use by walkers
- Carry out an inspection to ensure all footpaths are well marked and not obstructed

#### Who

- The Parish Council are to be asked to produce the map
- Bob Turgoose

#### When

- By Spring 2010



## COMMUNICATIONS

**Action 7**                    **Create a village web site advising villagers of Parish Council matters, including planning applications; local news and events in the village; meetings of interest groups; bus and train and tide timetables; maps of footpaths etc.**

How

- Lobby Rother District Council for completion of the template for village web sites
- Lobby the Parish Council to establish a Udimore web site including the facility to add non Parish Council information, notices etc.

Who

- Nick Bingham

When

- By February 2010

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**Action 8**                    **Explore the support in the village for developing the current Neighbourhood Care Scheme or to form a complimentary scheme or to discuss other ways to help anyone in need especially older or isolated people**

How

- Identify a way forward by forming a small working party
- Carry out a "Needs Assessment Survey"

Who

- Nan Hacking

When

- Working party by March 2010, survey by July 2010

## INTEREST GROUPS

### **Action 9                    Develop the existing historical web site with a view to researching and recording the history of Udimore**

How

- Approach villagers with a view to recording available documents, photographs, publications, interviews and reminiscences, gathered by past and present members of the community.
- Endeavour to collect copies of original documents and provide a secure home for these where thought desirable.
- Website [www.udimorehistory.org](http://www.udimorehistory.org)

Who

- Harold Moores

When

- Currently in progress and will be ongoing throughout the period of the Plan

### **Action 10                    Form a club/society (Udimore Gardeners) for keen gardeners to meet with a view to sharing and furthering their knowledge of horticulture**

How

- Organise an inaugural meeting to agree aims and objectives and publicise widely.
- Set up a programme of meetings/garden visits/visiting speakers as decided by members

Who

- Linda Harland

When

- By April 2010.

## **Action 11**

### **Support the setting up of interest groups**

How

- Publish on the parish web site the proposed formation of any interest groups and put interested parties in contact with one another

Who

- Peter Marshall

When

- On the availability of the parish web site

## **YOUNG RESIDENTS' FACILITIES**

### **Action 12**

#### **Enhance the village playground by the provision of additional equipment and improved facilities**

How

- Lobby the Parish Council
- Support fund raising activities
- Consult with young people and their parents as to their recommendations for equipment

Who

- Peter Marshall

When

- By April 2010



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Udimore Parish Council  
Rother District Council  
Action in Rural Sussex  
Rother Voluntary Action  
Rother Local Strategic Partnership  
Ordnance Survey**