



LANDSCAPE & BIODIVERSITY

Chartham Neighbourhood Plan Topic Paper

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

This document has been prepared by a group of volunteers to help the Chartham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group understand local issues relevant to Landscape and Biodiversity. It also sets out how the group believes the community could seek to address the issues identified through the Chartham Neighbourhood Plan.

Whilst the Steering Group will use this document to inform the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, its findings and recommendations are the views of the volunteer group and not necessarily those of the Steering Group.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This section provides an overview to the issue of landscape and biodiversity and provides a summary of the recommendations of this paper.

Overview

- 1.2. This paper considers the current state of our landscape and biodiversity in Chartham Parish, how negative impacts of development can be mitigated, and how the Parish can best adapt to those aspects which cannot be avoided.
- 1.3. From 14th January until 29th April 2021 the Landscape and Biodiversity Working Group met almost weekly in a virtual capacity, owing to Covid restrictions. They then continued to meet on an ad hoc basis until July 2021. The working group identified the principal issues relating to landscape and biodiversity for the parish, as detailed in this topic paper, and researched the current legal requirements for tackling and mitigating this, what is currently being done, and future Options that could be considered. The future Options include both those that can be directly addressed via the planning process and recommendations that can be taken forward by authorities at all levels and members of the public to address the challenges relating to landscape and biodiversity.
- 1.4. The working group also undertook a survey of the parish in March/April 2021 to gather views on Options to address the issues that have been considered by the working group, together with inviting parishioners to put forward their own suggestions.
- 1.5. Chartham has rich biodiversity and landscape and in seeking sustainability, it is important that they are conserved and protected. For Chartham Parish, the main issues identified have been centred on:
 - Development outside of settlements and the loss of green spaces
 - The degradation of our ability to enjoy the rural setting
 - The increasing loss of trees and hedgerows
 - Poor management of the Great River Stour Valley Basin
 - Harmful impact of development on biodiversity and lack of net biodiversity gain
 - Development damaging the complex landscape which contributes to Chartham's unique sense of place
 - Impacts on biodiversity and landscape not being appropriately mitigated by section 106 agreements
 - Harmful impacts of inappropriate development within the AONB

- Development within the green gap between Chartham and neighbouring settlements degrading the rural landscape

Recommendations

- 1.6. This report concludes by recommending that the following is considered for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan:
1. Policy that identifies and designates sites as Local Green Spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan
 2. Adopts polices set out in the Enforcement Plan
 3. Policy that protects rural roads from the harmful impacts of development
 4. Policy that identifies rural tranquil sites and protects them from the harmful impacts of development
 5. Policy that prevents development from producing inappropriate light pollution
 6. Policy that protects public rights of way from the harmful impacts of development
 7. Policy that protects highly valued viewpoints
 8. Policy that surveys the trees and hedges in the Parish and protects them from the harmful impacts of development
 9. Policy that promotes tree planting across the area as part of development
 10. Policy that prevents development within the River Stour valley basin unless that development benefits the landscape and biodiversity of the valley basin
 11. Policy that improves existing public rights of way to avoid erosion and flooding
 12. Policy that identifies key habitat sites in the Parish and protects them from being harmed by development
 13. Policy that requires net biodiversity gain
 14. Policy to provide criteria for development along the A28 and Shalmsford Street to prevent the impacts of ribbon development
 15. Policy that requires any loss to biodiversity to be replaced
 16. Based on the findings of local consultation, assessment and documentation to include a policy that protects landscape and unique sense of place
 17. Reinforces the policies set out in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026
 18. Policy that requires conditions to mitigate for negative impacts on landscape and biodiversity to be included with all development and to provide biodiversity net gain.

19. Reinforces the need for design codes for development in all areas, including within and without settlements, within and without the AONB and its setting, farmstead extension and development, roads and infrastructure
20. Identifies the importance of the AONB and protects it from the harmful impacts of development
21. Identifies green gaps and protects them from the harmful impacts of development

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. The countryside has evolved over many hundreds of years. It has been created by the interaction of the natural environment and human activities, in particular the combination of physical, biological, and cultural influences. Physical influences such as geology and landform, together with the overlying pattern of settlement and land use are key determinants of landscape character. Wild species and semi-natural habitats exist within the landscape and help to define it. Indeed, in one sense, our landscapes largely consist of 'habitats', both for wildlife and for people.
- 2.2. The UK Wildlife Trusts use the term "*Living Landscape*" for the landscape and environment as a complete whole - as a dynamic, complex and linked system. Landscape and biodiversity are similarly combined within this topic paper due to the interrelationship between the two.
- 2.3. Flora and Fauna form parts of ecosystems (a community or group of living organisms that live in and interact with each other in a specific environment). If an ecosystem becomes imbalanced due to a reduction in number of any of the species or due to change in the environment this can lead to an extinction of a species.
- 2.4. Nature is good for our mental health. Research published in Nature based on Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE) and a study by Exeter University, has found that two hours of exposure to nature a week significantly boosts health and wellbeing¹.
- 2.5. When looking at how the Neighbourhood Plan can address this topic within Chartham Parish, it is vital that the intrinsic value, diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife is recognized, and that the high-quality rural environment contributes to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of the area.

Members of the Working Group

- 2.6. This topic paper has been prepared by a Working Group setup by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to investigate this topic. The Working Group comprises:
 - ***Athanasios Mandis (Chair)***
Resident of Chartham. An agricultural engineer graduate focused on technical and sustainability consultancy to the food and drink sector. Atha has also played a key role in designing international sustainable standards.

¹ <https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2019/07/12/two-hours-a-day-outside-is-vital-for-health-and-wellbeing/>

- ***Camilla Swire***
Parish Councillor for Chartham, NP steering group representative in the working group. Qualified biochemist, artist and picture conservator with interests in landscape and nature.
- ***Sue Farris***
Resident of Chartham. Worked in Horticulture and Microbiology at Wye College. Volunteer Tree and Pond Warden with an interest in gardening, wildlife and conservation.
- ***Tim Owen***
Resident of Chartham. Partnership and Funding Officer for the Kent Downs AONB Unit. Tim has map-making skills and monitors the management plan outputs and actions and changes in landscape condition. He has an interest in running and cycling.

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1. This section provides an overview of the political and policy context relevant landscape and biodiversity to this topic area as well as relevant research.

Political Statements

- 3.2. Landscape and biodiversity matters are often discussed in political spheres. Political actors are responsible for managing landscape and biodiversity and the impacts of it. This section provides an overview of the main political actors which impact the plan area.

Chartham Parish Council

- 3.3. In March 2005, the Chartham Parish Design Statement² was created by Chartham Parish Council in conjunction with Chartham Society and Canterbury City Council. It has been accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Canterbury City Council. It states the importance of Chartham as:

A thriving Parish within a rural setting, determined to keep its local distinctiveness of several settlements separated by open space. The wider view is of an agricultural scene surrounded by woodland. The Parish includes parts of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, designated as a nationally important landscape on part with National Parks.

- 3.4. The importance of the River Stour is identified:

The River Stour, from Shalmsford Bridge to Milton Bridge, and its adjoining meadows are a haven for wildlife, and provide much interest and enjoyment for naturalists, walkers, local residents and visitors.

- 3.5. The importance of the Larkey Valley Wood, Bakers Wood, Hunstead Wood, Broadham, North Downs Way and Denstead Wood are also identified and described in terms of character, and ecology and biodiversity.

Canterbury City Council

- 3.6. Canterbury City Council have identified through various documents, which will be discussed later, the significance of both landscape and biodiversity. This has been conveyed in terms of the River Stour, green spaces, AHLVs, the Kent Downs AONB and the overall landscape.
- 3.7. Recently, a new Rural Settlement Study³ was undertaken for the emerging Local Plan which seeks to identify different rural clusters. Each settlement within the

² https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/file/649/chartham_village_design_statement

³ <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d6393d28d79243f4b634e7edecb75c3b>

cluster was given a title based on the settlement hierarchy. They were placed as follows:

- Rural service centre: Chartham
- Local service centre: Petham and Lower Hardres
- Village: Chartham Hatch, Bossingham, Upper Hardres and Waltham
- Hamlet: Anvil Green and Garlinge Green

- 3.8. The Parish Council is concerned because it was not consulted on this as claimed in the document. Furthermore, they feel that the process used lacks rigour and fails to consider the settlements identified within the Chartham Parish Design Statement, which is a statutory document. These concerns have been flagged with Canterbury City Council by the Parish Council.

Kent County Level

- 3.9. Kent Nature Partnership have written a Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045⁴ which sets out the contribution the county of Kent, and the Kent Nature Partnership, can make to the Government's ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it and the aspirations set out in its 25 Year Environmental Plan "*A Green Future*".

- 3.10. River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board (IDB) predominantly operate under the Land Drainage Act 1991[1] under which an IDB is required to exercise a general supervision over all matters relating to water level management of land within its district. It works closely with the Environment Agency.

- 3.11. The River Stour (Kent) IDB - Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) 2021-25⁵ defines the BAP which passes through Chartham Parish as '*Great Stour LWS, Ashford to Fordwich*':

This complex LWS runs from Buxford Bridge west of Ashford to Fordwich. River corridor with natural character. Associated habitats - wet grassland, wet woodland, swamp, a few areas of unimproved neutral grassland. Plants including shining pondweed, river water dropwort, common meadow rue. Rare coleoptera and a range of odonatanans. Otters have been recorded. Water voles, white-clawed crayfish, Atlantic salmon. Wide range of birds including water rail, reed bunting, Cetti's warbler, gadwall and other wildfowl, lapwing, occasional sightings of bittern.

- 3.12. It makes clear that the part of the river in Chartham is defined as the Lower Stour.

⁴ <https://www.kentnature.org.uk/uploads/files/Nat-Env/Kent%20Biodiversity%20Strategy%202020.pdf>

⁵ <https://rsidb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/2021-RSIDB-BAP.pdf>

3.13. The IDB and Partnership objectives are:

- *Maintain and, where possible, increase the biodiversity present within IDB watercourses while maintaining drainage standards Ensure no net loss of bankside hedges or trees as a result of IDB activities*
- *Improve management of all watercourses in the drainage district for biodiversity and prevent losses of channels Increase net number/length of bankside native trees and hedgerows within IDB district*
- *Encourage positive management to maintain and enhance existing features across the drainage district*

3.14. There are clear habitat action plans found for drainage ditches and associated linear features and wetlands. Species action plans for vascular plants, Shining Ramshorn Snail, White-Clawed Crayfish, Dragonflies and Damselflies, Fish, Amphibians, Reed-nesting Birds, Water Vole and Otter.

3.15. Kent Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP)⁶ works to promote both landscape and nature conservation and develop opportunities for appropriate access and informal recreation. It co-authored The River Stour (Kent) IDB BAP.

3.16. Kent County Council also offer an Ecological Advice Service which is consulted on by the City Council when planning applications are made.

UK Government

3.17. The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan gives indication of proposed changes to protect the natural environment. The following processes, identified in the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy will affect the future of Landscape and Biodiversity in Chartham and beyond:

- The Environment Bill
- The Agriculture Bill
- Environmental Land Management System
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Environmental Net Gain
- Nature Recovery Network
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Local Natural Capital Plans
- Glover review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

3.18. Key policy relevant to the protection of Landscape and Biodiversity includes the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949, Hedgerows Regulation 1997, Protection of Badgers 1992, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2010, Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000,

⁶ kentishstour@kent.gov.uk

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 and Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006.

- 3.19. The Government made changes to the National Planning Policy Framework⁷ on 20th July 2021. The main change that impacts upon landscape and biodiversity is the inclusion of Paragraph 131 states:

Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users.

- 3.20. The UK Government created the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which is tasked with the environment, food production, rural development, the countryside, wildlife, animal welfare and sustainable development. Key documents are:

- Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and ecosystem services⁸. The four priority areas of the strategy are 'a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea', 'putting people at the heart of policy', 'reducing environmental pressures' and 'improving our knowledge'.
- The Glover Landscape Review 2019⁹ which has as its Proposal 15 '*Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family*'. This is of relevance to Chartham because of the North Downs Way which runs through Chartham Hatch and has extensive views over the Stour Valley towards the AONB.

- 3.21. Natural England is the Government's adviser for the natural environment in England. They help to protect and restore the natural world. They too are an executive non-departmental public body which is sponsored by DEFRA.

- 3.22. The Environment Agency is an executive non-departmental public body which is sponsored by DEFRA. It seeks to create better places for people and wildlife and support sustainable development.

7

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

8

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb_13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf

9

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/833726/landscapes-review-final-report.pdf

- 3.23. The Wildlife Trust is a non-governmental organisation whose mission is *'to bring about living landscapes, living seas, and a society where nature matters'*. The concept of *"Living Landscapes"* indicates the strong link between the nature of the landscape and its biodiversity. Kent Wildlife Trust is the local branch; until recently it managed Larkey Valley Wood. The Working Group embrace their approach in combining landscape and biodiversity in this paper.
- 3.24. The Forestry Commission seeks to increase the value of woodlands to society and the environment. They are a non-ministerial department. Key guidance includes *Manage and Protect Woodland Wildlife*¹⁰ which covers penalties for tree felling mishandling wildlife and guidance surrounding operational site assessments, badgers, red squirrels, plants, and biodiversity.
- 3.25. The Woodland Trust is a non-governmental organisation which manages many woods in the UK including Denstead Wood which is part of the Wildlife Trusts South Blean plantation.
- 3.26. The Working Group is mindful that the Dasgupta review on the Economics of Biodiversity¹¹ has altered the understanding of the financial repercussions of damage to biodiversity and provides a way to weigh the biodiversity impacts of the environmental aspect of sustainable development as described in Chapter 2 of the NPPF.

International

- 3.27. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) is the world's leading independent conservation organisation which works to transform the future of wildlife, rivers, forests and seas. Many WWF documents are available which provide guidance surrounding the conservation of these. It highlights UK rivers and chalk streams as some of the world's most beautiful locations¹². In their document, *The State of England's Chalk Streams*¹³ they say,

Imagine a river. A lovely, tranquil English chalk stream. Crystal clear water. You won't find this scene anywhere else in the world, except perhaps pockets of Northern France.

The wonderful English chalk streams are especially ours, a gift from England's unique layers of geology, climate and human history. They are ours to enjoy, ours alone to protect and ours to destroy.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-and-protect-woodland-wildlife>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-economics-of-biodiversity-the-dasgupta-review>

¹² <https://www.wwf.org.uk/where-we-work/uk-rivers-and-chalk-streams>

¹³ http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_chalkstreamreport_final_lr.pdf

- Rural (52)
- Community (51)
- **Beautiful (31)**
- **Quiet (22)**
- Village (22)
- **Countryside (17)**
- **Peaceful (17)**
- **Green (15)**
- Safe (15)

Those highlighted in bold are considered to closely relate to this topic paper. Looking in more detail at the responses, comments often referred to 'countryside', 'access to woodlands', 'beautiful location in AONB', 'green spaces' and '...natural environment, woods and wildlife...' as the things people most value about the Parish.

- 3.31. On the flip side, the *'potential for over-development'* and *'threat of development in green space'* were flagged as things people dislike about the Parish include
- 3.32. The future of the Parish also featured, people are worried about *'overdevelopment from Canterbury, infill of fields surrounding village, eroding the gap between us and Canterbury'*, *'building over green spaces'*, and *'additional building spoiling the village character and views'* plus *'that the impact of future development on the natural environment, and amenities that residents currently enjoy may be lost or negatively impacted in some way'*.
- 3.33. Some highlighted what would improve the lives of the Community in the Parish. These comments included *'protecting our village status and green land'* and *'no more houses being built'*. Residents identified *'the natural environment, woods, wildlife, green links, walks, open spaces'* as things that they love, and that they wanted to protect and improve *'valuable local assets such as green space, views, the river, [and] walking routes'*.

Wildlife recorded in Chartham Parish

- 3.34. As a rural parish, there is a potential for habitat in any natural setting. Flora and Fauna form an ecosystem and are interdependent on each other for survival. Most plants and animals are protected under the Countryside and Wildlife Act 1981. Important locations in Chartham include Denge, Larkey Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Hunstead woods which have rare and protected animal and plant species that are interdependent. Mystole orchards have had many wildlife surveys taken and the river and wetlands provide blue infrastructure.

- 3.35. APPENDIX 1 - PROTECTED SPECIES FOUND IN CHARTHAM shows protected species found in Chartham Parish as registered on the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre (KMBRC). The Working Group are aware that this information is not up to date with recordings of species presented in planning applications surveys failing to be introduced into the database. The dates of some of the last sightings are not recent. We set out below commentary on the relevant groupings.
- 3.36. **Breeding Birds** - Several of the breeding species are on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern, having restricted population size or distribution, or that have declined severely over 25-50 years: Nightingale, Skylark, Turtle Dove, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Cuckoo, Marsh Tit, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Linnet, and Yellowhammer. Other breeding species include Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Garden Warbler, Whitethroat, Green Woodpecker, Great Spotted Woodpecker, and Bullfinch.
- 3.37. **Birds visiting in winter** - Regular winter visitors include Woodcock, Fieldfare, Redwing and Siskin.
- 3.38. **Birds (occasional visitors)** - Many other species have been spotted passing through, the most notable being Mandarin, Red Kite, Hobby, Green Sandpiper, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, Yellow Wagtail, Lesser Whitethroat, Reed Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Willow Warbler, Firecrest, Raven, Lesser Redpoll, and Hawfinch.
- 3.39. **Plants** - A survey carried out in May 2019 found 137 plant species, including Wood Spurge, Long-stalked Crane's-bill, Trailing St John's Wort, Yellow Pimpernel, Heath Speedwell and Narrow-leaved Vetch.
- 3.40. **Moths** - Eight surveys have identified 261 different species, including the rare White-banded Carpet Moth.
- 3.41. **Amphibians and Reptiles** - The following have been recorded so far: Common Frog, Common Toad, Viviparous (Common) Lizard, Slow-worm, and Grass Snake.
- 3.42. **Mammals** - Hazel Dormice are resident, as are Mole, Common Shrew, Rabbit, Grey Squirrel, Field Vole, Wood Mouse, Yellow-necked Mouse, Brown Rat, Fox, Badger, Weasel, and Fallow Deer. There is evidence that Larkey Valley Wood is one of the best habitats for dormice in Britain.
- 3.43. **Bats** - Records from The KMBRC dating from 1986 to 2019 show that in Chartham Parish there are 10 of the 15 species recorded in Kent.

Common Name	Name	Location	Year
Serotine Bat	<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Chartham	2017
Daubenton's Bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Chartham	2018
Whiskered Bat	<i>Myotis mysracinus</i>	Canterbury	2019
Natterer's Bat	<i>Myotis nattereri</i>	St Augustine's	1999
Leisler's Bat	<i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	Godmersham	1985
Noctule Bat	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Chartham	2005
Nathusius' Pipistrelle Bat	<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Chartham	2017
Pipistrelle Bat (45kHz)	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Chartham	2013
Pipistrelle Bat (55kHz)	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Chartham	2011
Long-eared Bat Brown	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	Chartham	1998

Figure 2 - Bat species found within 5km of Chartham Parish

- 3.44. The common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat, serotine and noctule are "indicator species".
- 3.45. Flying and roosting bats have been seen in several locations in the Parish: near the Churchyard and the River Stour; in and around the St. Augustine Housing Estate, in Larkey Valley woods (SSSI), and the boundary of South Blean woods. Maternity and hibernating roosts have been found in roof spaces, derelict buildings, and trees; all trees have the potential for bat roosts. Their residents are likely to hunt across the entirety of the Parish, so wildlife corridors are of particular importance.

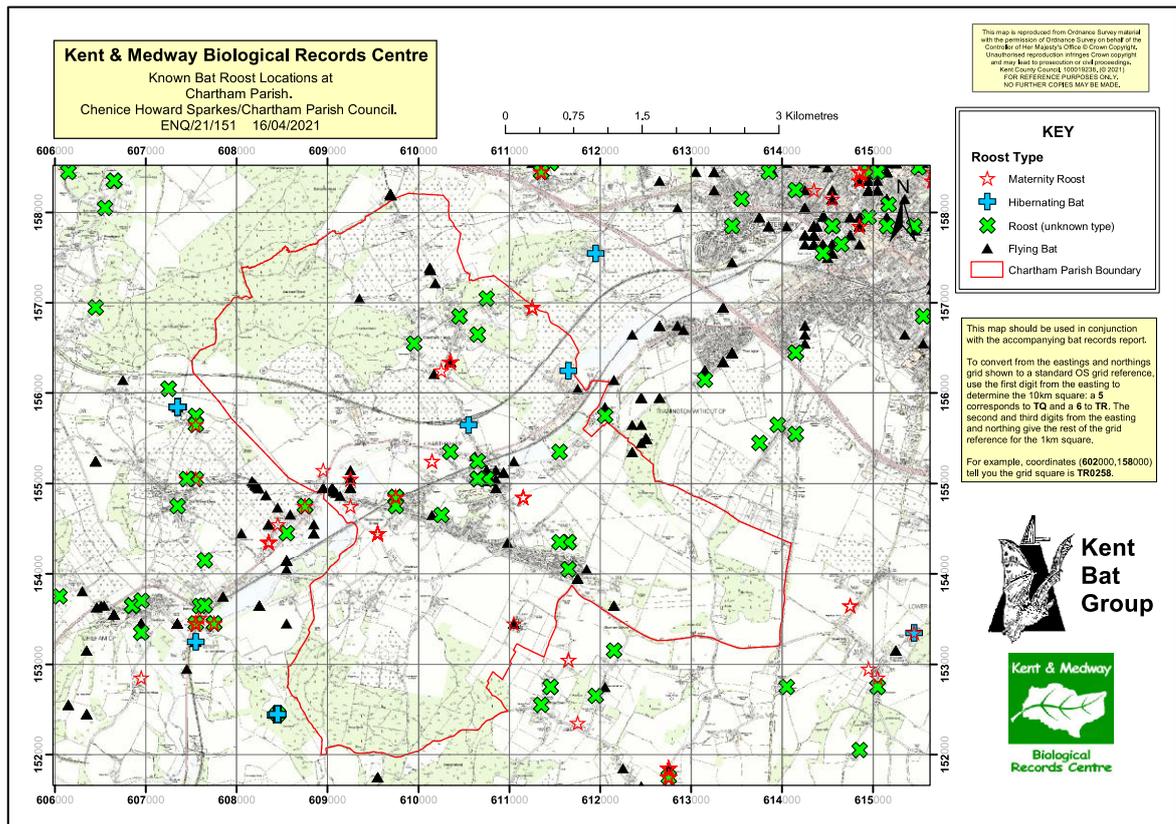


Figure 3 - Known for bat roost locations for Chartham Parish

- 3.46. Bats are protected under the Countryside and Wildlife Act 1981 and other Wildlife legislation.
- 3.47. Bats act as indicator species to changes in aspects of biodiversity, important pollinators (chiropterophily), and help to control pests by eating insects. Destruction of hedgerows and woods in farmland is concerning as bats rely on these features for roosting, hunting and getting around. The protection of “Dark Skies” is also important for the protection of bat roosts. Artificial lighting and the predominance of LED lighting can make bats vulnerable, due to confusion about circadian rhythms, insects being drawn away from darker areas and visibility for predators.
- 3.48. The Bat Conservation Trust in partnership with The Institution of Lighting Professionals and Clarkson and Woods ecological consultants have published a guide ‘Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK¹⁵’, September 2018. A document on landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity may also be highly relevant to development within the parish making efficient use of land.

¹⁵ <https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/landscape-and-urban-design-for-bats-and-biodiversity>

European Landscape Convention¹⁶ (July 2000)

- 3.49. The European Landscape Convention was adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and states the importance of:

Acknowledging that the quality and diversity of European landscapes constitute a common resource, and that it is important to co-operate towards its protection, management and planning

Acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas;

- 3.50. The aims of the Convention are to:

promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues

- 3.51. The Convention discusses guidance surrounding national measures and what can be undertaken to protect landscape.

- 3.52. European Co-operation is also detailed, such as the mutual assistance and exchange of information.

North Kent Plain National Character Area Profile¹⁷ (March 2015)

- 3.53. National Character Areas provide evidence and data surrounding the North Kent Plain which can be used to shape guidance to help communities inform their decision-making about the places they live in. Relevant policies in the document include:

SEO1: Maintain the historic character and long tradition of a farmed landscape, creating habitats to establish more resilient and coherent ecological networks within the farmed and peri-urban areas, benefitting biodiversity and geodiversity, and helping to regulate water and soil quality. Protect traditional practices including the longstanding associations of the fruit belt, maintaining a strong sense of place and reinforcing Kent's reputation as the Garden of England.

SEO2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising their contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquility

SEO3: Protect the distinct wooded areas of the landscape, particularly through the management of nationally important, ancient semi-natural woodlands, increasing the area of broadleaved woodland where appropriate,

¹⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/european-landscape-convention-book-text-feb-2008-en/16802f80c6>

¹⁷

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2900242#:~:text=The%20North%20Kent%20Plain%20National,open%2C%20low%20and%20gently%20undulating.>

while increasing the connectivity of the mosaic of associated habitats; notably wooded heath and semi-improved grasslands and enhancing the recreational resource.

SEO4: Protect and enhance the strong character and heritage of the urban areas. Plan for the creation of significant new areas of green space and green corridors to provide a framework for new and existing development in urban areas and along major transport routes.

North Downs National Character Area Profile¹⁸

- 3.54. Like the National Character Area Profile for North Kent Plain, the North Downs National Character Area provides guidance which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places they live in.

The North Downs National Character Area (NCA) forms a chain of chalk hills extending from the Hog's Back in Surrey and ending dramatically at the internationally renowned White Cliffs of Dover. The settlement pattern is characterised by traditional small, nucleated villages, scattered farms and large houses with timber framing, flint walls and Wealden brick detailing. Twisting sunken lanes, often aligned along ancient drove roads, cut across the scarp and are a feature of much of the dip slope. The Kent Downs and Surrey Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty designations are testament to the qualities and natural beauty of the area.

- 3.55. Canterbury has designated a North Downs Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV) to augment the protection of the setting of the AONB.
- 3.56. Chartham lies partly within the North Downs NCA and partly within the North Kent Plains NCA. The boundary loosely follows the route of the A28 through the Parish.
- 3.57. The North Downs are to the south of the North Kent Plains National Character Area and form a distinctive backdrop, with the boundary delineated between the Chalk and the Eocene deposits (although some Chalk also outcrops at Thanet). The underlying Chalk aquifer (an important source of groundwater abstraction) creates a functional link to surrounding NCAs.

Development pressures and agricultural practices continue to be forces for change throughout the NCA; high-quality and well managed green infrastructure both within and surrounding the NCA could help to service the demands of a growing population, a changing climate and increased pressures on natural resources, including the chalk aquifer, critical for water provision. Opportunities to create more robust and resilient ecological networks across the agricultural landscape should be maximised, working in partnership to secure positive environmental outcomes. The natural and cultural assets of the NCA support food production, regulation of water and

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<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7036466#:~:text=The%20North%20Downs%20National%20Character,renowned%20White%20Cliffs%20of%20Dover.>

soils, biodiversity, recreation, tranquillity, sense of place and sense of history.

3.58. Relevant policies in this document include:

SEO1: Manage, conserve and enhance the distinctive rural character and historic environment of the North Downs, including the long-established settlement pattern, ancient routeways and traditional buildings. Protect the tranquility of the landscape and sensitively manage, promote and celebrate the area's rich cultural and natural heritage, famous landmarks and views for future generations.

SEO2: Protect, enhance and restore active management to the diverse range of woodlands and trees of the North Downs, for their internationally and nationally important habitats and species, cultural heritage and recreational value and to help to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation. Seek opportunities to establish local markets for timber and biomass to support the active management of local woods, while recognising their contribution to sense of place, sense of history and tranquillity

SEO3: Manage and enhance the productive mixed farming landscape of the North Downs and the mosaic of semi-natural habitats including the internationally important chalk grassland. Promote sustainable agricultural practices to benefit soils, water resources, climate regulation, biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character while maintaining food provision.

SEO4: Plan to deliver integrated, well-managed multi-functional green space in existing and developing urban areas, providing social, economic and environmental benefits and reinforcing landscape character and local distinctiveness, particularly on or alongside the boundaries of the designated landscapes within the North Downs.

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2021-2026¹⁹

3.59. The AONB Management Plan provides the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as visions of certain aspects of the AONB such as sustainable development, landform and landscape character and biodiversity.

3.60. The vision for landform and landscape character is as follows:

In 2031... the rich diversity of landscape character and qualities distinctive to the Kent Downs are protected, enhanced and managed to the highest standards in a coordinated and continual programme. The special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB are recognised, valued and strengthened and landscape character informs land and resource management, nature recovery plans, intended net gain and natural capital investments, responses to climate change and development decisions.

3.61. The vision for biodiversity is as follows:

In 2031... the distinctive nature of the Kent Downs is understood better, enjoyed, celebrated and is in favourable, resilient condition with key habitats and species flourishing. There is a far-sighted, effective nature recovery plan being implemented across the Downs, which recognises and responds to the

¹⁹ <https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/management-plan-2021-2026/>

substantial changes that will be experienced and is connected with a wider national nature recovery network. An ambitious approach to intended biodiversity net gain is agreed and implemented, it is achieving secure advances in biodiversity across the Kent Downs. There has been an increase in the extent and quality of key characteristic habitats and abundance of species of the Downs. People, policy and funding regimes recognise, value and support the importance of nature in the Kent Downs.

3.62. The vision for sustainable development is as follows:

In 2031 ... the characteristic Kent Downs network of woodland and trees is greater in extent and is conserved and enhanced for its landscape, wildlife and historic value as well as its vital role in mitigating climate change and supporting nature recovery. Sustainably managed woodlands and trees are resilient to stressors such as pests, disease, visitor pressure and climate change, they provide inherent mitigation and adaption to that change. Buoyant markets for woodland products support the productive, sustainable management of trees and woodlands; new woodland and tree establishment; high quality multi-functional management provides well-used places for leisure and recreation, health and wellbeing and are rich in characteristic wildlife.

3.63. Finally, the vision for woodland and trees is as follows:

In 2034... the Kent Downs network of woodland and trees is greater in extent and is conserved and enhanced for its landscape, wildlife and historic value. Diverse and sustainably managed woodlands and trees are resilient to climate change and provide inherent mitigation to that change. The woodlands supply buoyant local markets for timber, coppice products and wood fuel, and high quality multi-functional management provides well-used places for leisure and recreation which are rich in characteristic wildlife.

The impacts of climate change are being felt but the mitigation and adaptive responses taken are landscape led, effective and carefully chosen to enhance the characteristics, qualities and distinctiveness of the landscape rather than detracting from them. The natural capital and ecosystems service provision of the Kent Downs has been enhanced. Important areas of tranquillity have been identified, protected and expanded and provide 'oases of calm'.

The Kent Downs landscape and partnership take an important and appropriate role in the economic and societal recovery from Covid-19.

3.64. While the whole of the Management Plan should be considered in respect of planning decisions, the following principles are considered to be most relevant to the planning process:

The Management of the Kent Downs AONB

***MMP2** Individual local authorities will give high priority to the AONB management Plan vision, policies, and actions in Local Plans, development management decisions, planning enforcement cases and in carrying out other relevant functions.*

Sustainable development (SD)

SD1 *The need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB is recognised as the primary purpose of the designation and given the highest level of protection within the statutory and other appropriate planning and development strategies and development control decisions.*

SD2 *The local character, qualities and distinctiveness of the Kent Downs AONB will be conserved and enhanced in the design, scale, setting and materials of new development, redevelopment and infrastructure and will be pursued through the application of appropriate design guidance and position statements which are adopted as components of the AONB Management Plan.*

SD3 *New development or changes to land use will be opposed where they disregard or run counter to the primary purpose of the Kent Downs AONB.*

SD5 *Local renewable and sustainable energy initiatives will be pursued where they help to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and landscape character of the AONB and bring environmental, social and economic benefits to local people. Proposals will be opposed where they do not conform with the Kent Downs AONB Renewable Energy Position Statement.*

SD7 *To retain and improve tranquillity, including the experience of dark skies at night, careful design and the use of new technologies should be used. New developments and highways infrastructure which negatively impact on the local tranquillity of the Kent Downs AONB will be opposed unless they can be satisfactorily mitigated.*

SD8 *Proposals which negatively impact on the distinctive landform, landscape character, special characteristics and qualities, the setting and views to and from the AONB will be opposed unless they can be satisfactorily mitigated.”*

SD9 *The particular historic and locally distinctive character of rural settlement and buildings of the Kent Downs AONB will be maintained and strengthened. The use of locally-derived materials for restoration and conservation work will be encouraged. New developments will be expected to apply appropriate design guidance and to be complementary to local character in form, setting, scale, contribution to settlement pattern and choice of materials. This will apply to all development, including road design (pursued through the adOption and implementation of the AONB Rural Streets and Lanes Design handbook), affordable housing, development on farm holdings (pursued through the farmstead design guidance), and rights of way signage.*

SD10 *Positive measures to mitigate the negative impact of infrastructure and growth on the natural beauty and amenity of the AONB will be supported.*

SD11 *Where it is decided that development will take place that will have a negative impact on landscape character, characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB or its setting, mitigation measures appropriate to the national importance of the Kent Downs landscape will be identified, pursued, implemented and maintained. The removal or mitigation of identified landscape detractors will be pursued.*

SD12 *Transport and infrastructure schemes are expected to avoid the Kent Downs AONB as far as practicable. Essential developments will be expected to fit unobtrusively into the landscape, respect landscape character, be mitigated by sympathetic landscape and design measures and provide environmental compensation by benefits to natural beauty elsewhere in the AONB.*

Landform and landscape character (LLC)

LLC1 The protection, conservation and enhancement of special characteristics and qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the Kent Downs AONB will be supported and pursued.

HCH5 The application of high standards of design sympathetic to cultural heritage within the AONB, identified in guidance including the AONB Landscape Design Handbook, Kent Downs Farmstead Guidance and any relevant Village Design Statements and Neighbourhood Plans, will be pursued.

Biodiversity (BD)

BD 5 The protection, conservation and extension of Kent Downs priority and distinctive habitats and species will be supported through the Local Plan process, development management decisions and the promotion of the Biodiversity Duty of Regard (NERC Act 2006).

Farmed landscape (FL)

FL7 Conversion from agricultural to leisure use and the creation of non-agricultural structures will only be supported where there is not a cumulative loss to the principally farmed landscape of the AONB.

FL8 Proposals for polytunnels will be assessed for their impact on the AONB landscape, including by reference to their siting and mitigation. Proposals for polytunnels should be justified by an integrated whole farm plan. Best practice guidance for the use and landscaping of polytunnels will be pursued.

Vibrant communities (VC)

VC8 Local communities will be encouraged to prepare and promote Village Design Statements, Parish Plans and Neighbourhood Plans as appropriate to assist in the conservation and enhancement of local distinctiveness as settlements evolve. These documents should address development requiring planning permission, automatically permitted development and change outside the scope of the planning system.

The Development Plan

- 3.65. The development plan includes all documents that provide relevant planning policy for a given area. Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 defines the term development plan, which includes adopted Local Plans, Neighbourhood Plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force. Neighbourhood Plans that have been approved at referendum are also part of the development plan.
- 3.66. The Working Group briefly considers the existing development plan documents and the most relevant policies within it below.

Canterbury District Local Plan²⁰ (July 2017)

- 3.67. The latest Canterbury District Local Plan was adopted in 2017. The main policies that have a bearing on landscape and biodiversity are discussed below:
- 3.68. **Policy T16 Rural Lanes** - *Rural lanes which are of landscape amenity, nature conservation, historic or archaeological importance will be protected from the changes and management practices that would damage their character, and where possible be enhanced.*
- 3.69. **Policy LB1 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** - *High priority will be given to conservation and enhancement of natural beauty in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and planning decisions should have regard to its setting.*
- 3.70. **Policy LB2 Areas of High Landscape Value** - *In Areas of High Landscape Value, development will be considered in relation to the extent to which its location, scale, design and materials would impact on or protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the designated landscape and its heritage and nature conservation interest.*
- 3.71. **Policy LB4 Sites of International Conservation Importance** - *Proposals for development, land use change or land management should demonstrate that they are informed by, and are sympathetic to, the landscape character of the locality.*
- 3.72. **Policy LB5 Landscape Character Areas** - *Sites of international nature conservation importance must receive the highest levels of protection. No development will be permitted which may have an adverse effect on the integrity of an SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, as it would not be in accordance with the Habitat Regulations 2010 (as amended) and the aims and objectives of this Local Plan.*
- 3.73. **Policy LB6 Sites of Special Scientific Interest** - *Planning permission will not normally be granted for development which would materially harm the scientific or nature conservation interest, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, of sites designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) for their nature conservation, geological, or geomorphological value. Support will be given for enhancement.*
- 3.74. **Policy LB7 Locally Designated Sites** - *Development or land-use changes are likely to have an adverse effect on local wildlife sites, local nature reserves and regionally important geological/geomorphological sites will be permitted if the justification for the proposals clearly outweighs any harm to the intrinsic nature conservation and/or scientific value of the site.*

²⁰ https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/download/34/local_plan

- 3.75. **Policy LB8 Landscape Scale Biodiversity Networks** - *New development must avoid the fragmentation of existing habitats and support the creation of coherent ecological networks through both urban and rural areas, retain, protect and enhance notable ecological features of conservation value and protect opportunities for improving connectivity of habitats in strategically important Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.*
- 3.76. **Policy LB9 Protection, Mitigation, Enhancement and Increased Connectivity for Species and Habitats of Principal Importance** - *All development should avoid a net loss of biodiversity/nature conservation value and actively pursue opportunities to achieve a net gain, particularly where: 1. There are wildlife habitats/species identified as Species or Habitats of Principal Importance; 2. There are habitats/species that are protected under wildlife legislation; 3. The site forms a link between or buffer to designated wildlife sites.*
- 3.77. **Policy LB11 The Blean Complex** - *The City Council will support projects that restore, enhance and connect the valued woodland habitat complex of the Blean. The Council will give particular support to projects that benefit the landscape through sensitive and traditional woodland practices and which support the timber market and wider local economy. The City Council will refuse proposals for development that would result in the loss, deterioration or damages the character and integrity of the Blean Complex. Development should provide opportunities for biodiversity improvement within the identified Biodiversity Improvement Areas.*
- 3.78. **Policy LB13 River Corridors** - *Development shall show how the environment within river corridors and river catchments, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced. Supply of water, treatment and disposal of waste water and flood risk management should be shown to be sustainable and deliver environmental benefits, within the water environment.*
- 3.79. **Policy OS1 Local Green Space** - *Proposals that protect or enhance these Local Green Spaces will be permitted development proposals that would impact upon or change the character of the Local Green Space will be permitted where very special circumstances can be shown.*
- 3.80. **Policy OS2 Playing Fields** - *Proposals for development, which would result in the loss, in whole or in part, of playing fields will only be permitted if:*
- a. The site has first been considered for other sport, recreation or community uses; and*
 - b. It has been demonstrated that the playing field is surplus to requirements having regard to the City Council's Open Space Strategy; or*
 - c. There is an overriding need for the proposed development which outweighs the loss of the playing fields and the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or,*

d. The development is for a small part of the site; where it has been demonstrated that it will result in enhanced sport and recreational facilities.

3.81. Policy OS6 Green Gaps - *Within the Green Gaps identified on the Proposals Map (see also Insets 1,3 and 5) development will be permitted where it does not:*

- a. Significantly affect the open character of the Green Gap, or lead to coalescence between existing settlements;
- b. Result in new isolated and obtrusive development within the Green Gap.

Proposals for open sports and recreational uses will be permitted subject to there being no overriding conflict with other policies and the wider objectives of the Plan. Any related built development should satisfy criteria (a) and (b) above and be kept to a minimum necessary to supplement the open sports and recreation uses, and be sensitively located and of a high quality design.

3.82. Policy OS8 Sports and Recreation in the Countryside -

Proposals for sports and recreation facilities in the countryside will be permitted where:

- a. They are well related to an existing settlement;*
- b. There is no detrimental impact on landscape interests, protected species, sites or features of nature conservation interest or on sites of archaeological or historical importance;*
- c. There is no adverse impact upon residential amenity;*
- d. Access and parking provisions are acceptable, the use does not significantly increase traffic to the detriment of the rural area or highway safety and the site is accessible by a range of transport modes;*
- e. Buildings and other related development are well designed, appropriate in scale and function to the use of the land and sensitively located to retain the openness of the area;*
- f. The rural character of the area is safeguarded.*

3.83. Policy OS9 Protection of Existing Open Space -

Proposals which would result in the loss of protected existing open space as shown on the Proposals Map (all Insets), will be permitted if:

- a. There would be no material harm to the contribution the protected open space makes to the visual or recreational amenity of the area; and*
- b. The open space has been assessed by the City Council as making no positive contribution to its overall strategy on open space.*
- c. Where there would be material harm, this would be balanced against demonstrable need for the development;*
- d. There is no alternative site available to accommodate the proposed development, and any harm that might result from the development could be offset by the provision of other open space of comparable quality, size, character and usability in a suitable location.*
- e. The open space has been assessed by the City Council as making no positive contribution to its overall strategy on open space.*

- 3.84. **Policy OS10 Loss of Open Space** - *Development which would involve the loss of open spaces and play areas provided as part of new residential developments which contribute to the visual or recreational amenity of the area will be refused.*
- 3.85. **Policy OS11 Outdoor Space Provision** - *New housing development shall make provision for appropriate outdoor space, including semi-natural areas, strategic urban parks and green corridors, amenity greenspace, children's play areas, open space for sport, allotments or community gardens proportionate to the likely number of people who will live there. Where the development does not allow for the provision of such open space on site, developers will be expected to make financial contribution towards the provision of new, or improvement of open space or recreational facilities elsewhere in the locality, through entering into a legal agreement or another suitable mechanism.*
- 3.86. **Policy OS12 Green Infrastructure** - *Proposals for new development should ensure that :*
- a. Green infrastructure is planned, designed and managed to conserve and enhance the distinctive character and special qualities of, rural and urban landscapes, and the identity of settlements. Where feasible as part of all new developments and proposals, developers will need to establish and extend green space networks as corridors for movement by foot and cycle, as havens for wildlife and natural habitats and for leisure, amenity and recreational use. Where practicable green linkages should be encouraged from within existing settlements to the open countryside.*
 - b. Existing open space is conserved and enhanced as part of these networks, which where possible, should extend through major new development sites and connect directly with community facilities, employment areas and transport hubs in order to deliver sustainable development and support the health and well-being of residents.*
- 3.87. **Policy OS13 Riverside Strategy** -
- Land identified on the Proposals Map (Inset 1 and 2), as Open Space and Riverside Path, along the River Stour corridors in Canterbury City will be protected from development to enable its future use and contribution towards the riverside corridor, having regard to the Riverside Strategy.*
- 3.88. **Policy QL4 Farm Shops** -
- The City Council will grant planning permission for farm shops provided :*
- a. There is no detrimental impact on local shops or on the character of the surrounding area;*
 - b. Access and parking provisions are acceptable and the use does not significantly increase traffic to the detriment of the rural area or highway safety;*
 - c. There is no detrimental impact on residential amenity;*
 - d. There is no overriding conflict with other Policies in the Plan.*

- 3.89. **Policy QL11 Air Quality** - *Development that could directly or indirectly result in material additional air pollutants and worsening levels of air quality within the area surrounding the development site or impact on the existing Air Quality Management Area will not be permitted unless acceptable measures to offset or mitigate any potential impacts have been agreed as part of the proposal. An air quality assessment will be required if the proposal is likely to have a significant effect taking account of the cumulative effects on individual sites.*
- 3.90. **Policy QL12 Potentially Polluting Development** - *When granting planning permission for development which could potentially result in pollution, the City Council will impose conditions or seek agreements to ensure subsequent mitigation measures are undertaken.*
- 3.91. **Policy DBE1 Sustainable Design and Construction** - *All development must respond to the objectives of sustainable development and improve the quality of life for residents, conserve resources, reduce waste and protect and enhance the environment.*
- 3.92. **Policy DBE3 Principles of Design** - *The distinctive character, diversity and quality of the Canterbury District will be promoted, protected and enhanced through high quality, sustainable inclusive design, which reinforces and positively contributes to its local context creating attractive, inspiring and safe places.*
- 3.93. **Policy DBE8 Public Open Space** - *In order to ensure that functional, visually successful public open space is created with a strong sense of place as part of new development, the City Council will expect developments to incorporate the following:-*
- a. The retention and incorporation of public rights of way and the creation of a connected open space and pedestrian/cyclist circulation system related, where appropriate, to a landscape framework having regard to safety and security;*
 - b. The maximising of opportunities for all areas of the public realm to be subject to natural surveillance;*
 - c. The incorporation of landscape design to the frontage of development sites, particularly where they border principal roads;*
 - d. In order to improve the physical environment of the public realm the City Council will expect the promotion of public art, subject to appropriate consultative and planning considerations.*

Where new development changes or creates new public places, the City Council will encourage the provision of public art to be included as part of the proposal. e. Create opportunities for wildlife habitats and corridors where appropriate. Demonstrate how the management and maintenance of public open space will be continued long term.

3.94. Policy DBE9 Outdoor Lighting -

Proposals for new outdoor lighting or new developments which include outdoor lighting will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. It has been designed to minimise light glare, light trespass, light spillage and sky glare through using the best available technology to minimise light pollution and conserve energy.*
- b. It does not adversely impact residential amenity;*
- c. It does not adversely affect sites of nature conservation interest and/or protected and other vulnerable species and heritage assets;*
- d. It does not adversely impact on protected landscapes or those areas where dark skies are an important part of the nocturnal landscape;*
- e. The lighting levels do not exceed the levels recommended by the ILE in the relevant environmental zone as set out in Appendix 5;*
- f. It does not have an adverse impact on long distance views or from vantage points.*

In addition, the City Council will expect proposals to demonstrate that they have had regard to the checklist set out in paragraph 8.95. For large developments involving outdoor lighting or those developments in or adjacent to sensitive locations, the City Council may require a Lighting Strategy to be submitted.

Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal²¹ (October 2020)

- 3.95. The Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal provides a robust evidence base to underpin the review of the Local Plan and to assist in the local planning process.
- 3.96. Chartham contains 6 Landscape Character Areas outside the AONB (which as mentioned above has 2 Landscape Character Areas). These are D5: Bigbury Hill and D6: Denstead Woods (both parts of the Blean Complex) F1: Stour Valley Sides, F7: Stour Valley West, H1: Harbledown Fruit Belt, H4 Nackington Farmlands and I3 Chartham and Shalmsford Slopes. For clarity, D5: Bigbury Hill and D6: Denstead Woods form part of the Blean Complex. Whereas the landscape descriptions of the two LCAs are separate, the Development and management guidance is given for the complex as a whole.

D5: Bigbury Hill

Landscape Description

Bigbury Hill LCA is a distinctive ridge with a plateau top to the west of Canterbury City. The boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland.

²¹ <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1B67YTk0-PoF5tO-zcFhNZMvh0eNjFEK>

The woodland is locally designated as part of the Blean Woods South LWS. It is less extensive than other parts of The Blean woods and includes a number of cleared areas in use as arable and pasture fields, including horse grazing. There is a small area of priority habitat traditional orchard at No Mans Orchard LNR.

The Iron Age Bigbury Camp hillfort is strategically located on the ridgetop. It is a large univallate hillfort with a northern annexe added later with bivallate defences. This is a rare example of a large hillfort, and is of national value, designated as a Scheduled Monument.

Bigbury Hill remained sparsely settled until the 20th century. Today, there are a few detached modern homes cut into the woodland and along the roads. Bigbury Road, the main route through the area, is a narrow rural lane with woodland very tight to the edge. The North Downs/Pilgrims Way crosses the ridge, marking what is widely believed to be a historic trackway, originating as the pilgrimage route between Winchester and Canterbury City. Tonford Lane and Faulkners Lane are small sunken winding lanes with trees growing from steep sandy banks.

D6: Denstad Woods

Landscape Description

Denstead Woods is an outcrop of high ground in the west of the district. The LCA boundaries are defined by the edge of the woodland, and the western boundary by the district boundary (the woodland continues into Swale Borough).

The woodland is locally designated as part of the Blean Woods South LWS. Much of the area is commercially managed chestnut coppice with oak standards, and some conifer plantation. Local areas of heathland and bog reflect the varied geology and provide habitat diversity. A series of oak pollards mark the boundary between Canterbury District and Swale District.

A small number of cottages and houses are located along the eastern edge of the woods, at Primrose Hill, including the Grade II listed Mount Cottage and Pilgrim's Cottage. Otherwise the area is entirely undeveloped and there are no roads. Occasional small areas of clearance on the edge of the woodlands are now used for grazing, with the main woodland block contrasting with the adjacent intensively managed orchard landscapes.

A number of narrow tracks allow restricted access to vehicles working in the woodland, supplementing the public rights of way network

Biodiversity Appraisal: The Blean - Woodlands Aim:

To maintain, restore, enhance and create woodland and grassland habitat, as part of the woodland and grassland habitat network of the Blean BOA.

Landscape Sensitivities and Values

- *Extensive and connected area of ancient semi-natural and ancient replanted woodland area across the northern part of the district.*
- *Value for wildlife as reflected through international and national designation (SAC, SSSI, LWS, LNR), range of woodland habitats and the diverse species supported.*

- *Open areas of acid grassland and heathland clearing, rides and glades within woodland provide important habitat (e.g. for rare heath fritillary butterfly) and contrasting open landscape within woodland.*
- *Views to The Blean within its rural setting and wooded horizons created by the woodland blocks across elevated land - distinctive across the northern part of Canterbury District.*
- *Role of Bigbury Hill as wooded setting and backdrop to Canterbury City, route of Pilgrims Way with views to the Cathedral, plus role as containing wooded backdrop to linear settlements at Tyler Hill and Blean.*
- *Evidence of Medieval cultural and woodland management practices in the form of earthbanks, coppice, pollards, droveways. Historic ownership and links to Abbey and Cathedral in Canterbury*
- *Range of archaeological sites, preserved within woodland including Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hillfort at Bigbury, sites of tile kilns and claypits.*
- *Remote character and strong sense of tranquillity within extensive uninterrupted woodland blocks, absence of development, few roads or detracting features.*
- *Major recreational resource with extensive network of linked trails used for cycling, walking and riding. Low key informal recreation facilities (promoted trails and car park) provided by RSPB, Kent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Forestry England. Linked recreational routes to the coastal towns and Canterbury City.*
- *Strong ‘Blean’ sense of place linking all the woodlands - forming highly distinctive and unique area between Canterbury City and the coast.*

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- *Protect, conserve and enhance ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors especially between and within surrounding LCAs with similar priority habitat.*
- *Continue to restore conifer plantations to deciduous woodland to include areas of open glades and early successional stages.*
- *Restore, enhance and create acid grassland and heath and neutral grassland where this does not conflict with the maintenance of existing woodland habitat.*
- *Encourage an integrated approach to land management among the various woodland owners (including Kent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, RSPB, Forestry England) to promote biodiversity, heritage and recreation, as promoted through The Blean initiative and individual management plans.*

- *Continue to provide for low key informal recreation via a range of PRow, tracks and trails, including maintaining and promoting PRow links to the coastal towns and Canterbury City.*
- *Conserve the distinct and tranquil landscape character of the ancient semi-natural woodland complex, including the mix of heath, ditches, streams and ponds.*
- *Conserve and manage the range of archaeological sites contained within the woodland, and evidence of past woodland management practices.*

Development Management

- *Improve style of existing and any new barriers which restrict vehicular access. Where fencing is necessary encourage the use of local materials and styles, where possible. Ensure recreational infrastructure is sympathetic to the natural character of the woods.*
- *Avoid any development within Blean Woods, any changes should be of local scale and character and relate to existing settlements only. There should be no loss of woodland as a result of new development.*
- *Maintain the existing narrow single line of development associated with Blean and Tyler Hill villages avoiding backland encroaching towards the woods and maintaining views through gaps in development to the woodland edge.*
- *Conserve the role of Bigbury Hill, and the ridge as a whole as part of the setting of Canterbury City including views to the Cathedral and role as wooded backdrop to the city.*
- *Conserve the rural character of the roads that cross through woodland, maintaining wooded edges and soft verges, resisting highways upgrades that are more urban in character including kerbing and lighting.*
- *Monitor development on the edges/buffer of existing woodland blocks - maintaining the rural setting of The Blean and avoiding any development, including solar farms that creates a hard or urban edge abutting woodland. Promote creation of a wooded buffer in relation to any development in surrounding farmland LCAs.*
- *Maintain uninterrupted rural views to the wooded Blean ridgeline, avoiding tall developments such as pylons which interrupt and breach the continuous wooded skyline*

F1: Stour Valley Sides

Location and Summary

The Stour Valley Sides LCA is in the west of the district and divided into three sections; each forming part of the steeply sloping chalk valley sides of the Great Stour Valley and including the villages of Shalmsford Street and Chartham. The landscape comprises large scale dramatically undulating arable fields, bound by mature tree hedgerows.

Key Characteristics

- *Steeply undulating chalk slopes with well drained chalky loam soils with narrow seams of silty deposits.*
- *Large-scale open arable fields, with occasional areas of grazing pasture.*
- *Mature hedgerows and small blocks of mature trees help to maintain a sense of the field structure.*
- *Settlement confined to Chartham and Shalmsford Street, including Grade II listed buildings.*
- *Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows.*
- *Some PRow linking to the Stour Valley.*
- *Modern development prominent on the Shalmsford Street ridge.*
- *Long views across the Stour Valley to the Blean Woods to the north and North Kent Downs to the south*

Key Sensitivities and Values

- *Steeply sloping landform, with contrast between high open elevated farmlands and more enclosed shallower slopes.*
- *Open entirely undeveloped slopes north of the Great Stour River (Highfield Springs).*
- *Occasional ecologically important areas including pockets of priority habitat deciduous woodland and semi-improved grassland, ancient woodland and Blean Woods South LWS.*
- *Remnant areas of intact historic field pattern provides a sense of place and time-depth.*
- *The historic settlement of Chartham retains a distinctive building vernacular and contains several listed buildings and*
- *is designated as a Conservation Area.*
- *Good network of PRow including part of the North Downs Way and Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath are valued for recreation.*
- *Long distance views across undulating landform to the Blean woodlands to the north.*
- *Open steeply sloping valley slopes highly visible from surrounding landscape, including the valley floor.*

Biodiversity Aim:

To enhance improved and neutral grasslands and bring them to species rich grassland priority habitat quality.

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- *Protect and conserve ancient woodland and existing woodland priority habitat. This should include strengthening of habitat connectivity by restoring hedgerows and woodland corridors, particularly linking to Denstead Woods in the north.*

- *Protect grassland priority habitat. This includes strengthening habitat connectivity and creating buffers by restoring improved grassland to neutral grassland habitat around existing priority habitat and to the BOA, and reinstating management of the Blean Woods South LWS.*
- *Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.*
- *Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the maintenance and re-creation of hedgerows, particularly for internal field boundaries.*
- *Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species where present.*
- *Development Management*
- *Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Chartham Conservation Area.*
- *Conserve the traditional pattern and structure of the landscape by improving the continuity of hedgerow and shelterbelt features to enhance the field pattern.*
- *Assess new building proposals to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with the adjacent rural and open landscape. This is important for existing village edges as well as proposed new strategic allocations to the east at Cockering Farm.*
- *Conserve and enhance the integration of urban edges, through native wooded boundaries and mature trees to provide visual screening and reduce the impact of built development on the open and exposed landscape.*
- *Resist unsympathetic proposals that introduce extensive or obtrusive elements on the visually sensitive ridgeline and steeply sloping valley sides, particularly to the north and south of the Great Stour River.*
- *Any proposals for highway upgrading should retain the rural hedged character of the roads and lanes.*
- *Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.*

F7: Stour Valley West

Location and Summary

The Stour Valley West LCA lies to the south-west of Canterbury City. It is defined by the flat river floodplain of the Great Stour River and associated waterbodies. It extends from the settlement edge of Canterbury City at Thanington to the district boundary in the west.

Key Characteristics

- *Flat alluvial floodplain of the Great Stour River, on chalk geology, with river terrace deposits on higher valley edges.*

- *Great Stour River meanders across the floodplain with floodplain ditches and open lakes providing wetland habitats,*
- *including priority habitat floodplain grazing marsh and wet woodland forming an important biodiversity corridor.*
- *Wetland tree species associated with the river and ditches, with small areas of priority habitat deciduous woodland surrounding the water bodies and along railway embankments.*
- *Poor soils result in medium-scale wet meadows predominantly in use as grazing land, interspersed with occasional larger arable fields.*
- *Past and current gravel workings and industrial activities have altered large areas of the valley, including creation of large open waterbodies.*
- *Settlement concentrated in nucleated historic settlement of Chartham, with industrial/commercial development extending along the A28 Canterbury Road.*
- *Major transport routes, including the A28 Canterbury Road and Canterbury to Ashford railway line run through the valley.*
- *Good network of PRow crossing the valley and running along the valley floor, allowing recreational access.*
- *Small scale landscape with a strong sense of enclosure from dramatic steeply rising valley sides and woodland.*

Key Sensitivities and Values

- *The open flat river floodplain with the meandering Great Stour River and open lakes has a strong sense of place.*
- *Ecologically important wetland habitats including priority chalk river, habitat floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland, designated locally as the Great Stour Ashford to Fordwich LWS forming part of an important biodiversity corridor.*
- *Historic pattern of grazing meadows retained by traditional network of ditches still in use today.*
- *Rural grazing marsh and floodplain provide important setting to historic Chartham and Canterbury City. At Chartham*
- *many distinctive buildings are listed, and the valley forms a setting to the Conservation Area.*
- *Recreational value from PRowS following the Great Stour River including Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath and cycle route.*
- *Glimpsed views to Canterbury Cathedral along the valley provide a sense of place.*
- *Small scale landscape with strong sense of enclosure created by the enclosing valley sides.*

Biodiversity Aim:

To enhance wetland habitat, as part of the wider network of the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA.

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- *Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats, the Great Stour River and associated lakes by managing scrub encroachment. Explore opportunities for further wetland habitat creation within the floodplain, linking the existing floodplain grazing marsh.*
- *Protect ancient woodlands and existing woodland priority habitat. Enhance improved grassland to bring them to species rich grassland of priority habitat quality.*
- *Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of chalk and neutral grassland, wetland, river floodplain, chalk scarp and wet woodland.*
- *Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as restoring the traditional drainage pattern where possible. Encourage the restoration and management of extensive wetland grazing and enhance the pastoral valley floor setting of the Great Stour River.*
- *Seek to remove detracting features from the valley, including replacing/removing post and wire fencing where practicable.*
- *Create and implement a long term management plan for invasive species across the river catchment. Excavation and removal techniques should be favoured, where this is not possible an appropriate herbicide treatment is recommended.*
- *Development Management*
- *Conserve the local distinctiveness of historic buildings and their rural floodplain setting, particularly within the Chartham Conservation Area.*
- *Conserve the open landscape and avoid the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements, which are prominent in the open valley landscape.*
- *Assess new building proposals within adjacent urban and suburban areas to ensure that an attractive and integrated edge is formed with this rural and open recreational landscape. This is important for existing edges as well as the new strategic allocations at Cockerling Farm. Design of this development on the adjacent slopes should consider views from the valley and views to and from the city. Physical access into the Larkey Valley Woods SSSI (within I3) should be minimised to avoid an increase in visitor numbers.*
- *Soften the retail and industrial development to the east, roads and railway corridors with appropriate deciduous woodland including wetland species and wetland trees, avoiding planting on areas of existing biodiversity interest.*
- *Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, ensuring it continues to play a role in providing a setting to Chartham and an approach to Canterbury City.*
- *Continue to provide and promote opportunities for wider public access from the heart of the city, while also managing recreation pressures. Retain a natural and informal character to existing and new features,*

including a muted colour scheme for car parks, footpaths and interpretation.

- *Restore the quality of views to Canterbury Cathedral by mitigating the impact of the built-up areas and ensuring planting does not obscure views.*

I3 Chartham and Shalmsford Downland

Key Characteristics

- *Undulating downland chalk slopes with silty soils, used for intensive arable agriculture.*
- *Large arable fields with evidence of hedgerow loss.*
- *Mixed woodland blocks (including priority habitat deciduous woodland) and hedgerows both dominated by beech, forming Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS.*
- *Blocks of ancient woodland.*
- *Poplar shelterbelts and some orchards, remnant of traditional farming practices.*
- *Modern, densely populated housing at Shalmsford Street.*
- *Encompassing part of the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and part of the Mystole Park Conservation Area, providing a rural setting to the historic buildings including Oasthouses and cottages.*
- *Narrow hedge lined lanes.*
- *Long panoramic views across the Kent Downs AONB which lies immediately adjacent to the south.*
- *Crossed by the Stour Valley Walk Long Distance Footpath in the west.*

Key Sensitivities and Values

- *Strongly undulating and coherent chalk arable landscape forming the dip slope to the Kent Downs.*
- *Strong landscape framework provided by intact hedgerows connecting with characteristic beech avenues and*
- *woodlands (deciduous woodlands defined as priority habitats).*
- *Designated woodland and coppice habitats at Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS, along with areas of ancient woodland at Rabbit Wood and Long/Oakfield Shaws.*
- *The remaining network of hedgerows forming strong patterns of Parliamentary and late-Medieval fields around areas of intensive arable and horticulture production, which provide landscape and biodiversity value.*
- *Areas continuing with traditional agricultural practices (including priority habitat orchards) that are under threat from arable conversion.*

- *The landscape's role as a setting to the northern edge of the Kent Downs AONB and the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and the Mystole Park Conservation Area.*
- *Traditional farmsteads connected by minor trackways, contributing towards the rural character.*
- *Prehistoric bowl barrows (Scheduled Monuments) within Iffin Wood.*
- *Rural and historic route of Chartham Downs Road.*
- *Panoramic elevated views that look across the AONB to the south, including from along PRowS.*
- *Pockets of quiet/tranquil landscape in the north and east, away from developed areas.*

Biodiversity Aim:

To protect and enhance ancient woodland and to create chalk, neutral and acid grassland as part of the wider network of these habitats within the East Kent Woodlands & Downs BOA.

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- *Conserve and manage the woodland blocks and belts (including the characteristic beech avenues) and seek to replace non-native species with native trees. Seek to link up the network of existing woodlands to strengthen habitat connectivity.*
- *Increase the extent of native deciduous woodland, using locally occurring native species in order to link to existing woodland. Seek to avoid the introduction of coniferous boundaries/shelterbelts.*
- *Protect the landscape's valued semi-natural habitats including ancient woodland at Larkey Valley Woods SSSI/LNR and Iffin Wood/ Little Iffin Wood LWS, Rabbit Wood and Long/Oakfield Shaws, seeking to reconnect with other fragments of this habitat. Physical access into Larkey Valley Woods SSSI should be minimised to avoid an increase in visitor numbers.*
- *Seek to enhance the arable landscape through management along margins for biodiversity and conserve remaining areas of pasture.*
- *Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of fertile soils woodland, chalk scarp woodland, chalk grassland, neutral grassland and acid grassland and heath where appropriate.*
- *Conserve and improve the traditional landscape pattern and structure, as well as increasing biodiversity interest through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides and along historic field boundaries. Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible.*
- *Conserve and enhance historic field patterns and features including the prehistoric bowl barrows within Iffin Wood.*

- *Conserve old orchards and their landscape and biodiversity value.*
- *Development Management*
- *Conserve the rural setting to the Garlinge Green, Kenfield and Swarling Conservation Area and the Mystole Park Conservation Area, respecting the character of historic built form along Mystole Lane.*
- *Protect the remnants of prehistoric bowl barrows within Iffin Wood including appropriate vegetation management.*
- *Conserve the undeveloped character and tranquillity of the landscape by avoiding the introduction of large scale or incongruous elements. Any proposals to upgrade the road network should retain the rural character of the roads, including the historic route of Chartham Downs Road.*
- *Retain uninterrupted long-distance panoramic views across the AONB to the south and views from the AONB towards this LCA by avoiding any development in prominent locations such as on higher ground including large scale farm buildings.*
- *Promote enhanced management of horse paddocks, ensuring they are sympathetically integrated into the landscape.*
- *Seek to integrate visually prominent development including large agricultural buildings within the landscape through appropriate screening planting.*

H1: Harbledown Fruitbelt

Location and Summary

The Harbledown Fruit Belt LCA is an area of distinctive folded landscape which is predominately under orchard cultivation. The boundaries are contained by the edge of the district to the west, the Blean Woods to the north and Canterbury City and the Stour Valley to the east and south. It is part of a much larger fruit belt area that covers a substantial part of North East Kent and surrounds the outcrop of higher wooded ground at Bigbury Hill.

Key Sensitivities and Values

- *Rolling topography with mosaic of orchards and woodland provides visual interest and diversity.*
- *Occasional areas of ecologically important priority habitat deciduous woodland which forms part of the wider Blean Woods.*
- *Historic farmsteads and oast houses provide a sense of place and time depth.*
- *Provides important rural setting to Bigbury Camp Scheduled Monument and historic village of Harbledown.*
- *Good PRow network which provides recreational value.*
- *Occasional glimpsed views to Canterbury City and the Cathedral from high points and long valleys.*

- *Strong rural character with limited development, enclosed by the Blean Woods.*

Biodiversity Aim:

To enhance wetlands, grassland and ancient woodlands, as part of the wider wetland, species rich grassland and woodland networks of the Blean and Lower Stour Wetlands BOAs.

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities

Landscape Management

- *Conserve and enhance the biodiversity interest of wetland habitats around the watercourse at Upper Harbledown by managing scrub encroachment and in the south of the LCA near Howfield Farm as part of the wider habitat improvement to be carried out along the banks of the Great Stour.*
- *Restore and create acid grassland and heath and woodland habitat in the north around Denstead Farm.*
- *Manage and enhance the wildlife interest of agricultural fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and enhance areas of improved grassland and arable fields to species rich grassland.*
- *Enhance or reinstate management of ancient woodlands at South Blean Woods LWS and reconnect with surrounding areas of ancient woodland such as those at Hunstead Wood.*
- *Implement habitat opportunities identified within the BOA including the creation of fertile soils woodland, wet woodland, chalk scarp woodland, acid soil woodland, chalk grassland, neutral grassland and acid grassland.*
- *Enhance and augment fragmented field boundary hedgerows with native species, replacing post and wire fencing where possible. Encourage the replacement of unsympathetic coniferous shelterbelts with native deciduous species*
- *Conserve old orchards for their landscape, visual and biodiversity value.*

Development Management

- *Conserve the strong vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Upper Harbledown and Harbledown Conservation Areas.*
- *Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in the setting to Harbledown and Canterbury City and conserve the key views to the Cathedral in its Stour valley setting.*
- *In relation to Canterbury City conserve the distinct rural edge formed by the steep slopes of Golder Hill.*

- *Seek to enhance the setting of Chartham Hatch and areas of larger farm building, including opportunities for further*
- *woodland planting to help integrate these areas within the landscape.*
- *Conserve and respect the character of historic built form and their association with traditional farming practices by resisting further agricultural intensification.*
- *Protect the valued recreational use of the landscape, seeking opportunities to further enhance opportunities for access and enjoyment.*

H4: Nackington Farmlands

Location and Summary

The LCA is located on the lower dip slope of the Kent Downs, immediately to the south of Canterbury City rising gently towards the AONB which forms the southern boundary as defined by Bridge Road and Chartham Road. To the west the boundary is marked by the more intricate chalk topography of Chartham Downs and to the east by the railway marking the boundary with the fruit belt landscapes of Littlebourne.

Biodiversity Aim:

Aim: To protect, restore and enhance ancient woodland, priority habitats and designated sites within the LCA

A very small area of this LCA lies within the East Kent Woodlands & Downs BOA. The targets associated with this BOA should be considered in relation to the adjacent Larkley Valley Wood SSSI / LNR and the Iffin Wood and Little Iffin Wood (of which a very small part lies within the LCA), which offer important strategic habitat within the district.

Broad habitat types present within the LCA include arable and horticulture, improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, traditional orchard

and built up areas. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and deciduous woodland and traditional orchard, which are listed as a priority habitat.

Landscape Guidelines and Key Habitat Opportunities:

Landscape Management

- *Conserve and reinforce the parkland character around Nackington House and Renville putting in place a programme of new parkland tree planting where appropriate.*
- *Conserve remnant traditional orchards for their landscape, biodiversity, and historic value.*
- *Manage and enhance the interest of arable fields by encouraging the creation of uncultivated field margins and other wildlife-friendly farming methods.*

- *Improve the quality of the existing boundaries and restore hedgerows, tree belts and areas of deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland) to strengthen the connectivity to habitats within the BOA.*

Development Management

- *Conserve the open character of the arable dip slope cut by more enclosed dry valleys.*
- *Conserve and enhance views of Canterbury City and seek to maintain views to Canterbury Cathedral against the Stour valley slopes and open skyline backdrop.*
- *Conserve the visual links with the AONB ensuring that this area continues to provide a rural dip slope setting to the Kent Downs.*
- *Improve the definition of and strengthen the boundary with the existing and new urban edge respecting the contribution from the traditional field pattern. For new development the aim should be to secure a sensitive and integrated edge with the surrounding rural area avoiding hard built or tall development, with open space/green infrastructure, plus associated hedgerow and tree planting to soften edges and provide a transition to the rural dip slope landscape.*
- *Conserve the sense of scale avoiding separation and further subdivision of field parcels which are in active agricultural use.*
- *Improve the continuity of the green link afforded by the disused Elham Valley Railway and potential as a green infrastructure connection.*
- *Resist the introduction of contrasting tall visual elements such as pylons, telecommunications masts etc. Seek opportunities to rationalise multiple/ double pylon lines.*
- *Conserve the distinctive vernacular of historic buildings and their rural setting, particularly within the Nackington and Renville Conservation Areas and reference the pattern of red stock weather board and clay tile buildings in new buildings.*
- *Enhance the approach to the city along the New Dover Road and North Downs Way in sympathy with their historic significance by creating vistas towards the city and cathedral and sense of a gateway to Canterbury.*
- *Conserve the PRoW connections between the AONB and Canterbury City, managing and restoring key views and their setting.*
- *Conserve the rural character of the landscape ensuring that it continues to play a role in providing a rural separation between Canterbury City and the outlying villages of Bridge, Patricbourne and Lower Hardres.*

Canterbury's Riverside: Achieving a connected network²² (August 2016)

- 3.97. This document was published by Canterbury City Council as a supplementary planning document and sets out a strategy for the riverside corridor between Chartham and Sturry.
- 3.98. The main policy that relates to landscape and biodiversity is **Policy RS12** which states that:

Wherever possible new design and landscape management decisions shall promote biodiversity. The in-channel river passing through Canterbury shall be enhanced as a linear movement route for wildlife.

Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2031²³

- 3.99. The Green Infrastructure Strategy:

sets out a strategic network of green infrastructure across Canterbury district, along with an assessment of needs and opportunities, strategic priorities and objectives

- 3.100. Its vision is stated on page 1 as:

Delivering an integrated and multifunctional green infrastructure network covering all of Canterbury district, which supports sustainable development, health and wellbeing and economic prosperity and provides a distinctive and high quality local environment that is managed and valued by Canterbury's communities.

- 3.101. The most relevant Identified Needs are as follows:

Biodiversity

- *To protect, enhance and restore biodiversity, particularly biodiversity for which Canterbury district is important internationally, nationally and in Kent.*
- *To develop a coherent and resilient ecological network through ensuring the core network of biodiversity sites are in good condition and through reducing fragmentation and increasing connectivity.*
- *To strengthen links between urban and rural biodiversity and bring more wildlife into urban areas. Support pollinators.*
- *To encourage co-ordinated and partnership working across many sectors to improve delivery and secure funding.*

Woodland

- *Ensure protection of ancient semi-natural woodland, priority woodland habitats, ancient trees and important hedgerows.*
- *Promote increased woodland management, to improve biodiversity, increase resilience and support the economy.*

²² https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/10nBF7e9tcpTOZH3_pIHsNJHoqDuieAKg

²³ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H3QHnxWMrnn5N6GxYq6HWEiW1VR8wrER/view>

- *Respond proactively to threats to trees and woodlands posed by climate change and pests and diseases.*
- *Promote urban woodlands, street trees and tree planting to provide multiple benefits for people and the environment.*
- *Ensure trees are retained on new development and planted where appropriate.*

Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy Action Plan 2018-2023

3.102. The Action Plan for the Canterbury District Green Infrastructure Strategy

‘covers the period from 2018-2023 and includes the projects which are intended to be taken forward during this time period, to deliver green infrastructure objectives’.

3.103. Its actions for Rural Canterbury District, which contains Chartham, are:

- *Continue cross-boundary working with neighbouring districts to further nature conservation across the landscape.*
- *Support community initiatives to improve nature conservation sites.*
- *Take forward landscape and conservation projects in partnership with the Kent Downs AONB*
- *Ensure that the countryside is linked to the city centre through strategic allocations and that corridor linkages across and into the city are retained in the future.*
- *Continue to ensure those sites managed by Canterbury City Council are in good condition for wildlife and access.*
- *Support promotion of the rights of way network for health and wellbeing and tourism benefits.*
- *Implement new cycle routes in accordance with Transport Strategy, seeking green infrastructure gains in implementation.*
- *New development should retain trees, hedgerows and woodland of amenity and wildlife value.*
- *Deliver new play facilities and enhancements, deliver new allotment site and new mini and junior football in accordance with the Open Spaces Strategy.*
- *Ensure that the countryside is linked to urban areas.*

National Planning Policy

3.104. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Practice Guidance²⁴ (NPPG) together form the legislative framework for planning in England.

²⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.105. The NPPF was originally published in March 2012, consolidating over two dozen previously issued documents. It has since been revised in 2018, 2019 and 2021. It sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 3.106. The NPPF includes policies which are directly relevant to landscape and biodiversity. The purpose of planning is to achieve sustainable development by considering 3 key objectives in Paragraph 8c. The environmental objective is to:
- to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.*
- 3.107. The policies which relate to landscape and biodiversity are detailed below.
- 3.108. Paragraph 20 d) requires strategic policy to take sufficient provision of natural, built and historic environment including landscape and green infrastructure:
- Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision¹² for:*
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*
- 3.109. Paragraph 84, sections a and c require enablement of sustainable growth of business through good design and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside respectively:
- a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- 3.110. Paragraph 85 requires that development beyond existing settlements be sensitive to its surroundings, not have unacceptable impact on local roads and exploit sustainable transport:
- Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.*

- 3.111. Paragraph 119 requires effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses while safeguarding and improving the environment with footnote 44 providing an extra caveat to development of brownfield land if it might cause harm to designated sites of importance by biodiversity:

Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield' land .

Except where this would conflict with other policies in this Framework, including causing harm to designated sites of importance for biodiversity.

- 3.112. Paragraph 131 highlights the importance of trees and ensures that development proposals include them:

Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined, that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments (such as parks and community orchards), that appropriate measures are in place to secure the long-term maintenance of newly-planted trees, and that existing trees are retained wherever possible. Applicants and local planning authorities should work with highways officers and tree officers to ensure that the right trees are planted in the right places, and solutions are found that are compatible with highways standards and the needs of different users

- 3.113. Paragraph 148 expresses the need to protect the green belt:

When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations

- 3.114. Paragraph 174 discusses that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

- e) *preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

3.115. Paragraph 176 expresses that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Consideration of applications in these designated areas should include an assessment of:

- a) *the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) *the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) *any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

3.116. Paragraph 180 states that when determining planning applications, the following principles should be applied:

- a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*

3.117. Paragraph 190 b requires a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and taking advantage of historic setting and sense of place:

Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 3.118. The NPPG was published online by the Government in 2014 and is updated in line with the NPPF and policy changes from central government. It provides further planning guidance to be used alongside the NPPF. NPPG is split into topics such as natural environment and provides specific guidance surrounding that topic.
- 3.119. NPPG provides guidance on natural environment and more specifically on agricultural land, soil and brownfield land of environment value, green infrastructure, biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems and landscape.

National & International Legislation

- 3.120. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006²⁵ makes provision about bodies concerned with the natural environment and rural communities to make provision in connection with wildlife, SSSIs and the Broads, to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes. Section 40 places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan.
- 3.121. Natural England have developed a GIS tool called Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)²⁶ which:

make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

²⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

²⁶ <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/ssi-impact-risk-zones-england>

4. MAIN ISSUES IN CHARTHAM PARISH

- 4.1. The Working Group has identified nine main issues relevant to landscape and biodiversity which are summarised below.

Issue 1 – Illegal Development outside of settlements and loss of Green Space

- 4.2. The Working Group has also identified that illegal development outside of settlements exists which negatively impacts the rural landscape.
- 4.3. The Working Group has identified the loss of green space as an issue which impacts the Parish.
- 4.4. The Community raised through the Vision and Objectives Survey that they don't like that the Parish is becoming too built up, piecemeal development outside the existing built areas and development on the green belt. They are also worried about the future of Chartham Parish from additional building spoiling the village character and views, building on the "greenbelt" and erosion of green spaces.

Issue 2 – The Degradation of Our Ability to Enjoy the Rural Setting

- 4.5. The Facebook group "*Chartham and Surrounding Area in Pictures*"²⁷ (started February 2017) is described as a *group for people to share their pictures of Chartham, Chartham Hatch, Old Wives Lees, Chilham and Mystole saying These are beautiful villages so lets get sharing our pictures. These are beautiful villages so lets get sharing our pictures.* The fact that it has 702 members highlights our parishioners love for local landscape.
- 4.6. During the Vision and Objectives consultation, we asked people to provide us with a brief description of their 3 worries for the future of the Parish. The response has been summarised in the word cloud at Figure 3.

²⁷ See <https://www.facebook.com/groups/270855739998037>

- 4.10. The Working Party are concerned that there has been a gradual loss of trees and hedgerows over the years and there is a threat that this may continue.

Issue 4 – Poor Management of the Great River Stour Valley Basin

- 4.11. The River Stour Valley Basin acts as one of the most attractive, valued landscapes within the Parish that also provides habitat to a wide range of animal and plant species.
- 4.12. The Community identified what things they liked about Chartham in the Vision and Objectives Survey, and this included ‘fields by river’, ‘the river path’, ‘river walks along the Stour’ and ‘river location’.
- 4.13. The Working Group has identified that the Great River Stour Valley Basin is being increasingly poorly managed, and this must change to maintain these attractive attributes described by the Community.

Issue 5 – Harmful Impact of Development on Biodiversity, Lack of Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.14. There is a strong local interest in Nature as demonstrated through consultation responses to date and the Chartham Village Natureboard which has 222 members since it was started in November 2020.
- 4.15. Development can have a detrimental impact on biodiversity and development should result in biodiversity net gain as required by national policy. Recent developments have demonstrated that this is not happening in the Parish and as a result the harmful impact of development on biodiversity and lack of biodiversity net gain features as Issue 5

Issue 6 – Development damaging the complex and historic landscape which contributes to Chartham’s unique sense of place

- 4.16. Chartham is a rural parish with rich natural character and a complex and historic landscape with unique features which must be protected.
- 4.17. The Community have highlighted what they loved about the Parish which includes the ‘*beautiful countryside*’, ‘*access to woodland and countryside*’ and ‘*rural location*’. To contrast this they have also confirmed what they don’t like which is the ‘*constant building of new houses destroying open space*’. Looking to the future, concerns were raised about ‘*building over green spaces*’ and ‘*inappropriate development in sensitive areas*’. When asked what would improve their lives,

responses included *'protecting our village status and green land'* and *'no further development'*.

- 4.18. The Working Group has therefore identified development damaging the complex landscape as a key issue. In particular, the ribbon development along the A28 and Shalmsford Street causing harm to Chartham's landscape and character.

Issue 7 – Impacts on biodiversity and landscape not being appropriately mitigated

- 4.19. There is concern that the impacts on biodiversity and the landscape are not being appropriately mitigated when development occurs, or when mitigation is included in development it is not properly implemented. When not implemented there appears to be a lack of enforcement action by Canterbury City Council to force developers to
- 4.20. There is also concern that planning conditions and obligations have not been used appropriately or fully implemented as needed to make development acceptable in planning terms.

Issue 8 – Harmful impacts of development upon the Kent Downs AONB and its setting

- 4.21. The Community noted in the Vision and Objectives Survey responses that *'AONB'* is a word that best describes Chartham. *'Beautiful location in AONB'* was also identified as one of the things the Community love most about the Parish.
- 4.22. Ensuring the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is maintained as an area of outstanding natural beauty is therefore paramount. The principle threat to this comes through inappropriate new development. The harmful impacts of development upon the Kent Downs AONB and its setting is therefore a key issue which needs to be addressed.

Issue 9 – Development within the green gap, between settlements and neighbouring areas, degrading the rural landscape

- 4.23. The Community raised in the Vision and Objectives Survey that one of the things they did not like about the Parish is the gap between Canterbury and Chartham getting smaller. The Community also worry that *"overdevelopment from Canterbury"*, *"infill of fields surrounding the village"* in general, erosion of *"the gap between us and Canterbury/becoming a satellite extension of Canterbury"*, and *"encroachment by Canterbury"* could all impact Chartham in the future. There appears to be a broad consensus that the community would like to see no further

development between Canterbury and Chartham, and more or better protection to prevent Chartham becoming part of Canterbury.

- 4.24. Development within the green gap, between our settlements and those in neighbouring areas, is therefore an important issue that needs to be addressed to preserve our rural landscape and the character of our Parish. Increasing ribbon development, both commercial and residential, along roads such as the A28, Howfield Lane and Hatch Lane are also problematic and do not help address this issue.

5. ISSUE 1 – ILLEGAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOSS OF GREEN SPACE

Overview

- 5.1. Development outside of settlements can lead to urban sprawl and an extension of urban areas into the countryside which changes and can degrade (as has been identified within the Vision and Objectives survey) the beautiful landscape. It can also negatively impact local biodiversity if this is not properly addressed.
- 5.2. Green spaces are fundamental aspects of the rural setting, providing visually pleasing spaces that can be enjoyed by residents of rural areas and visitors alike.
- 5.3. The Community raised through the Vision and Objectives Survey that the Parish is 'becoming too built up', with 'piecemeal development outside the existing built areas', including 'strawberry polytunnels', harming the rural character of the area. They are also concerned that there will be continued 'building over green spaces', resulting in 'additional building spoiling the village character and views'. The community believe that these issues could be addressed by 'protecting the village green status', and by looking to protect unbuilt areas from development.

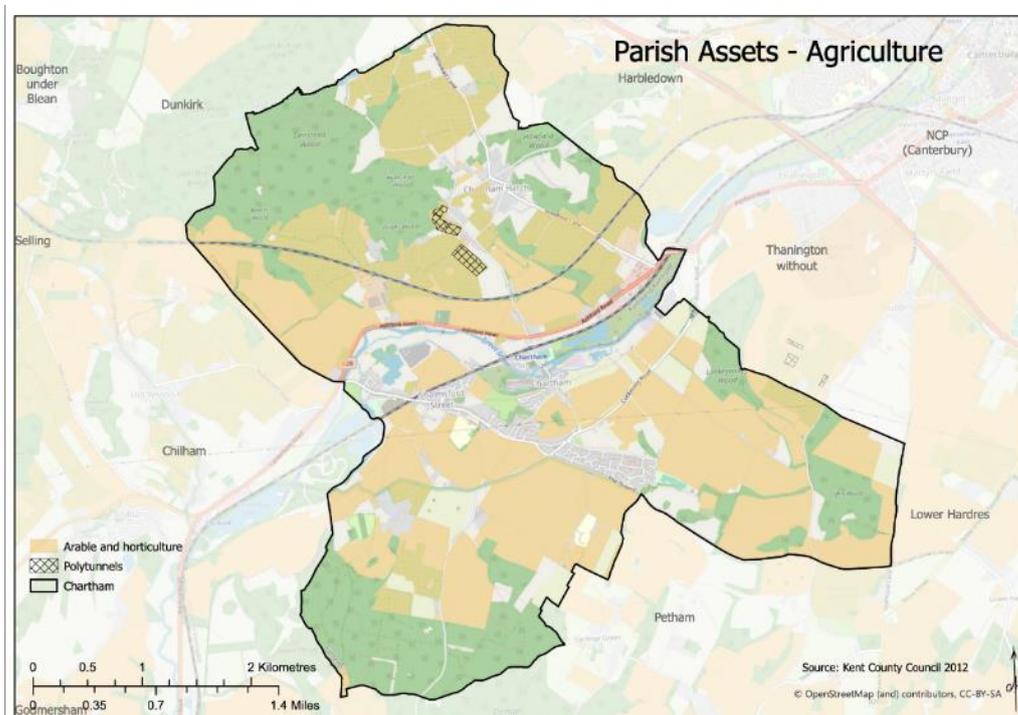


Figure 4 - Map showing Agricultural and Horticultural Land marked in buff and the recent introduction of Polytunnels near to the National Trail, the North Downs Way, marked in hatched polygons

- 5.4. Alongside this general concern about new development, the Working Group is also concerned by the number of buildings which are seemingly being erected without the required planning permission. Examples of buildings in contravention of Policy HD4 (new dwellings in the countryside) in the Local Plan are:

- Placement of three containers at Perry Court Farm - no application.
 - Recently identified placement of static caravans in woodland near the pumping station behind Steed Cottages in Chartham Hatch - no planning application. Canterbury City Council enforcement have investigated.
- 5.5. Possible contravention of HD5 (conversion of rural buildings) in the Local Plan, where permission has been given for buildings but not as residence are:
- CA//16/00982 - retrospective application for the demolition and erection of replacement agricultural building - granted.
- 5.6. An example where Canterbury City Council has enforced HD4:
- There is an illegal development currently being enforced by Canterbury City Council in Iffin Wood. Planning application CA//19/01901 (Land at New House Lane - there is an appeal lodged).
- 5.7. Uncertain enforcement exists for:
- One caravan exists on the piece of land marked 'Tank' on the west of Iffin Lane, to the north of the boundary fence which defines Iffin Woods to the south of Iffin Meadows Farm (planning refused).
- 5.8. An historic example of lack of enforcement leading to considerable development which would otherwise have been illegal is:
- The conversion of an illegal dump, poorly enforced over 20 years, into a housing development adjacent to Larkey Valley Wood, publicized as a means of clearing it up²⁹: Planning Application: CA//15/00683 - Larkey Woods Farm, Cockering Road, Chartham. Restoration of agricultural land across two adjoining sites; demolition of 5 no. existing derelict barns; the processing of on-site materials and associated landscaping; the construction of an enabling development of 10 no. residential units with a new integral access.
- 5.9. An example where the Parish Council objected when a planning application was made, and an application was withdrawn:
- In the AONB, planning application CA//19/10098 - land on the west side of Garlinge Green Road - proposed use of land for stationing of 1 number residential static caravan and 1 number storage caravan -
- 5.10. Overall, development outside of settlements and the loss of green spaces is a significant issue within the Parish, and this is compounded by illegal developments which seek to circumvent the planning system.

²⁹ <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/homes-plan-unlikely-on-hazardous-38486/>

Options to address the issue

- 5.11. The Working Group has considered the best way to address the issue and believe that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address the issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national policy to prevent and control illegal development and protect green space

- 5.12. This Option would see no specific actions taken in the neighbourhood plan to try and address this issue. Instead, we would continue to rely on national policy which aims to guide development in the correct places. Legislation provides the Local Planning Authority (LPA) with the power to enforce against illegal development.
- 5.13. National policy and the Local Plan discourage development on green, open spaces and states the significance of them on rural settlements as places for health and well-being and therefore it is important that they are protected.

Option 2 – Identify and designate sites as Local Green Spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan

- 5.14. In a bid to protect those open spaces which are most important to us, the Neighbourhood Plan can seek to designate specific areas as Local Green Space. Once applied, this designation in effect makes a space akin to Green Belt land in perpetuity making it very hard to build on, with the priority being to preserve the space's openness (absence of development).
- 5.15. Local Green Space can only be designated where it meets the three tests set out in NPPF Paragraph 102, which are:
- a) in a reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
 - b) demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
 - c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land*
- 5.16. To pursue this Option, we would need to first identify and then assess each space to ensure that the above tests are met. The tests would need to be applied rigorously meaning we may not be able to designate all spaces that come to mind as Local Green Space.

Option 3 – Include a section in the Neighbourhood Plan on how planning breaches are enforced.

- 5.17. Canterbury City Council are responsible for ensuring that illegal development is dealt with in an appropriate manor and the process for planning enforcement is set out in their Enforcement Plan³⁰.
- 5.18. This Option sees this text being included within the Neighbourhood Plan in an explanatory section so that guidance is symmetrical between the two plans. This will also help to encourage local people to report illegal development to aid the Canterbury City Council's Enforcement team.

Option 4 – Outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, formalise a process within the Parish Council planning committee and the Parish Council itself to actively report illegal development

- 5.19. This would see the Parish Council adopting their own enforcement plan, or procedures that should be taken when illegal development is reported to or identified by the Parish Council. It could be supported by within the Neighbourhood Plan like:

The Parish Council will be proactive, in their approach to resist illegal development by requesting Canterbury City Council to serve an enforcement notice or a breach of condition notice. It is illegal to disobey an enforcement notice unless it is successfully appealed against. If the verdict against appeals for refusal of permission or enforcement notices comes out against you and you still refuse to comply, you may be prosecuted.

- 5.20. If enforcement action is taken by Canterbury City Council, a developer may seek to submit a planning application or appeal should formal enforcement action be taken. Whichever route is taken, relevant planning policies will be considered alongside whether it is in the public interest to take enforcement action. It could be in the public interest to take enforcement action if the development is harmful to the neighbourhood, would unacceptably affect public amenity or safety, the existing use of land and/or buildings meriting protection, development is harmful to biodiversity, it is causing pollution or impacting a source protection zone. This is not an exhaustive list and the City Council would consider each report of illegal development on a case by case basis.

Option 5 – Introduce a policy that requires retrospective applications to identify and mitigate impacts.

- 5.21. Where retrospective applications are made, it is easy for the true impact of development to be forgotten. This Option would see the Neighbourhood Plan include a requirement for the development to identify impacts upon landscape character, conservation areas, AONB, AHLVs, biodiversity etc., not only for the

³⁰ https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/downloads/file/1199/planning_enforcement_plan

site, but its setting. Change of use must accord with conditions in Canterbury City Council planning policies.

- 5.22. Whilst this should be done as a matter of course for every retrospective application, having this written into policy will ensure that such a requirement is properly considered.

Option 6 – Outside the Neighbourhood Plan, engage with Canterbury City Council to strictly enforce any breaches to planning conditions

- 5.23. In order to be effective, planning conditions must be enforced. The Working Group believe that Chartham Parish Council should lobby Canterbury City Council Planning when planning conditions are breached. This can not only have help ensure that development remains legal but also ensure that requirements (such as biodiversity net gain) are delivered.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 5.24. National policy and legislation requires relevant development to secure planning permission, or allows other development through permitted development. Where breaches occur, local planning authorities have the power to deal with enforcement issues as set out in Option 1. However, as is evident through continued planning breaches in the Parish, relying on national policy and legislation does not seem to be entirely efficient. Likewise the existing policy context does not seem to adequately protect our rural character given continued encroachment of development which is negatively affecting our Community's enjoyment of them.
- 5.25. Designating Local Green Spaces through Option 2 would be the most effective Option at protecting certain areas from inappropriate development which are demonstrably special to the local community. It is low cost and so long as spaces meets the criteria, is decided upon by the Community to help benefit themselves and the space in which they live. Such protections last in perpetuity.
- 5.26. Including a section in the Neighbourhood Plan with text from the Enforcement Plan as set out in Option 3 would help to raise awareness of how to report illegal development, providing advice that is already given by Canterbury City Council. This may help discourage illegal development. The disadvantage of this is, as the Working Group have identified, that this is not enough. We hope that by bringing enforcement Options to the forefront it may make more people aware.
- 5.27. Formalising a process within the Parish Council to report illegal development through Option 4 would help to identify illegal development and encourage Canterbury City Council to manage it. There is currently no such process and can only help to address the issue.

- 5.28. Requiring applications to identify and mitigate for impacts of development through Option 5 would help to prevent what is seen by some as a loophole to overcome known issues (for example where habitat existed before the proposal, works then take place, but no evidence of the pre-development habitat can be identified) to the retrospective application process. The disadvantage of this is that this should already be carried out through the planning system and therefore the Option may not be necessary or be of limited effect.
- 5.29. On balance, a combination of Options 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 are recommended to the Steering Group. Option 1 assumes that no action can be taken which is incorrect. The remainder all present valid ways which we can seek to address the identified issues of illegal development outside of settlements and loss of Green Space.

6. ISSUE 2 – THE DEGRADATION OF OUR ABILITY TO ENJOY THE RURAL SETTING

Overview

- 6.1. The rural setting is fundamental to the unique character of Chartham which is valued so highly by the Community. The Parish Design Statement describes Chartham as:

‘a thriving parish within a rural setting, determined to keep its local distinctiveness of several settlements separated by open spaces’

- 6.2. The Vision & Objectives survey indicated that the rural setting and countryside were not only very important in defining the Parish, but also seen to be at great risk. The Community raised things that they loved about the Parish which included *‘beautiful countryside’*, *‘access to woodland and countryside’* and *‘rural location’*. What they don’t like about the Parish included *‘constant building of new houses destroying open space’*. What they are worried about the future for the Parish included *‘building over green spaces’* and *‘inappropriate development in sensitive areas’*. Finally, what would improve their lives includes *‘protecting our village status and green land’* and *‘no further development’*.
- 6.3. The boundaries and names of the fields of the parish were celebrated in 1997 in the Parish of Chartham Field Names Map to be found in the Chartham Village Hall. This represents a long-standing interest of the parishioners in the landscape within which they live. They were derived mainly from the Chartham Tithe Schedule of 21 September 1842.³¹
- 6.4. Facebook groups such as ‘Chartham and Surrounding Areas in Pictures’ and ‘Chartham Village Natureboard’ show the importance of the natural setting to locals. The Valued Views survey, however, had little response (14 views submitted). It was hampered by technical problems and was released just after the Chartham Parish Council survey. Covid online fatigue may also have been a factor.

³¹ <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/research/tithes/chartham#02.htm>

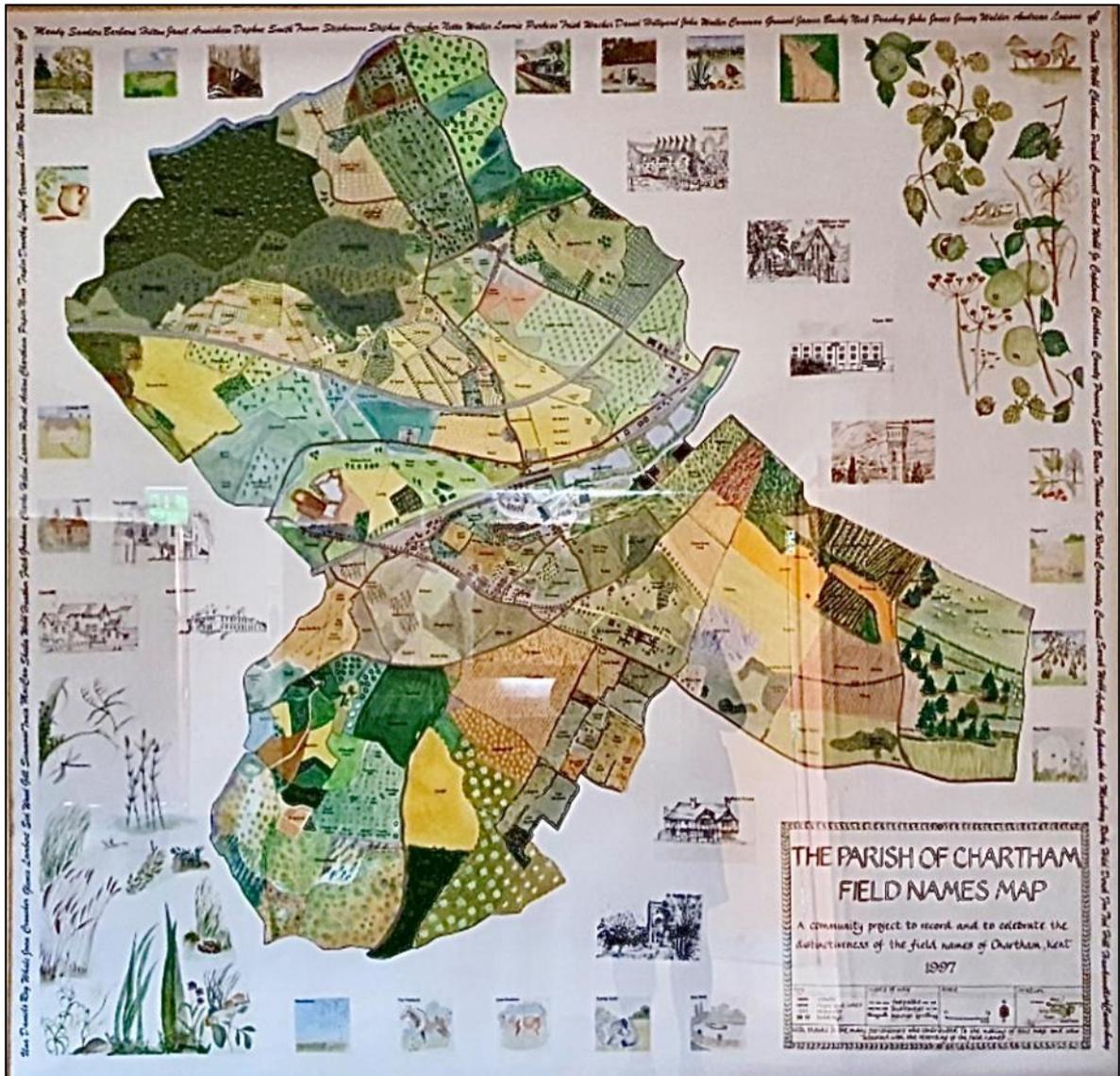


Figure 5 - The Parish of Chartham Field Names Map 1997

- 6.5. The Working Group discussed the challenges of defining Chartham's landscape. Even with the National Landscape Character profiles, Chartham is divided. The complexity of Chartham's landscape is reflected in the number of landscape character areas within the parish. These include two within Kent Downs AONB (Chilham and Petham). Within the Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment, each of the LCAs have their individual landscape management and development management guidelines. In some cases, the LCA management refers to adjacent LCAs so the concept of the setting of a development is relevant. These are protected in the Local Plan through Policy LB4 which ensures that development is sympathetic to the landscape character of the locality in these areas.
- 6.6. The Landscape Character Areas in Chartham are identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal as Chartham contains 7 Landscape Character Areas outside the AONB (which as mentioned above has 2 Landscape Character Areas). These are D5: Bigbury Hill and D6: Denstead Woods (both parts of the Blean Complex) F1: Stour Valley Sides, F7: Stour Valley West, H1: Harbledown Fruit Belt, H4 Nackington Farmlands and I3 Chartham and Shalmsford Slopes. The challenge for sensitively located development within

Chartham Parish is that each of these 9 LCAs not only have their own characters, but also the potential to impact those nearby and visible from the other side of the Stour valley, from below looking up or from above looking down.

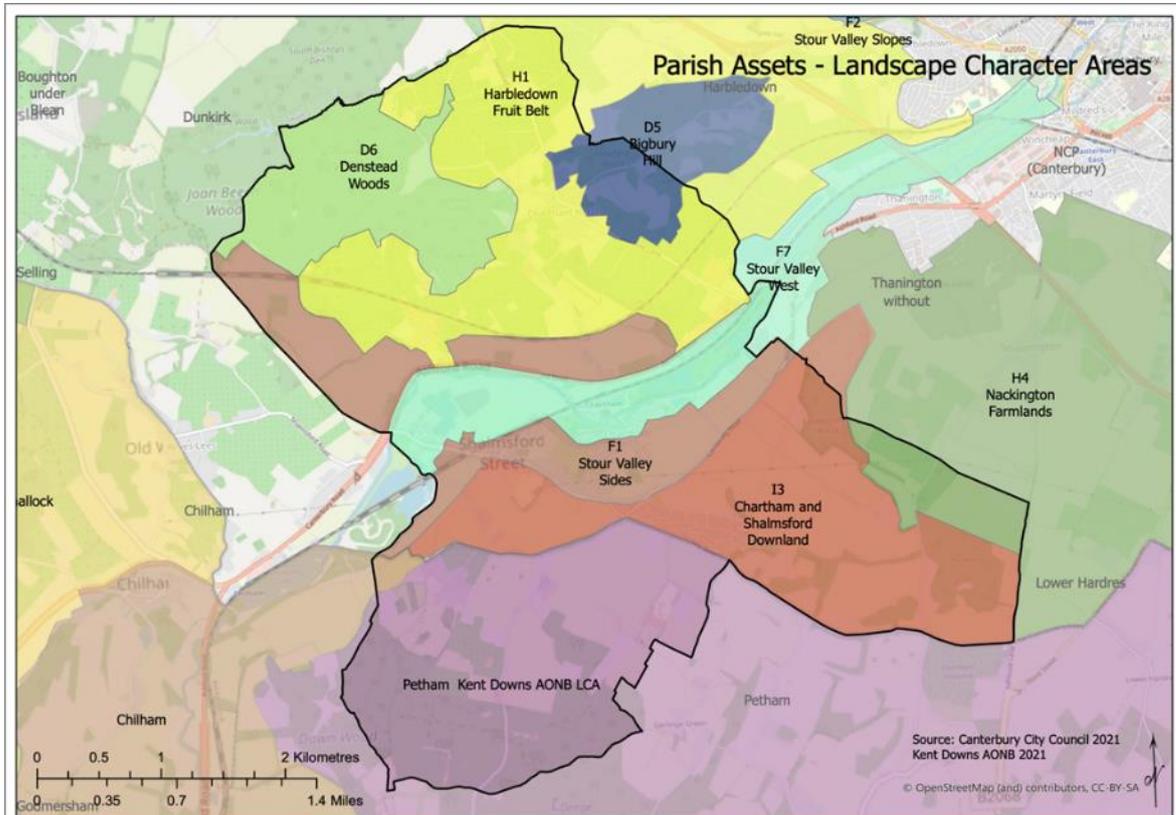


Figure 6 - Landscape Character Areas

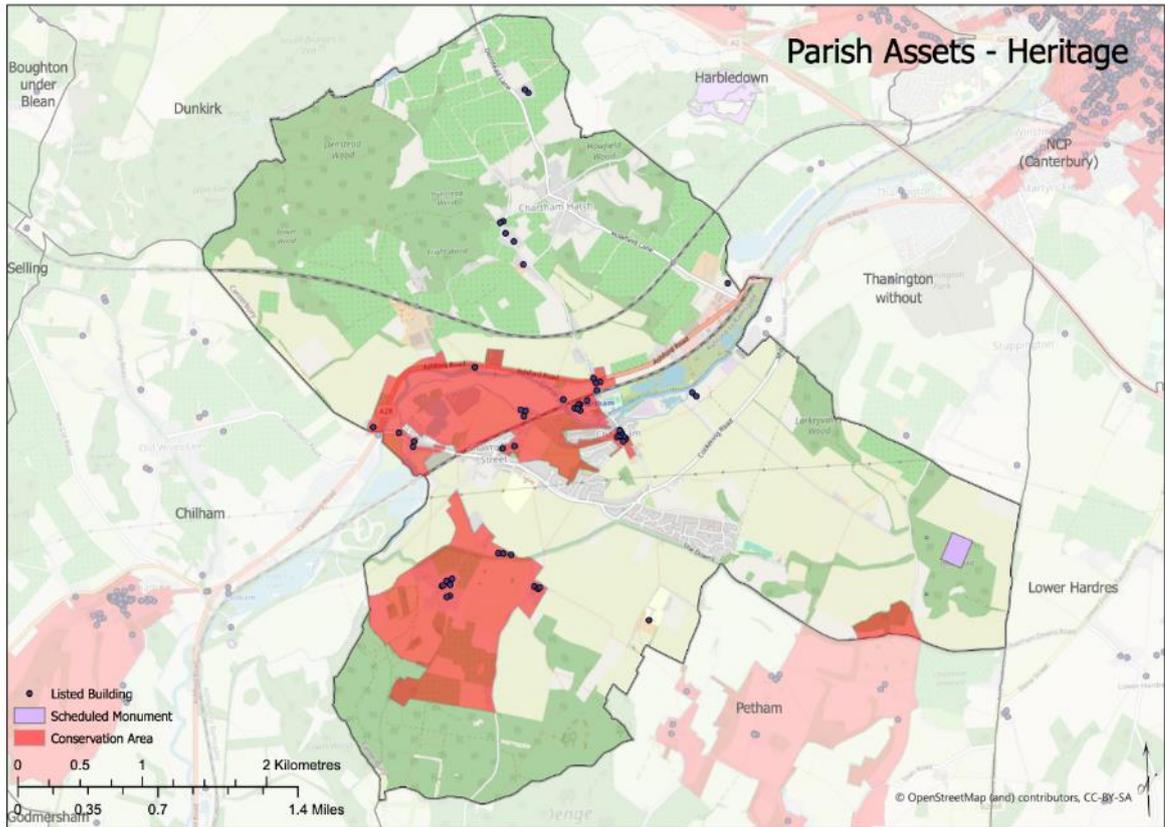


Figure 7 - Conservation areas, Scheduled monuments and Listed buildings (the scheduled monuments at Burnt Farmhouse and Horton are omitted in error)

- 6.7. Conservation areas exist within Chartham Parish. These extend over several settlements and in each case, there is recognition of the contextual importance of landscape setting in creating a sense of place.
- 6.8. Canterbury City Council has retained a number of landscape designations, because of their 'greater than local' importance and where the Council is certain that their special importance requires particular policy recognition. Of particular note to Chartham are the Canterbury Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV), The North Downs AHLV and the Blean Woods AHLV. These AHLV's were all designated as Special Landscape Areas in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan³².
- 6.9. Another concern of the Working Group is the impact of ribbon development within the Parish particularly on the horizon along roads such as the A28 and Shalmsford Street which have problems on a practical front due to inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure. Evidence of this has previously been seen on Hatch Lane and Howfield Lane. Ribbon development can cause harmful impacts to the landscape of the Parish, causing obtrusive views and degrading the Parish's rural quality.
- 6.10. Although old, the *Restrictions of Ribbon Development Act, 1935*³³ provides restrictions to development along road frontages by providing guidance as to how

³² https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0008/99296/SPG1-Landscape-Character-Sep-2006.pdf

³³ https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1935/47/pdfs/ukpga_19350047_en.pdf

development along road frontages should be implemented as to avoid inappropriate ribbon development that can be harmful to the built and natural environment of place.

- 6.11. Light pollution has also been identified as an issue within the Parish. It is caused by artificial lights both on development, playing fields, and our roads. Businesses including agricultural businesses, are often large emitters of light pollution.
- 6.12. Figure 8 shows the distribution of light pollution and dark skies within Chartham and the surrounding area based on data from 2016, and taken from the CPRE and LUC's England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies interactive map. As can be seen, light pollution is mostly concentrated along the Stour River and the A28, with residents of Chartham, Shalmsford Street and Mystole also being impacted by mid-level lighting (2-4 nanowatts/cm²/sr) during night hours.
- 6.13. Light pollution can be detrimental to the enjoyment of the rural setting and peace of mind of the residents of the Parish. It can also impact upon biodiversity such as nocturnal animals who can become confused based on the introduction of artificial light. Plants, animals, insects and aquatic life can all be affected by light pollution and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to reduce the amount of artificial light produced within the Parish.

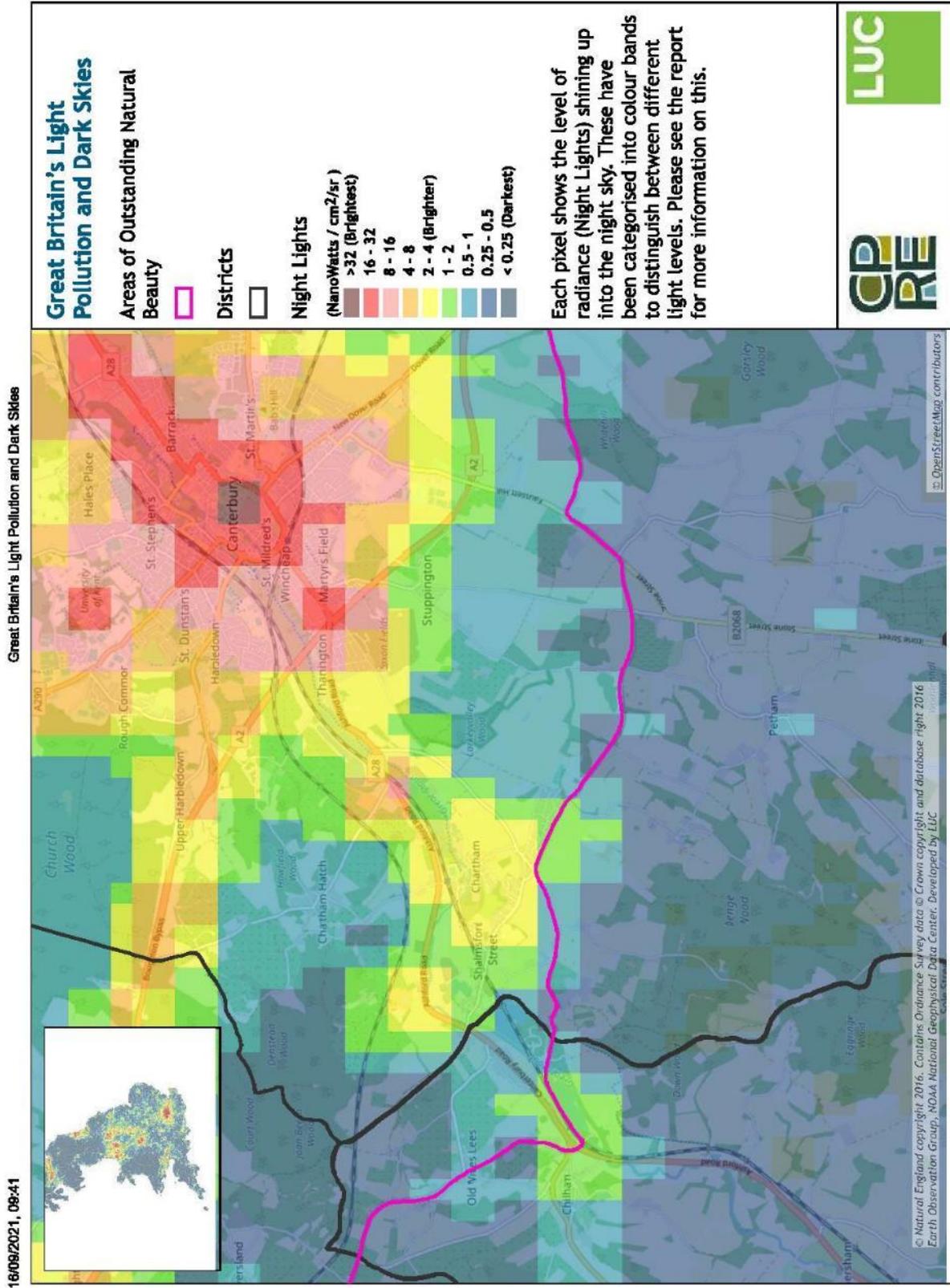


Figure 8 - Light pollution and dark skies within Chartham. Data taken from the CPRE and LUC's *England's Light Pollution and Dark Skies* interactive map <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>

Options to address the issue

- 6.14. The Working Group have considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address the issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national and local policy to protect the valued characteristics of the rural setting

- 6.15. National and local policy encourages the protection of valued landscapes and the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. An example is Natural England's policies with regard to the North Downs³⁴ and North Kent Plain³⁵ landscapes. In addition, part of the Parish is located within the AONB which is a highlight protected area.

Option 2 – Introduce a policy to protect rural roads from the harmful impacts of development

- 6.16. The Chartham Downs Road and other village roads are not only scenic but provide an alternative route to both Canterbury and Ashford for the community. This is, at times, a vital route during periods of road closures and adverse weather. With the exception of B roads, i.e. roads intended to connect different areas, and to feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network, the vast majority of roads in the Parish are classified or unclassified minor roads which provide a positive contribution towards our rural setting. These small windy roads are truly rural in character and make a positive contribution to our sense of place.
- 6.17. This Option would introduce a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan to seek to prevent an urbanisation of our rural lanes. This would be in alignment with guidance in the Canterbury City Council's Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity document 2020 and with AONB policy for the landscape character areas within Chartham. The policy could relate to surface treatment, pavements, new turnings/accesses, street furniture and the protection of hedgerows or existing road edge treatments with the objective of maintaining the rural character of our lanes.

Option 3 – Identify rural tranquil sites including 'quiet lanes' and introduce a policy to protect them from development which creates significant noise.

- 6.18. The perception of being away from the noise, sights and smells of modern life is a much-valued feature of many parts of the landscape and rural life. In the southeast

³⁴ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7036466>

³⁵ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/7036466>

of England tranquillity is an increasingly rare resource. As stated in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan:

Research by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) has shown that since the 1960s England has lost over 20% of its tranquil areas to urban sprawl, traffic and light pollution. The average size of our tranquil areas has reduced by 73%. As Kent's population increase, this resource will become more important and increasingly under threat.

- 6.19. These valued sites could therefore be identified in the Neighbourhood Plan, and policy created to protect them from substantial noise so that the Community can benefit from them as much as possible.

Option 4 – Introduce a policy to prevent development from producing inappropriate light pollution

- 6.20. Due to the expansive natural and rural setting, with development characterised by low-lying buildings, light pollution can arise from various distant sources. In addition, there is concern of encroaching light on the AONB. Bats and other fauna, including humans, are disturbed by artificial lighting as indicated in the CPRE guidance on domestic lighting³⁶, Canterbury City Council's Local District Plan and Bat Conservation Trust's Landscape and urban design for bats³⁷.
- 6.21. There have been some complaints from the Community regarding several sites around Chartham where private /business security lighting is impacting on their quality of life and that of the environment surrounding the sites; this has also been raised as an issue by the Working Group. Examples exist along the A28 and in association with farms which have diversified into industrial warehousing. There is concern that further urban development will detract further.
- 6.22. A policy could therefore be introduced to minimise light pollution from new development, the effect of which can degrade the Community's enjoyment of our rural setting.

Option 5 – Introduce a policy to protect highly valued views

- 6.23. The ability to enjoy our rural setting in part comes from the occasional or continuous, short- or longer-range view across a field, along a road or over the valley.
- 6.24. There are numerous highly valued viewpoints in the Parish which provide outstanding views of the rural landscape and help make our community aware of

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645299/pb13978-getting-light-right.pdf

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[https://cdn.bats.org.uk/pdf/Our%20Work/Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversityweb.pdf?mtime=20181101151349&focal=none](https://cdn.bats.org.uk/pdf/Our%20Work/Landscape%20and%20urban%20design%20for%20bats%20and%20biodiversityweb.pdf?mtime=20181101151349&focal=none)

our rural setting. Some of these views also include far away glimpses of Canterbury Cathedral.

- 6.25. These views are valued by our community but due to development are slowly changing and the rural settings often being irreversibly lost as development takes place within them. This Option proposes to identify our most important views and introduce policy in the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that development does not cause further damage to our important views.

Option 6 – Introduce a policy to protect public rights of way from the harmful impacts of development

- 6.26. The Chartham Parish Design Statement says:

'The whole parish is linked by over sixty Public Rights of Way including the North Downs Way National Trail, the Stour Valley Recreational Walk, three Byways, six Bridleways and fifty-one Footpaths. There is also an 'Access For All' surfaced path beside the river. This network affords opportunities to appreciate the countryside and wildlife within the bounds of the parish, often taking in unspoilt views towards neighbouring parishes.'

- 6.27. In addition, part of the footpath network is the National Trail, the North Downs Way³⁸.

Running from Farnham to Canterbury and the White Cliffs of Dover, the Trail passes through two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Surrey Hills and the Kent Downs, and along the famous Pilgrims Way (or Pilgrim's Way) from Winchester to Canterbury - one of England's most famous cities.

- 6.28. There is a heritage trail in association with this National Trail called 'Chartham's Lost Landscapes'³⁹.

³⁸ https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/north-downs-way/

³⁹ https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/short-routes/lost-landscapes-chartham-walk/.

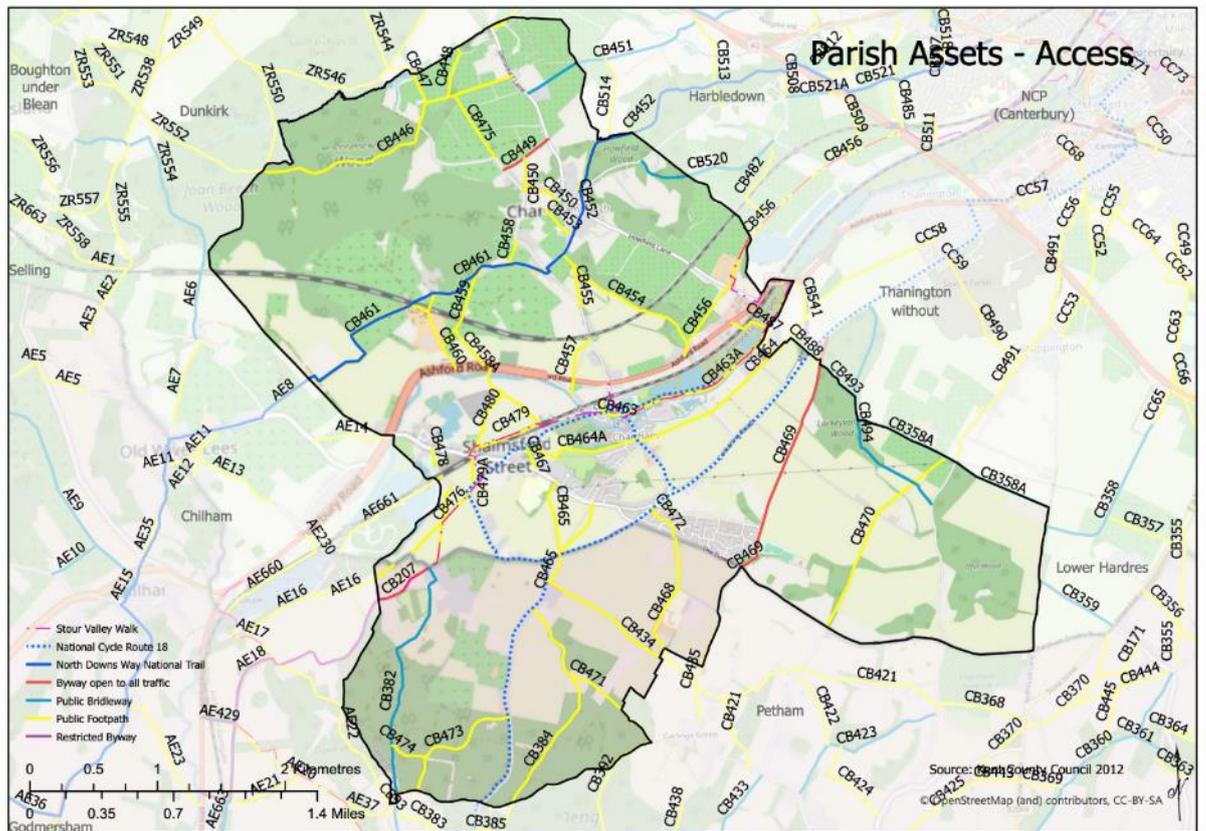


Figure 9 - Public Rights of Way in Chartham Parish

- 6.29. Routes of pilgrimage form part of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Canterbury World Heritage Site. It is at the local planning policy that World Heritage Sites can be protected.
- 6.30. The Glover Landscape Review has as its Proposal 15:
- Joining up with others to make the most of what we have, and bringing National Trails into the national landscapes family*
- 6.31. This is an important consideration and indicates the national landscape importance of the North Downs Way which has a historic association with a route of pilgrimage.
- 6.32. Our public rights of way criss-cross our Parish through our fields and villages, this network reinforces the rural setting we enjoy. New development has potential to harm these rights of way and negatively impact this rural setting or feel. This Option proposed to introduce planning policy to ensure that new development should not adversely affect the rural feel experienced whilst walking along our public rights of way.
- Option 7 – Outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, raise awareness of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) Network
- 6.33. Whilst the issue we are addressing is the degradation of our ability to enjoy our rural setting, it is also right to consider how best we can encourage our community to experience this setting for themselves.

- 6.34. The Working Group would therefore like to encourage the Parish Council to raise awareness of the Public Rights of Way network and how to use it, referring to the newly updated countryside code⁴⁰ wherever possible.
- 6.35. Whilst this would likely fall outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process it could be a vital element to ensuring that our community retains its connection with our rural environs.

Option 8 – Outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, ask the Parish Council to campaign against litter, publicise fines given for fly tipping and dog fouling that degrade the visual quality of the landscape, advertise litter picking group dates and communicate with the Parish about problem areas and bin provision

- 6.36. The Parish residents in the consultation paper identified litter as one of the most important issues in the neighbourhood.
- 6.37. Licensed contractors are legally required to dispose of commercial or industrial material. In some cases, when handling hazardous materials or substances, more than one licensed contractor is involved. There are concerns that some licensed contractors do not fully adhere to legislation.
- 6.38. Personal litter and fly-tipping can be effectively controlled by constant policing and follow-up fines. Recent examples are when a fine was issued after builder's waste was dumped in Pennypot Lane in Chartham⁴¹ and a Chartham resident was fined for dumping 12 bin bags of litter 3 miles away from her home in Chartham Hatch⁴².
- 6.39. Dog fouling is also a particular bugbear for many parishioners.
- 6.40. This Option therefore involves Chartham Parish and Canterbury City Council working together to discourage litter pollution and enforce fines for those who do not adhere to the rules.

Option 9 – Introduce a policy to provide criteria for development along the A28 and Shalmsford Street to prevent the impacts of ribbon development

- 6.41. Ribbon development can cause harmful impacts to the landscape and green spaces of the Parish and therefore policy must be required to provide criteria for development so that ribbon development will not occur on the horizon of the A28 and Shalmsford Street. This criterion may involve restrictions on the type, scale and benefits of the development.

⁴⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code>

⁴¹ <https://news.canterbury.gov.uk/news/article/195/fines-issued-after-builder-s-waste-is-dumped-in-chartham>

⁴² <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/woman-fined-after-12-bags-of-rubbish-dumped-by-waste-carrier-243108/>

- 6.42. This will also help to prevent the coalescence of settlements by preventing sprawl from occurring as further discussed under Issue 9 - Coalescence of settlements .

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 6.43. We have set out seven ways that we could seek to address the degradation of our ability to enjoy the rural setting above and these are considered below.
- 6.44. Option 1 is the 'do nothing' approach which relies on national policy to protect the key characteristics of our rural setting. Given the existing issues it is not considered that this approach is entirely effective, although it is noted that recent changes to the NPPF haven't yet had a chance to filter through to planning decisions and have a real-world impact.
- 6.45. Our rural roads make a valuable contribution towards our rural setting and if these were urbanised through development this setting may be lost. Option 2 may therefore be helpful in combating this issue. In practice however it may be hard to deliver as improvements to roads are somewhat inevitable to support highway access requirements and increasing levels of traffic.
- 6.46. Tranquillity is key in rural environments and Option 3 seeks to protect them by designating tranquil zones. In such zones development would need to be sympathetic to existing noise levels. This would help to retain the quiet rural environment that is valued by the Community and benefits their quality of life. The downside of this is that some development that makes a positive contribution to the area, such as community uses, could be restricted.
- 6.47. Light pollution also degrades our rural environment and is harmful to our community's ability to enjoy the rural setting. Option 4 seeks to limit harmful light pollution resulting from development, this would help maintain our community's ability to enjoy the rural setting. The downside, however, again is that important development that could benefit the community (such as floodlights or other community facilities which introduce light pollution) could be restricted if exceptions are not included in the policy approach.
- 6.48. Views make a massive contribute to the community's enjoyment of the rural setting and Option 5 would protect the rural scenes offered from identified viewpoints. Alongside maintaining our community's enjoyment of the rural setting, this can also help to attract tourism.
- 6.49. Protecting public rights of way from the harmful impacts of development throughout the Parish through Option 6 will maintain the ability for residents of Chartham and visitors to enjoy the Parish's stunning scenery whilst walking around our public rights of way.

- 6.50. Raising awareness of the PROW Network through Option 7 would help the community to identify the various public rights of way within the Parish so that they can enjoy its landscape.
- 6.51. Asking the Parish Council to campaign against litter, publicise fines given for fly tipping and dog fouling that degrade the visual quality of the landscape, advertise litter picking group dates and communicate with the Parish about problem areas and bin provision in line with Option 8 would help to improve the Community's ability to enjoy the landscape and rural setting without the obtrusion of waste and litter. However, this is not something that could be progressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 6.52. Having reviewed the Options, it is recommended that Options 3-9 are all adopted moving forward. This will include measures inside and outside the Neighbourhood Plan process but overall will work to ensure that the Community's enjoyment of the rural setting is not degraded.

7. ISSUE 3 – THE GRADUAL LOSS OF TREES AND HEDGEROWS

Overview

- 7.1. Trees and hedgerows are critical in contributing to the Parish's valued landscape and biodiversity.
- 7.2. They are protected by policy in the Local Plan (LB10 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland Policy HE13 Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens Policy DBE1 Sustainable Design and Construction in combination with Table D1: Sustainable Design and Construction Measures Checklist, Policy LB8 Landscape Scale Biodiversity Networks and Policy DBE3 Principles of Design), Guidance and Strategic documents: Canterbury Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal 2020, with LCA-specific management and development guidance and the Green Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2031, specifically within the Rural Canterbury District actions and aims, which are pertinent to Chartham Parish, similarly make clear the strategic approach to be made by the City Council.

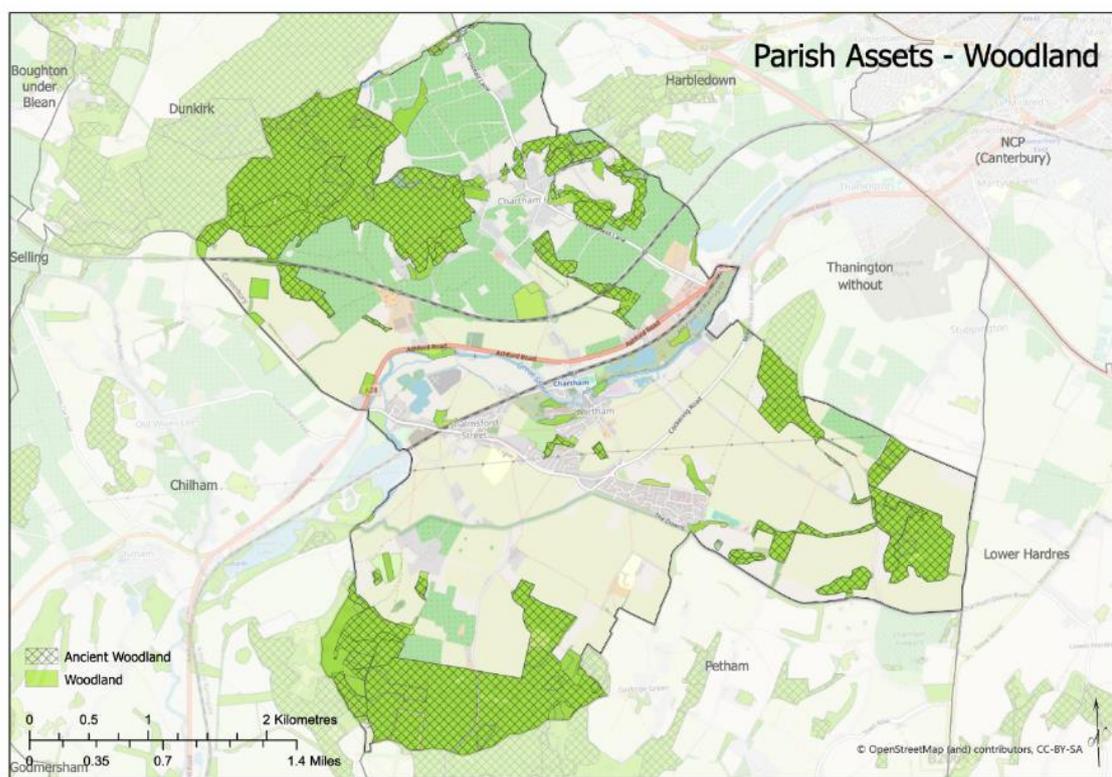


Figure 10 - Map showing Ancient Woodlands and some other woodland. It does not identify hedgerows

- 7.3. At Canterbury City Council, national⁴³ and international levels, there is some protection for trees. Conservation area designation affords some protection to existing trees and hedgerows, Tree Preservation Orders can also be used. In conservation areas local authorities have been given powers to control works to trees. With limited exceptions, all trees standing within a conservation area are legally protected and the local planning authority must be given six weeks written notice of any proposed works.^c This applies to the Chartham and Shalmsford Street Conservation area, the Garlinge Green, Swarling and Kenfield Conservation Area (including Iffin Wood where there is a deserted medieval manorial settlement and associated earthworks which form a scheduled monument⁴⁴), and Mystole Conservation Area.
- 7.4. Individual trees, groups of trees, or woodlands can be protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs), in the interests of amenity or particular value. However, they may still be removed subject to certain conditions.
- 7.5. Woodlands with SSSI and LNR status are afforded special protection due to their valuable and rare flora and fauna. Permanent removal of even one tree from a woodland can have a drastic effect on the local wildlife.
- 7.6. Woodlands can be managed according to a detailed management plan to grow naturally with minimal intervention, by coppicing (a traditional, historically local method of woodland management which allows species of trees such as sweet chestnut or hazel, to produce new shoots from their stump) to form a copse.
- 7.7. Over 500 plant species, 60 species of nesting birds, many hundreds of invertebrates and almost all of our native small mammal species are supported by hedgerows in the UK⁴⁵. Nesting space, shelter, shade and food are provided, including that for endangered species such as Dormice⁴⁶ and bats⁴⁷ within Chartham Parish.
- 7.8. Hedgerows provide “green corridors” between woodlands where dormice and bats often nest. By acting as physical barriers, they are important for reducing the number of polluting fertilisers, pesticides and sediment that reach watercourses.
- 7.9. Around half of the hedges in the UK are hundreds of years old and are protected under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. It is illegal to remove most countryside hedges. Unlimited fines may be imposed if this is done without proper consultation.

⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-hedgerows-regulation-and-management>

⁴⁴ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1009012>

⁴⁵ <https://ptes.org/hedgerow/hedgerow-wildlife/>

⁴⁶

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/806960/P-ROTOCOL_Dormouse_May_2019_v4.0_FINAL.pdf

⁴⁷

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/697600/England-protected-species-bats.pdf

- 7.10. Trees and hedgerows are becoming increasingly important in terms of climate change as they can help lessen the impacts of weather events as well as remove CO₂ from the air.
- 7.11. Native trees, having evolved together with local wildlife provide the most suitable habitat for it. While the native Oak supports over 280 species of insects which are an important food source for birds, bats and other mammals, the 18th century introduction of Turkey Oak, led to its aggressive spread and also brought with it the “Knopper Gall Wasp” which burrows into the native acorns, thus stopping the native species spreading.
- 7.12. Only 35 of the 60 recorded native tree species are common. There is an opportunity to increase biodiversity by planting locally suitable but rarer native trees, both as specimens and within mixed hedgerows.
- 7.13. Although hedgerows and trees within a field provide shade and shelter for livestock, modern farming trends and methods have unfortunately led to their removal. A recent example within Chartham Parish discussed by the Working Group is a hedgerow in Chartham Hatch shown in Figure 11.

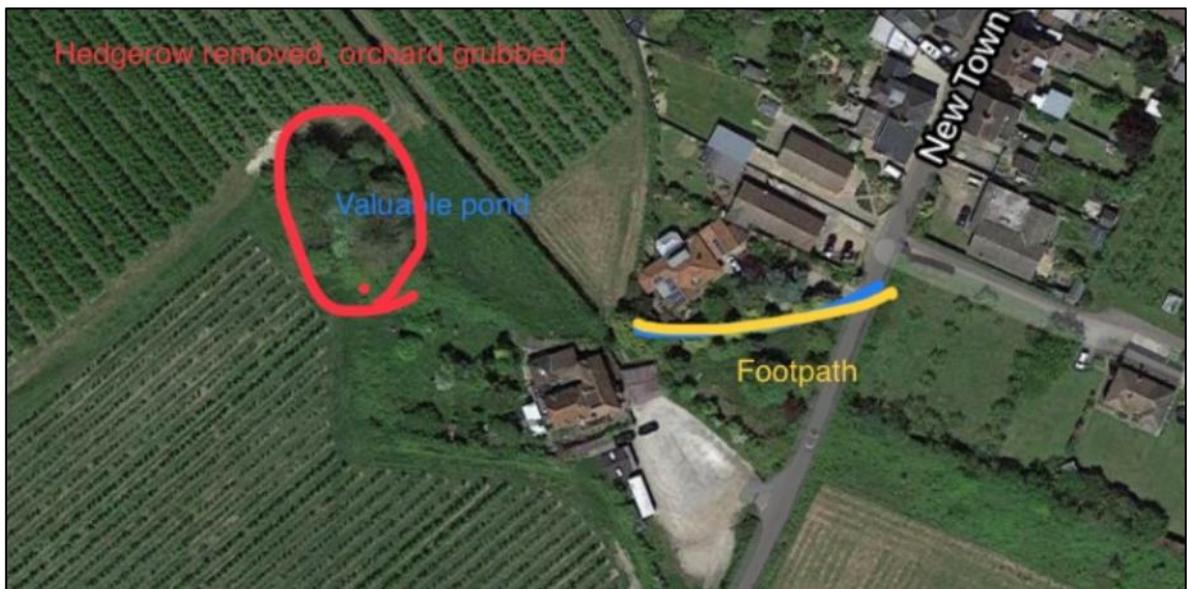


Figure 11 - Marked-up Google map showing the loss of a hedgerow, a valuable pond, a recently grubbed up orchard to the north of the Chapter Arms in Chartham Hatch and marking the position of a footpath.

- 7.14. A copse, with its range of differently-aged trees, provides a rich variety of habitats. The Hazel Dormouse, now highly endangered⁴⁸ benefits from woodland managed in this way. Larkey Valley Woods Local Nature Reserve citation⁴⁹ shows the benefits, saying:

Regular monitoring of the wood has shown that this is one of the best in the country for dormice.⁵⁰

- 7.15. In Chartham parish we have several ancient and heritage native trees such as the Yew in St Mary's Churchyard, Hawthorn on the Memorial Ground and the Weeping Willows at the edge of the Memorial Ground near the River Stour. There are boundary oaks registered in the Chartham Parish Design Statement and Chartham Lost Landscapes Walk (National Trail Walk)⁵¹.

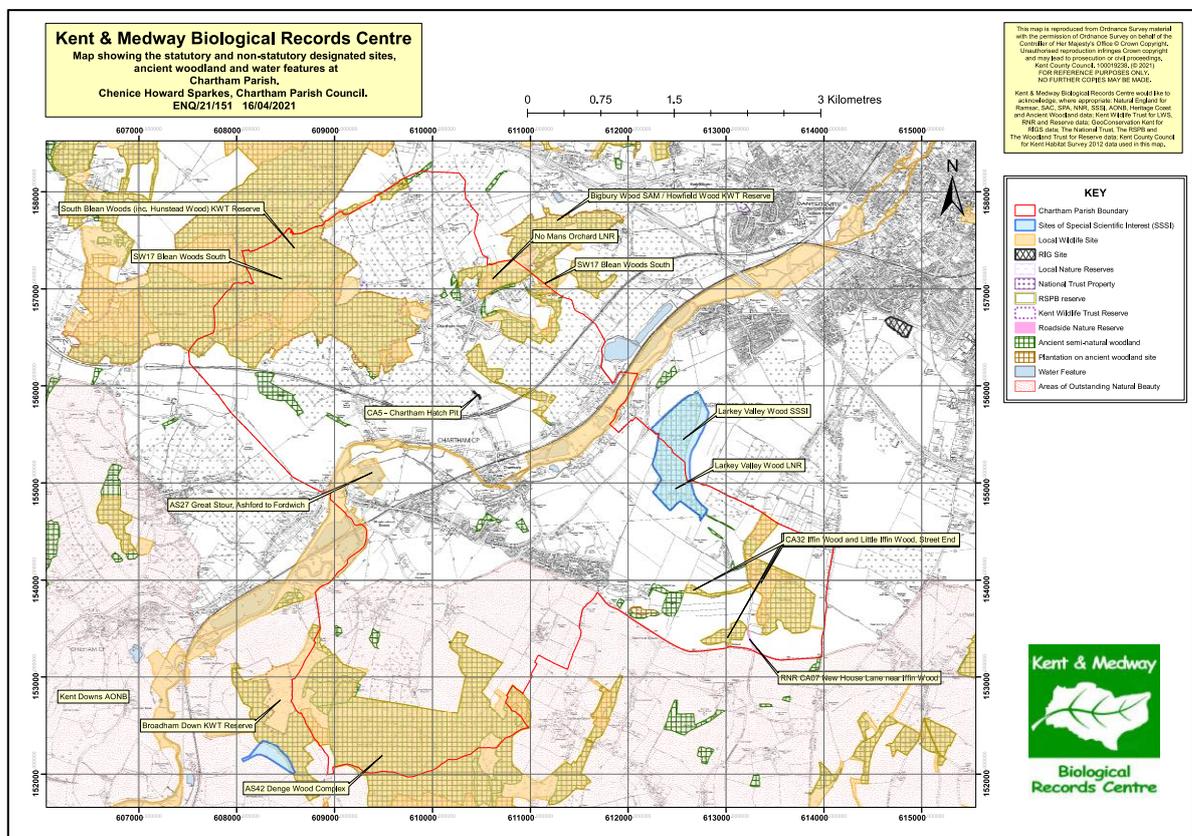


Figure 12 - KMBRC map showing and naming Ancient Woodlands and their designations, local SSSIs, LNR, LWS and RIGS

- 7.16. Larkey Valley Wood (SSSI), Denstead Wood, Denge Woods, Iffin Wood, and Bakers Wood all of which are designated as Ancient Woodlands (which have specific protection) and are open to the public travelling on footpaths or bridleways.

⁴⁸ <https://ptes.org/campaigns/dormice/>

⁴⁹ <https://explorekent.org/activities/larkey-valley-wood-local-nature-reserve/>

⁵⁰

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1008990&SiteName=lark&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=>

⁵¹ https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/short-routes/lost-landscapes-chartham-walk/

- 7.17. No Man's Community Orchard⁵² was the first orchard to be turned into a Local Nature Reserve, designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust, mainly because of the number of lichens and mosses found on the fruit trees. Two main air pollutants that affect lichen growth are nitrogen and sulphur dioxide and as a result, certain lichen species are bioindicators of choice for air pollution. Lichens are easier to study and quicker to respond to environmental change than animals are.

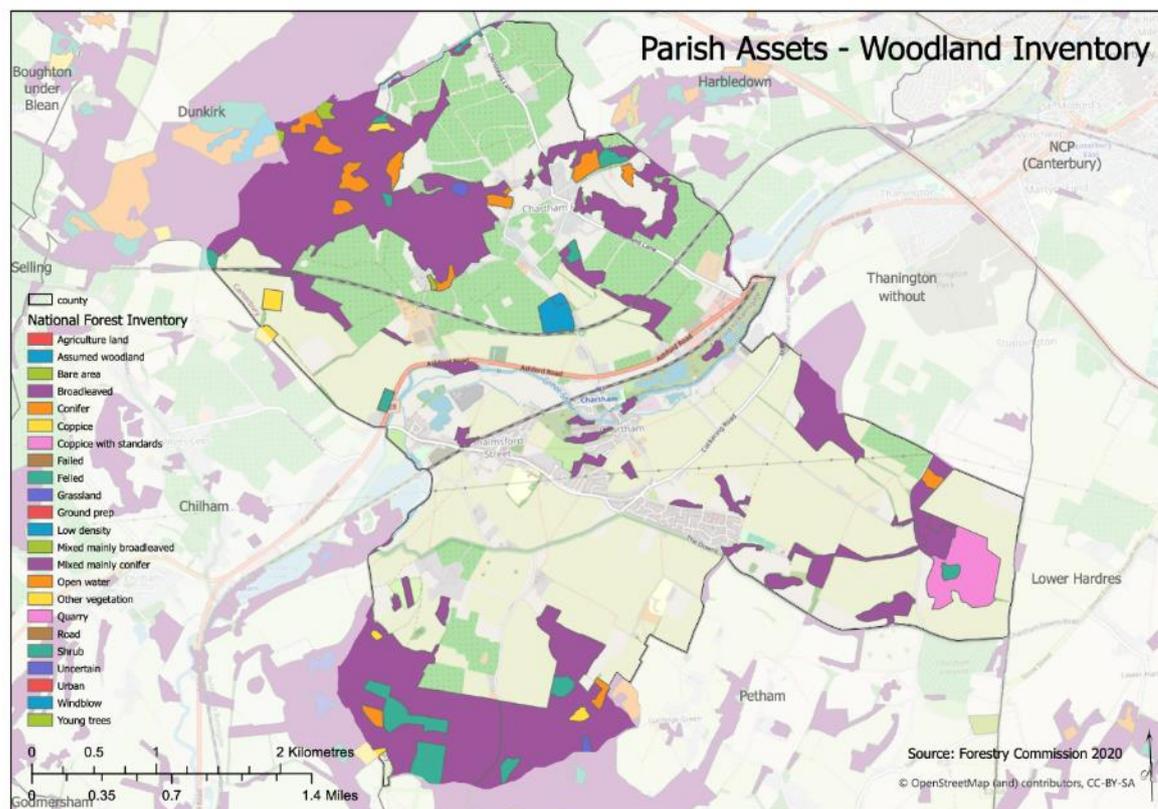


Figure 13 - Chartham Parish's Woodlands and some of their associated habitat-types and management situation in 2020

Options to address the issue

- 7.18. The Working Group have considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address the issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national policy to protect trees and hedgerows

- 7.19. Through conserving and enhancing the natural environment, national policy seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside which includes trees and hedgerows, from the impacts of development. Existing policies go some way

⁵²<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009591&SiteName=no%20mans%20orchard&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAAra=>

towards protecting trees and hedgerows but as evidenced above does not provide protection for all of the trees and hedgerows, it is likely more that we can therefore do more.

Option 2 –Outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, reinforce the significance of the Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) and seek to place TPO's on important unprotected trees.

- 7.20. TPOs are an important tool to protect trees of significant importance from the negative impacts of development.
- 7.21. The importance of TPOs should therefore be highlighted, and awareness of which trees benefit from TPOs increased. This could take many forms, from a simple awareness campaign, an interactive map on the Parish Council or other website, plaques/signs highlighting which trees are protected or even direct letter drops to those who own protected trees and their neighbouring landowners.
- 7.22. It is also suggested that the Parish Council undertake a review of our unprotected trees and work with the LPA to protect trees worthy of protection, which are currently unprotected. Taking such action could help prevent the removal of our most valuable trees.

Option 3 – Map existing trees and hedges and introduce a policy to protect them.

- 7.23. Despite best efforts, many trees and hedges are not protected and are removed because they are in the way of landowners' aspirations.
- 7.24. Trees and hedgerows are fundamental for providing habitat for wildlife such as birds and small mammals, and also for natural screening from roads and housing. Alongside this, hedgerows are deemed to be important in mitigating the impacts of climate change through their ability to remove carbon dioxide in the atmosphere through photosynthesis. Alongside these benefits in terms of biodiversity and mitigating climate change they also help to enhance the rural landscape and it is important that they are protected.
- 7.25. This Option would see the Parish being surveyed (this is now feasible using satellite technology⁵³), and a plan of existing trees and hedges created. The Neighbourhood Plan could then introduce policy protecting the trees/hedges identified in the survey to ensure that there is no overall net loss because of development. This would help to stop the gradual loss of trees and hedgerows.

⁵³ <https://www.bluesky-world.com/ntm>

Option 4 – Promote tree and hedge planting projects

- 7.26. One way to combat the gradual loss of trees and hedgerows is by planting new ones. Despite our best efforts it is unlikely that we will be able to prevent all loss in future and so this Option is seen as a vital element in the fight against tree/hedgerow loss.
- 7.27. There are existing schemes which seek to promote planting new trees, such as the Woodland Trust who give away young trees, by the public. We could utilise these or create our own local scheme to encourage more people to actively plant trees and hedgerows. Even encouraging the collection of native tree seeds from the Parish and growing them at home before planting them out could provide a meaningful boost to local tree stock.
- 7.28. Involving schools and the wider community in these projects will help to build a sense of local pride in such projects and in the end, it is hoped lead to enhanced flora (and fauna) around the Parish.
- 7.29. Unfortunately, such projects would fall outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, but the plan does present an opportunity to highlight their existence to our community.

Option 5 – Educate local people about preserving wildlife and their habitats

- 7.30. Like Option 4, Option 5 would primarily fall outside of the Neighbourhood Plan but there is scope to include wording within it to achieve the objective - which is to educate local people about preserving wildlife and their habitats.
- 7.31. Doing this will ensure that the Community are aware about how best to conserve wildlife and their habitats and the benefits that this can bring to the Parish. With the ongoing issues of climate change and the pressures of development, it is of utmost importance that the Community are aware of how to safeguard and protect our wildlife.
- 7.32. This could take many forms (like Option 4) and so consideration should be given as to the best way forward. It could also be done in combination with Option 4 as one campaign or project.

Option 6 – Require tree planting and natural boundary features as part of development proposals

- 7.33. The Options discussed previously are ‘softer’ approaches aimed at protecting trees/hedgerows or encouraging our community to engage more with our environs and positively contribute towards its wellbeing. This Option would place a requirement on new development to make a positive contribution to the number of trees in our Parish.

- 7.34. A policy would be introduced to require developments to plant native trees as part of the proposal, either on site or within the Parish. Such a requirement already exists in other areas (see Policy SNP18 of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan⁵⁴) whereby the increase in floorspace proposed is then translated into a number of trees that need to be planted. In the case of the Southwater Neighbourhood Plan one new tree must be planted for every 40m² of floorspace created.
- 7.35. Given our rural setting, it may also be appropriate to require boundary features (such as walls and fences) to be discouraged, or at least appropriately screened, with the preference being boundaries comprising native trees/hedgerows.
- 7.36. The exact format of the policy can be considered in due course but the introduction of a firm policy requiring tree planting and natural boundary features could make a meaningful impact and increase in the number of trees across the plan area over time, reversing the identified issue.

Option 7 – Publicise the need to apply for felling and tree work within Conservation Areas and the need for a felling license.

- 7.37. A recent article in the New Scientist has identified that yearly tree felling between 2016-18 has increased by 49% compared to the yearly felling rate 2011-2015⁵⁵. It is considered that a lack of knowledge about the rules regarding felling trees could be in part responsible for this. In many cases you may need to notify the LPA or gain a felling license before undertaking works.
- 7.38. Everyone involved in the felling of trees (the owner, agent and timber merchant or contractor) must ensure that a licence has been issued before any felling is carried out, unless they are certain that one of the exemptions apply. If there's no licence or other valid permission, or if the wrong trees are felled, anyone involved can be prosecuted. As a rule, if you are going to fell more than 3m³ of trees on your property in a 3-month period a license is required. Removing a single mature tree can exceed this amount.⁵⁶
- 7.39. Trees in a conservation area that are not protected by an Order are protected by the provisions in section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These provisions require people to notify the local planning authority, using a 'section 211 notice', 6 weeks before carrying out certain work on such trees, unless an exception applies. The work may go ahead before the end of the 6 week period if the local planning authority gives consent. This notice period gives the authority an opportunity to consider whether to make an Order on the tree.

⁵⁴ Available to view at <https://southwater.joomla.com/component/jdownloads/send/19-the-plan/104-southwater-neighbourhood-plan-made.html>

⁵⁵ Available to view at <https://www.newscientist.com/article/2247601-satellites-reveal-a-49-per-cent-increase-in-tree-felling-in-europe/>

⁵⁶ Full details can be found online at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/876641/Tree_Felling_-_Getting_Permission_-_office_print_version.pdf

- 7.40. Making sure people are aware of these rules would be very helpful to ensure that felling trees only occurs when it is legal to do so. Exactly how can be discussed in due course but at the very least it should be publicised on the Parish Council website.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 7.41. National policy is relatively effective at protecting out trees and hedgerows from the harmful impacts of development. However, it does not cover all trees in all scenarios and doesn't force a reversal of tree loss. It is considered that we can do more than just rely on national policy as set out in Option 1.
- 7.42. Reinforcing the significance of TPOs through Option 2 will help to protect the most important trees which provide the most value to the rural environment.
- 7.43. Surveying trees and hedges to identify their location and include policy to protect them through Option 3 will help to protect wildlife and their habitats from the harmful impacts of development and ensure that their wellbeing is conserved. The disadvantage of this is that important development which provides benefits to the Community could become restricted.
- 7.44. Engaging our community, schools and the wider community to promote the planting of trees as set out in Option 4 will help to enhance wildlife by providing more habitats for animal species. This will also aid in producing air quality benefits and enhance our landscape.
- 7.45. Educating the residents about conserving wildlife through Option 5 will help to protect wildlife and their habitats and enhance biodiversity by helping residents to understand the importance that animal and plant life has on the Parish.
- 7.46. Introducing a policy to promote tree planting across the plan area as part of development through Option 6 would go further than the above and help to reverse the current trend of slow tree and hedgerow loss across the Parish. Likewise, requiring 'soft' boundary features instead of hard walls/fences will provide meaningful landscape, flora, and fauna benefits across our area.
- 7.47. Encouraging the Parish Council to publicise that without permission, it's an offence to cut down, uproot or wilfully destroy any trees:
- subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)⁵⁷
 - in a Conservation Area
 - over 5 cubic metres in volume (whether an individual tree or several smaller trees) over a 3 month period⁵⁸

⁵⁷ <https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/planning-and-building/doing-work-tree/>

⁵⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-online-for-a-felling-licence>

- 7.48. Option 7 would help to increase the efficiency of the development management process and ensure that appropriate measures are taken regarding the felling of trees.
- 7.49. A combination of policies 2-7 are recommended to the Steering Group. Action can be taken therefore Option 1 is not appropriate. Option 2 will help to protect significant trees and Option 3 will help to identify these trees and hedges and introduces policy to protect them. Option 4 will help to enhance biodiversity by encouraging school and community planting projects. Option 5 will help to educate residents regarding the importance of wildlife and their habitats. Option 6 may help to reverse the gradual loss of trees and hedgerows.

8. ISSUE 4 – POOR MANAGEMENT OF THE GREAT RIVER STOUR VALLEY BASIN

Overview

- 8.1. The Great River Stour Valley, and the Petham Bourne (a seasonal winterbourne which along with other local artesian springs feeds the Stour) have significant habitats, including ancient woodlands, woodland and grassland priority habitats. The valley also represents several opportunities to protect and enhance the landscape features of the Parish.
- 8.2. The landscape of [F7: Stour Valley West](#) is defined by the flat river floodplain of the Great Stour River and associated waterbodies. It extends from the district boundary in Chartham to the settlement edge of Canterbury City at Thanington.
- 8.3. The landscape is being continually degraded by, and under further threat from, development. The enforcement of existing legislation is vital to safeguard the landscape from erosion which in turn will undermine some of the climate and environment goals set by Canterbury City Council.
- 8.4. The Great River Stour has the second largest catchment in Kent. It is a central and defining feature of Chartham Parish. Known Protected Animals which have been found in the Stour River according to the KMBRC. See the Key at [Appendix 1](#) for information about location.

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
European Eel	Anguilla anguilla	CCSI SS	1977
		HGS	2005
		MM	1991
European Water Vole	Arvicola amphibius	CCSI SS	1970
White-clawed Freshwater Crayfish	Austropotamobius pallipes	CCSI SS	1999
		PD	1993
		NF	1998/99
		CM	1998/99
		H	1994/5
European Otter	Lutra lutra	CCSI HGS	2019

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Sea Trout	Salmo trutta	CCSI SS	1985

Figure 14 - Some protected animals associated with the River Stour in Chartham

- 8.5. In the Vision & Objectives Survey, six parishioners used the word ‘river’ when best describing Chartham.
- 8.6. In their document, *The State of England’s Chalk Streams*, the WWF say,
- England’s precious chalk streams remain in a shocking state of health. More than three-quarters - 77% - are failing to meet the required Good status. The chalk aquifer - the engine room of the chalk stream - is classed as in Poor Quantitative status, with phosphate and nitrates at levels that pose a significant risk to drinking water supplies.*
- The key pressures causing failure are: physical modification (e.g. for historic land drainage and industry), over abstraction (particularly for public water supply), pollution from sewage works, septic tanks and agriculture.*
- With growing pressure from climate change, population growth and new and expanding populations of invasive non-native species, ensuring no further deterioration from the current meagre baseline will be challenging without a step change in management.*
- 8.7. These sorts of comments are of concern to the Working Group.
- 8.8. The river is fed by local artesian springs and Petham Bourne, a secondary, seasonal pathway. The Stour and Petham Bourne pathways are classified by the Environment Agency as high risk of flooding (flood zone 3: land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of river flooding) and being in a nitrate vulnerable zone (NVZ).
- 8.9. Stodmarsh is a wetland site in the Stour Valley downstream of Chartham. It contains a wide range of habitats including open water, extensive reedbeds, scrub and alder carr, which together support a rich flora and fauna. It is designated as a Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar Site, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Site of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) and National Nature Reserve (NNR) (hereafter referred to as ‘Stodmarsh’).
- 8.10. One of the key issues for maintaining the integrity of Stodmarsh SPA, Ramsar and SAC is water quality which is associated with high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen causing eutrophication and thus deterioration of habitats and loss of species dependent on the habitats as discussed below.
- 8.11. ‘Advice on Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Stour Catchment in Relation to Stodmarsh Designated Sites - For Local Planning Authorities’ (Natural

England, July 2020)⁵⁹ is currently resulting in the restriction of development upstream of Stodmarsh.

- 8.12. Due to the uncertainties of the Total Phosphorus and Total Nitrogen sources, they are currently being investigated by the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) investigation which commenced in April 2020 and is due to be completed by March 2022. The WINEP investigation is being carried out by Natural England, the Environment Agency and Southern Water.
- 8.13. Groundwater flooding regularly occurred in Shalmsford Street. Sources were emergence of springs, activation of the Petham Bourne, and fluvial risk from the Great Stour. Action has been taken to improve the drainage under the railway line and delineate channels for the Petham Bourne and to attempt to prevent water from the Stour filling the water course from the Stour Lake fishing lakes. But the nearness of certain properties to springs continues to be a problem.
- 8.14. The Working Group is unaware of identification of these artesian springs within Chartham Parish on a map.
- 8.15. Southern Water's Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan of August 2020⁶⁰ identifies the Stour River basin of Chartham in the year 2019-20 as having had over 20 internal sewer floods within properties, over 160 external flooding within the curtilage of a property and three sewer collapses and rising main bursts. There has been a recent increase in the number of floods from the sewer network in the Chartham catchment.
- 8.16. Recent complaints to the Parish Council about both highway sewer systems and farm worker sewage systems raise further concern about the potential to cause pollution within the chalk stream.
- 8.17. With the Stodmarsh eutrophication situation, the WWF's identification of Chalk Streams as vulnerable habitats worthy of protection, and the recent fines to Southern Water, it would be of interest to better understand the water quality of the Stour at Chartham.
- 8.18. The LCA, lies within the Lower Stour Wetlands BOA, which sets out the following relevant key targets:
 - Protect and enhance existing priority habitats and designated sites.
 - Establish freshwater wetland complex, including fen, reedbed and grazing marsh, in which successional processes are allowed to proceed.
 - Enhance species-rich grassland to bring it to priority habitat quality.
 - Enhance or reinstate management of LWS woodlands.

⁵⁹ [https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/media/2747/ID-1042876-2-MM7-/pdf/ID_1042876_\(2\)_MM7\).pdf](https://www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/media/2747/ID-1042876-2-MM7-/pdf/ID_1042876_(2)_MM7).pdf)

⁶⁰ <https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/3886/stour-dwmp-strategic-context.pdf>

- 8.19. Broad habitat types present within the LCA include improved grassland, neutral grassland, broadleaved, mixed, and yew woodland, rivers and streams, open standing water and canal and built up areas.
- 8.20. Habitats of key importance within the LCA include ancient woodland and priority habitat coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodland, good quality semi-improved grassland, lowland fens, reedbeds and traditional orchards, which are listed as priority habitat.
- 8.21. The South East River Basin Management Plan is a statutory document. Although there is no statutory requirement to produce a Catchment Plan⁶¹, the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership felt it would help to outline why the Partnership has been formed, to set out why the rivers of East Kent are not meeting environmental requirements and to summarise the solutions and work in progress.
- *The Quantitative Groundwater status of Canterbury is poor.*
 - *The River Basin Management Plan South East River Basin District states that the East Kent Stour Chalk at poor chemical status due to rising trends of nitrate. The current ecological status/potential of the Stour catchment around Chartham is moderate.*
 - *East Kent Stour Chalk at poor chemical status due to rising trends of nitrate: the Chichester and Worthing Chalk, the Brighton Chalk, the Test Chalk, the Itchen Chalk, the*
- 8.22. Southern Water is due to improve sewage works at nine locations including Ashford, Canterbury and Lenham, to reduce inputs of nutrients such as phosphate, and organic pollutants and benefit bathing and shellfish waters.
- 8.23. In the section marked Lower Stour, including lakes these bullet points are possibly relevant to Chartham:
- *Improve fish passage through In-channel improvements at Godmersham, Olantigh and Chartham, including better fish passage.*
 - *Implement recommendations of KSCP's 'The River Stour & Floodplain Restoration Plan - Shalmsford Street to A2'.*
 - *Drive down domestic and commercial water use.*
 - *Pollution prevention at industrial sites.*
 - *Sensitive flood risk management maintenance (weed cutting).*
 - *Catchment Sensitive Farming: diffuse pollutants / riparian habitat enhancements / reduce abstraction and encourage winter storage.*
 - *Investigate and rectify outflow from septic tanks and pumping station failures.*

⁶¹ <http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/explore-kent-bucket/uploads/sites/8/2018/07/07111730/Stour-Catchment-Management-Plan-2.docx>

- *Removal / modification of concrete channel (Whitehall Road / Faulkeners Lane).*
- *Removal of non-native invasive species.*
- *Riverbank re-profiling.*
- *Tree-thinning, tree planting, woody debris.*
- *Mitigation measures to 'naturalise' hard engineered river banks.*
- *Ensure urban growth has positive impact - for instance through wide-scale sustainable drainage.*
- *Encourage 'Love Your River' initiatives via 'Friends of' groups.*
- *Improve fish passage at water level control structures*
- *In-channel improvements to improve hydro-morphology (Lampen Stream).*
- *Investigate and address potential sewage pollution from Stodmarsh PS.*
- *Implement Improvement Plans for lakes.*

- 8.24. The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges⁶², is of concern to Chartham because of the high prioritisation of ground and surface water bodies as a road runoff destination due to the proximity of the A28 to the River Stour.
- 8.25. The Working Group has identified the poor management of the river valley basin as a key issue which effects biodiversity. The River Stour has chalk stream characteristics as it runs through Chartham.
- 8.26. Further action must therefore be taken to protect biodiversity associated with the River Stour.

⁶² <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/prod/attachments/ada3a978-b687-4115-9fcf-3648623aaff2>

Options to address the issue

- 8.27. The Working Group have considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address this issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national policy to manage development in the valley basin

- 8.28. National policy discourages inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding but where development is necessary, the development must be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. National policy also states that a sequential test must be undertaken to decide whether there are more appropriate sites for development in areas of lower flood risk. These policies discourage development within the valley basin due to its categorisation within flood zone 3.
- 8.29. With regard to habitat, recent policy changes now require biodiversity net gain although we are yet to see this working in practice where development takes place.
- 8.30. Funds acquired through the community infrastructure levy (CIL) can also be spent towards improving river infrastructure.

Option 2 – Petition Canterbury City Council to designate F7 Stour Valley West as a new Area of High Landscape Value (AHLV)

- 8.31. Canterbury City Council have decided to designate a new AHLV Stour Valley East as a new AHLV. Some of the F7 is protected in the Canterbury AHLV but the Working Group believe that the tract of F7: Stour Valley West, which runs through Chartham is equally important. Qualities which make this landscape worthy of protection, are that:
- it is as yet relatively unspoilt and yet highly visible from multiple, multi-modal routes of access from the West of the country (from National Trail-route of pilgrimage, National Cycle route, 2 routes of rail access to Canterbury and the A28-route of pilgrimage, as well as many local footpaths).
 - it has a long history of Pilgrimage from Winchester, with the Pilgrim's Way (A28) being the main route of entry
 - within Chartham, the Stour has Chalk Stream qualities thus making it a BAP. There is also a BOA around it. In the context of living landscapes, river management will help protect it.

- 8.32. This could be undertaken alongside Thanington Parish Council who are currently in the process of creating a neighbourhood plan. Should the City Council not be willing to designate the area as an AHLV we could look to include a similar designation within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Option 3 – Petition Canterbury City Council to have land within F7 Stour Valley West turned into Green Gap

- 8.33. According to LUC's website⁶³, green gaps aim to avoid coalescence with other settlements and protect high quality landscapes on the urban fringe. The F7 Stour Valley West would benefit greatly from this due to its undeveloped character as expressed within the Landscape Guidance of the Landscape and Biodiversity Appraisal below:

Conserve the undeveloped character of the landscape, ensuring it continues to play a role in providing a setting to Chartham and an approach to Canterbury. and their recommendations are that Further study required to determine whether a new gap is appropriate with new strategic allocation at Cocking Farm.

- 8.34. A green gap designation would help to protect the area from inappropriate development and conserve valued views and landscape which it provides. Should the City Council not be willing to designate the area as Green Gap we would look to include a similar designation within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Option 4 – Introduce policy to ensure development respects and benefits the landscape and biodiversity of the river basin

- 8.35. Inappropriate development can harm the landscape and biodiversity of the river basin, development should therefore be carefully managed to preserve the important elements of the river basin. This Option introduces a policy to require development to positively contribute to the wellbeing of the river basin. This could be through implementing infrastructure which reduces flood risk and/or planting trees or hedgerows which could provide habitats for local wildlife.
- 8.36. Relevant criteria for development within the river basin to adhere to would be decided through discussions between the Steering Group, Canterbury City Council, and the Environment Agency.

Option 5 – Introduce a policy to improve existing public rights of way to prevent erosion and subsequent flooding

- 8.37. The current pedestrian and non-motorised vehicle routes which run alongside the river are very popular for residents and provides one of the Parish's most appealing attributes for visitors. These routes have been eroded because of heavy use, which has led to the river path becoming more vulnerable to flooding.

⁶³ <https://landuse.co.uk/locally-valued-landscapes/>

- 8.38. The existing path could be improved, or a new route provided which is resilient to erosion.

Option 6 – Ask Chartham Parish Council to join the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership

- 8.39. The Working Party have concerns about the sewage treatment works within Chartham, pollution, water abstraction, drinking water quality, groundwater and flooding.
- 8.40. The WP believe that there would be merit in Chartham Parish Council having representation on the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership with an interest in the Lower Stour as Wye Parish Council does for the Upper Stour.
- 8.41. This would fall outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process but would be a way for Chartham to have a say in waterbody improvement plans and have the opportunity to have good relations with other stakeholders in the future for the Stour.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 8.42. National policy discourages development on land at risk of flooding. This helps to protect the river valley basin's landscape and biodiversity. The drawback of this is that the river valley basin will not be improved, instead it will be left in its current vulnerable state, and it is likely that gradual development will continue to negatively impact it.
- 8.43. Should Canterbury City Council designate F7 Stour Valley West as a new AHLV (Option 2), it would provide greater protection of the Stour Valley West as development within an AHLV that causes unacceptable harm to Canterbury City and/or the World Heritage Site would be refused.
- 8.44. Likewise, if Canterbury City Council were to have land within F7 Stour Valley West designated as a Green Gap in their Local Plan (Option 3), the area would benefit from greater protection and hopefully avoid development that would lead to the coalescence of Chartham with the settlements on its eastern border such as Thanington. Such development would be harmful to the Stour Valley. It is noted however that it would not impact development on the eastern side of the A28 towards Thanington. A way to change this would be to work together with Thanington Parish Council to protect this important gateway to the City or look to include suitable designations within the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.45. Requiring development within the valley basin be of benefit to the landscape and biodiversity of the river basin (Option 4) would help to prevent inappropriate development from occurring whilst allowing well designed developments to proceed. This will help to improve the condition of the river basin valley for the flora and fauna that occupies it and protect the valley basin for future generations to

come. However, the downside to this is that it may be challenging to submit proposals that won't lead to some degree of harm to the valley basin and therefore it may be difficult to gain planning permission - careful consideration of policy wording would be required to get the correct policy requirements in place.

- 8.46. Altering the existing route of the riverside right of way through Option 5 would lead to a reduction in erosion and subsequent flooding, creating a suitable environment for use by residents and visitors. The downside is that it is inevitable that the condition of this new or improved route will decline over time and may require constant maintenance depending on the rate of erosion, which may increase in the future due to climate change.
- 8.47. Chartham Parish Council to join the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership as set out in Option 6 would enable the Parish Council to have an active say in river management and water work/sewage work improvements that would benefit the Community and the future of the River Stour.
- 8.48. On balance, a combination of Options 2-6 are recommended to the Steering Group.
- 8.49. The Working Group recommends that the Steering Group recommend to the Parish Council to embrace Options 2, 3 and 6. Options 2 and 3 will help to protect the landscape and biodiversity associated with the Valley Basin. Option 6 will require action by the Parish Council and will take account of areas outside flood zone 3. By having an interested representative involved in policy making for the Stour Catchment Area, Option 6 will have multiple advantages for Chartham.
- 8.50. Both Options 4 and 5 can be taken forwards within the Neighbourhood Plan itself. Option 4 will also discourage inappropriate development from the valley basin but also allow development that positively contributes to the basin's landscape and biodiversity. Option 5 will improve the existing public rights of way to reduce erosion and flooding. Care must be taken to develop criteria for development where it is allowed and path improvements to avoid any harm to the valley basin.

9. ISSUE 5 – HARMFUL IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT ON BIODIVERSITY, LACK OF BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Overview

- 9.1. Development can cause harm to biodiversity through the destruction of habitats.
- 9.2. Figure 13 below shows general habitats including residential, urban, and arable and horticultural land. These, if managed well, can provide important habitat for endangered species. Figure 14 below shows BAP priority habitats identified in the Kent Habitat Survey 2012⁶⁴.

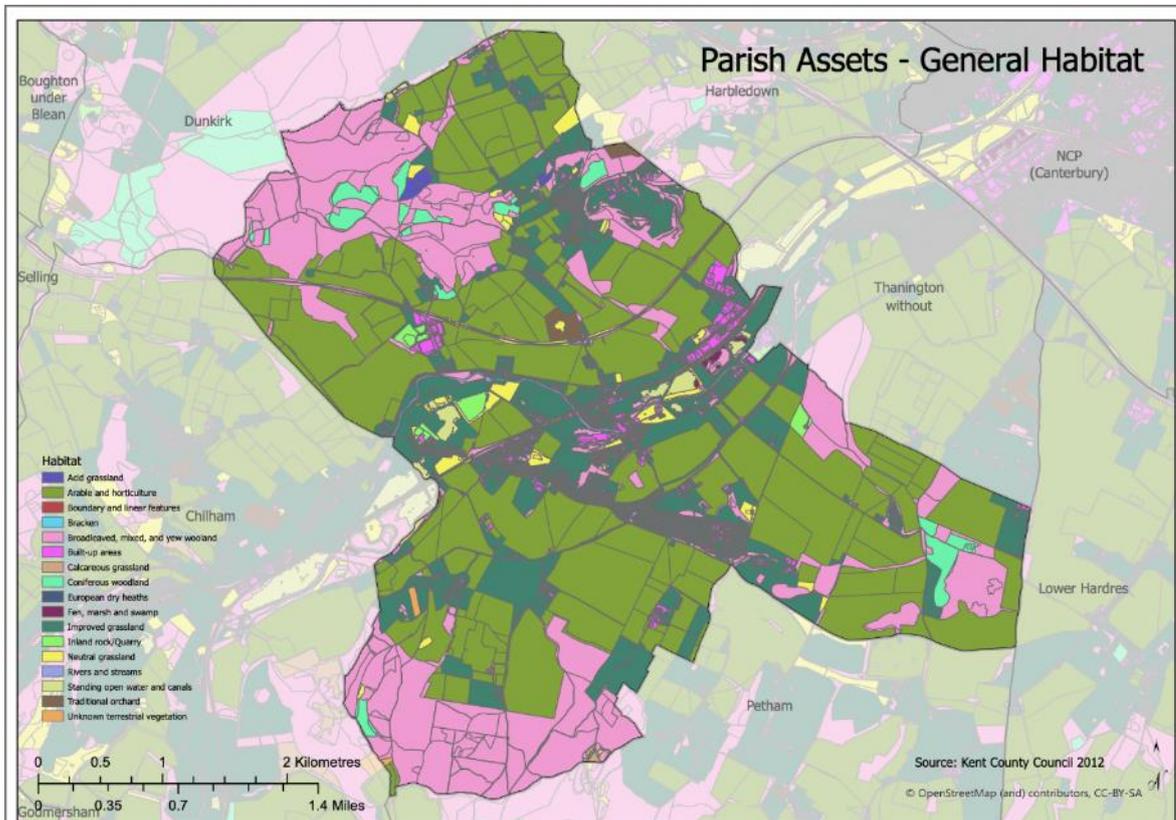


Figure 15 - Map showing General Habitats within Chartham Parish

⁶⁴ https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/95104/Kent-Habitat-Survey-2012-section-1-executive-summary.pdf

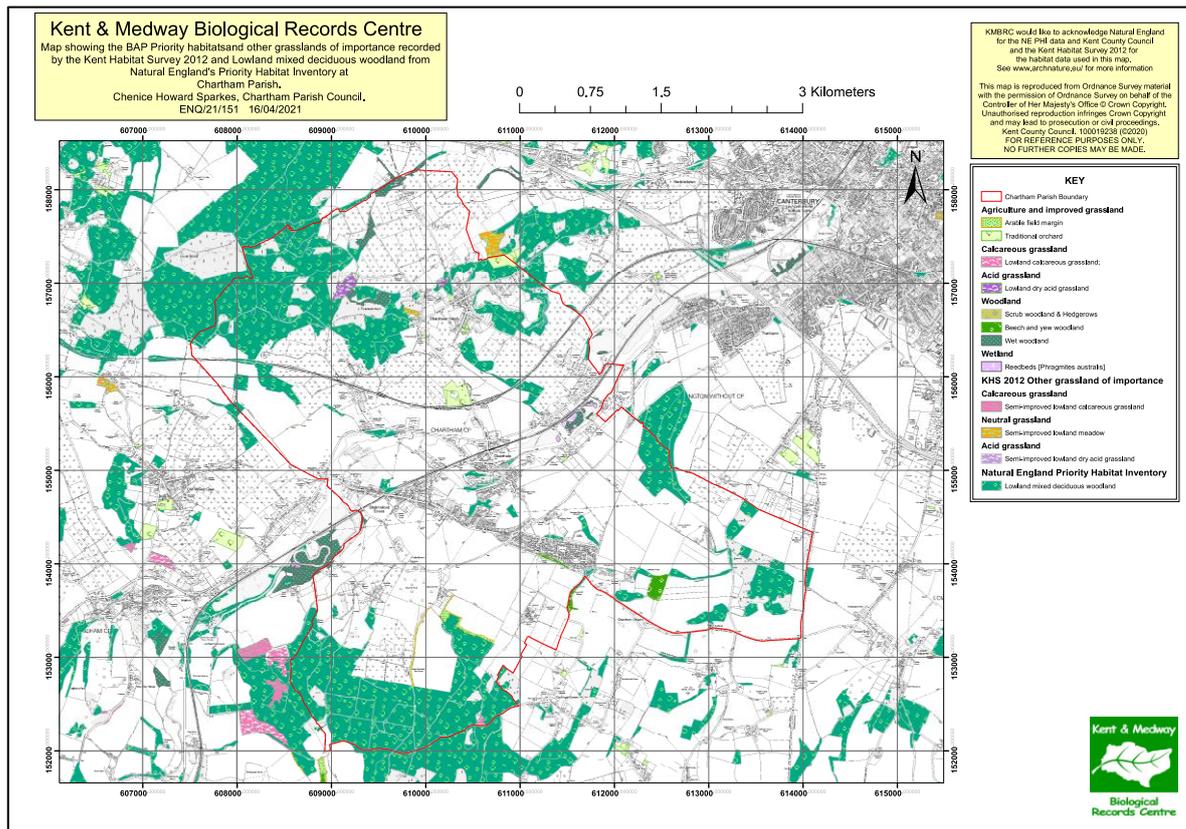


Figure 16 - KMBRC map of BAP Priority habitats and other grasslands of importance recorded by the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 and Lowland mixed deciduous woodland from Natural England's Priority Habitat inventory

9.3. Within Chartham Parish, the following priority habitats have been identified:

- broadleaved, yew and mixed woodland
- improved grassland
- standing open water and canals
- rivers and streams
- coniferous woodland
- traditional orchards
- neutral grassland
- inland rock quarries
- calcareous grassland
- acid grassland
- fen marsh and swamp

9.4. The Working Group believe that many have been missed. Examples are Boundary and Linear Features: Hedgerows, flower meadows, possibly wet woodland, ponds such as one at Chartham Hatch, Aquifer Fed Naturally Fluctuating Water Bodies like the Petham Bourne, Chartham Parish are not marked, Wood-Pasture and Parkland around Mystole are missing, and the standing waters sections lack definition (eg. fishing lakes are likely to be eutrophic).

- 9.10. In addition, credit should be given to Canterbury City Council, horticultural and wildlife specialists and the many volunteers and enthusiasts, for their role in enhancing public and private space for pollinators.
- 9.11. Given the agrarian and rural landscape and diverse range of protected wildlife and plant species in Chartham Parish, some of which are rare and endangered, these species should be not only protected but supported by a strategy towards a biodiversity Net Gain.
- 9.12. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks posed by development proposals to: SSSIs, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites⁶⁶.

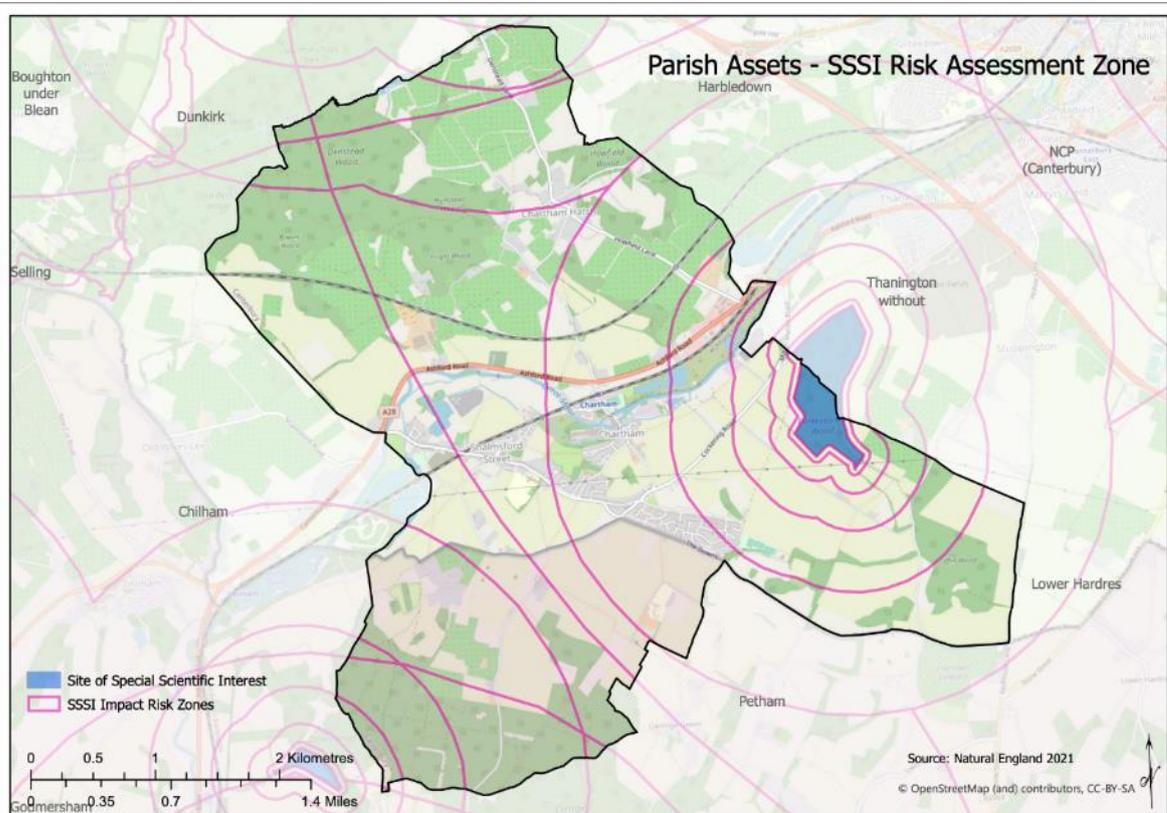


Figure 18 - Impact Risk Zones for Blean Woods SAC and Larkey Valley Wood and Down Bank SSSI impact risk zones

- 9.13. The Working Group is specifically concerned about the cumulative effects of currently occurring, past and proposed development, both within Thanington and Chartham Parishes, upon the SSSI Larkey Valley Wood (see Figure 18).

⁶⁶ https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI%20IRZ%20User%20Guidance%20MAGIC.pdf

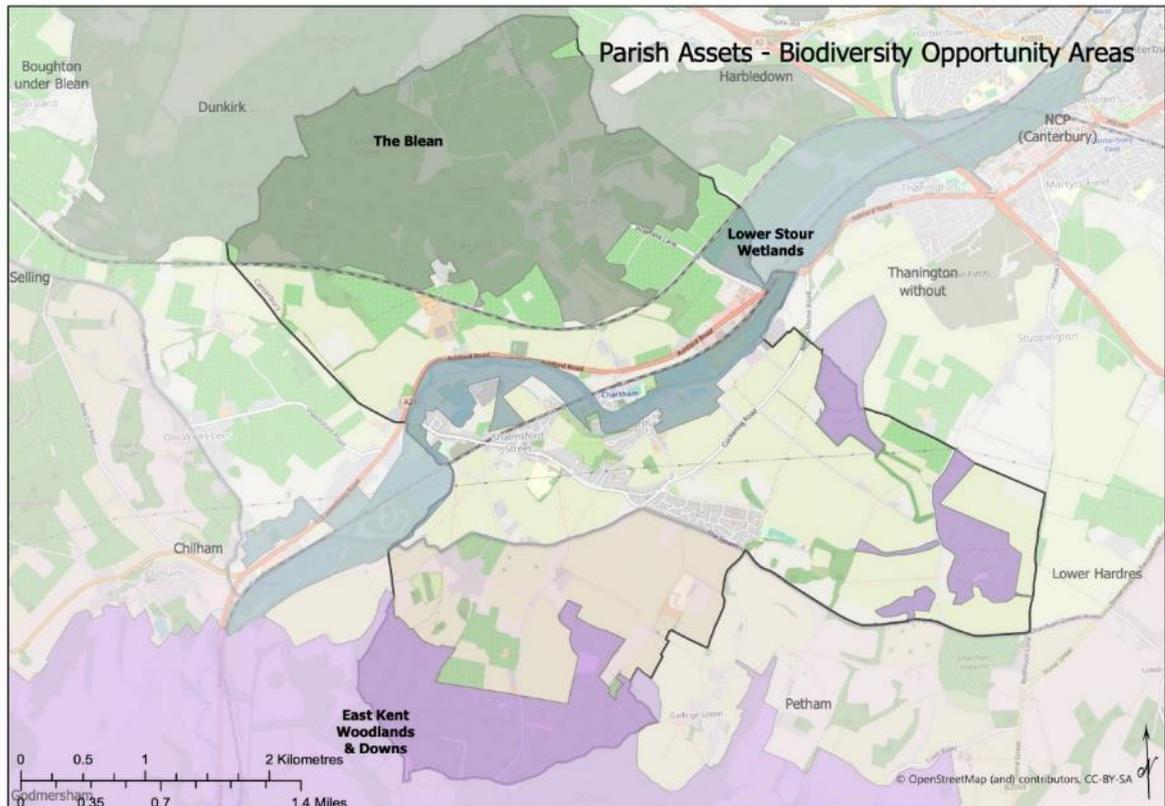


Figure 19 - Biodiversity Opportunity areas identified within Chartham Parish

- 9.14. Another concern is the fragmentation of connectivity between Biodiversity Opportunity Areas which is illustrated in Figure 19 primarily as a result of built form or agricultural activity. Whilst the Lower Stour Wetlands provides a corridor through the valley floor other areas are now fragmented and appear in isolation. This prevents the free movement of fauna between areas which can eventually result in a decline in species present.
- 9.15. Shortcomings of development proposals for landscape and biodiversity which would make development unacceptable can be corrected through development so that it becomes acceptable. One such way that impacts on landscape and biodiversity can be mitigated against from harm may be specified in planning conditions associated with a planning application or by a section 106 obligation.
- 9.16. Section 106 planning obligations are legal obligations entered into to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. The three criteria of obligations are that they must be:
- Necessary to make development acceptable in planning terms;
 - Directly related to the development; and
 - Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development
- 9.17. However, recent examples have highlighted that this does not always work, especially where developers fail to deliver what has been promised and the LPA fail to adequately monitor and enforce the requirements mitigation.

- 9.18. The Working Group has therefore identified that human activity, and particularly development is having harmful impacts on biodiversity. Concerns are also raised about a of biodiversity net gain resulting from development.

Options to address the issue

- 9.19. The Working Group has considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address this issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to existing policy and legislation

- 9.20. Sustainable development is at the heart of the UK planning system. 1 of the 3 core objectives of sustainable development relates to the environment which includes encouraging improvements to biodiversity and delivering biodiversity net gain. National policy also seeks to protect sites of biodiversity under conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Habitats and biodiversity are also protected under national policy by refusing development which leads to significant harm to biodiversity.
- 9.21. National policy has recently been strengthened to require development to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. This is only just beginning to filter into planning decisions and it is unknown at the time of writing how effective this new policy requirement at the national level.
- 9.22. That said, this ‘do nothing’ may have merit as the UK government are seeking to address this issue. However, adopting this Option would not specifically address local issues in the way that could be done through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Option 2 – Petition / Engage with DEFRA to extend the Larkey Valley Wood SSSI

- 9.23. Extending the SSSI would provide additional protection to flora and fauna which are located within the SSSI, from the harmful impacts of development. This can only be achieved if it can be proven that plant or animal species require further protection beyond the boundaries of the existing SSSI.
- 9.24. To successfully do this, we may need to commission detailed ecological surveys which may be costly and rely on landowners granting us access to their land - which they may not be willing to do.

Option 3 – Identify key habitats within the Parish and introduce a policy to prevent them from being harmed by development

- 9.25. When considering development proposals, key habitats must be identified to protect them from the harmful impacts of development by policy to support biodiversity within the Parish.
- 9.26. Again, to successfully do this, we may need to commission detailed ecological surveys which may be costly and rely on landowners granting us access to their land - which they may not be willing to do. Alternatively, we could rely on existing published data to identify these habitats. However, in doing so in the Neighbourhood Plan we may be repeating protections already in place at the national / local level.

Option 4 - Outside of the Neighbourhood Plan, apply for key habitats to be made into Parish Council owned local nature reserves

- 9.27. Local nature reserves can be created by Canterbury City Council and are designated based on local wildlife, geology, education and employment value. Applying for the identified key habitats to be made into local nature reserves will grant them protection through the creation of byelaws to set restrictions on the use of the land. The management of such local nature reserves would fall to the Parish Council.
- 9.28. One such key habitat that could be identified is Baker Wood which is currently classified as an Ancient Woodland. The Working Group propose that Baker Wood could be identified as a key habitat site and could subsequently be made into a Parish Council owned local nature reserve where biodiversity within the woodland is further protected, and management falls onto the hands of the Parish Council. Similar actions may be taken with other identified key habitats.

Option 5 – Introduce a policy requiring biodiversity net gain.

- 9.29. The final way we can look to deliver a biodiversity net gain is to introduce a policy to require development to result in biodiversity net gain. However, given this requirement is now enshrined in national policy the Working Group queries whether such a policy is required.

Option 6 – Introduce a policy that requires biodiversity survey data to be submitted to the Kent & Medway Biological Record Centre and for conditions to mitigate for negative impacts on landscape and biodiversity to be included with all development and to provide biodiversity net gain

- 9.30. Such an approach would be compliant with the garden city principles listed in Appendix 1 of the Canterbury District Local Plan 2017 and in the longer term ensure that the desired outcome is achieved.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 9.31. Option 1 seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity through national policy. This will help to improve conditions for biodiversity by discouraging development that leads to significant harm on local wildlife. The downside of this is that national policy does not consider the specific wants and needs of individual areas. Introducing a local policy requiring biodiversity net gain has been considered in Option 4 but it is not known whether this is appropriate given this requirement is now set out in national policy.
- 9.32. Extending the Larkey Valley SSSI through Option 2 would enable further protection of plant and animal species within the SSSI by providing additional restrictions to development. The drawback of this is that it must be proven that rare species are located outside of the SSSI which would require detailed survey work which may prove costly.
- 9.33. Option 3 aims to identify key habitats and protect them from the harmful impacts of development. This will help to preserve local biodiversity from being harmed and retaining habitats that are needed to sustain the ecosystem.
- 9.34. Option 4 seeks to apply for the identified key habitats to be made into Parish Council owned local nature reserves. This will enable the Parish Council to manage these sites in the best interest of landscape and biodiversity and will enable greater protection on these sites through the creation of byelaws. The disadvantage of this option is that the management and upkeep of these local nature reserves could become costly to the Parish Council.
- 9.35. Given the above discussion, it is considered that biodiversity net gain should be delivered through development. However, whether this is left to national policy (Option 1) or introduced at the neighbourhood level (Option 5) is a matter for the Steering Group to discuss.
- 9.36. Otherwise, it is suggested that Options 3, 4, 5 and 6 are progressed by the Steering Group as they will both likely reduce the harmful impact of development on biodiversity.

10. ISSUE 6 – HARMFUL IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT UPON THE KENT DOWNS AONB AND ITS SETTING

Overview

- 10.1. Areas of Outstanding National Beauty are part of a global family of protected areas recognised and classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). AONBs, National Parks and Heritage Coasts in England and Wales fall into Category V - Protected Landscapes. These are areas that have been moulded by centuries of human activity, where there is a diversity of land use with a 'sense of place'.
- 10.2. There is government pressure to increase housing numbers which has forced local authorities to prioritise new building over landscape protection. This has been seen with the Kent Downs AONB which "has experienced a ten-fold increase in development since 2017"⁶⁷
- 10.3. The south east and south west of England AONBs are accommodating 85% of the national total of homes planned for these protected landscapes. Nationally, high housing pressure is also having a major impact on the landscape setting of AONBs, with 27,807 housing units approved for building within 500 metres of their boundaries within the past five years.
- 10.4. The need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Kent Downs AONB is recognised as the primary purpose of the designation and is given the highest level of protection within statutory and other appropriate planning and development strategies and development control decisions.
- 10.5. The Kent Wildlife Trust says, 'Living Landscapes lie at the heart of everything we do, bringing nature to people and providing corridors across the landscape along which wildlife can move and spread.'⁶⁸ Although the AONB is primarily a landscape designation, development which impacts landscape will inevitably impact biodiversity. Without proper planning and having biodiversity at the forefront of development, invariably habitat fragmentation will occur. This coupled with a creeping urbanisation of the rural landscape, as experienced within the Parish, biodiversity loss is inevitable. While some species can thrive along habitat edges, others struggle to survive.

⁶⁷ <https://www.cpre.org.uk/news/sounding-the-alarm-on-disappearing-natural-beauty/>

⁶⁸ <https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/blog/paul-hadaway/connected-countryside-living-landscape>

- 10.6. The Working Group sees this as unsustainable and believe that Chartham's fine views and beautiful landscape, which provides benefit for people, wildlife and the planet should be afforded protection from inappropriate development.

Options to address the issue

- 10.7. The Working Group have considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address this issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national policy

- 10.8. National policy states the importance of protecting AONBs from inappropriate development to conserve their unique character, heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and national significance which contributes to the country's valued landscape. Whilst this has some effect, there are concerns that it is not given adequate weight locally in decision making.

Option 2 – Reinforce the policies set out in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2021-2026⁶⁹ in the Neighbourhood Plan

- 10.9. The Management Plan sets out a variety of policies which relate to landscape and biodiversity. The Neighbourhood Plan should reinforce these policies to ensure that development is not inappropriate and does not encroach on the Kent Downs' valued and unique landscape and biodiversity.
- 10.10. This could take the form of a specific policy, or explanatory text in the plan highlighting the importance of the AONB.

Option 3 – Introduce design codes for development within the AONB and its setting

- 10.11. By seeking to closely control how development comes forward, it is hoped that harmful development can be minimised. Using design codes provide clarity for both the developer/applicant and the LPA by clearly setting out what development would be considered acceptable in each area.

⁶⁹ <https://www.kentdowns.org.uk/management-plan-2021-2026/>

- 10.12. By requiring conformity with the guidance⁷⁰, good design will help to mitigate harmful impacts of development on the landscape and biodiversity of the AONB and its setting. relating to farmstead extension, other development, roads⁷² and infrastructure.

Option 4 – Provide training to Parish Councillors on relevant AONB planning considerations

- 10.13. Whilst the Parish Council does not make decisions on planning applications, it does provide comments and a view on the acceptability of proposals, including those within the AONB. It is therefore proposed that Councillors are given specific training on what should be considered for such proposals that impact the AONB. This should be done in consultation with, or by, the Kent Downs AONB Unit and will include consideration of the impacts on landscape and biodiversity when deciding upon planning applications

Option 5 – Petition Canterbury City Council to fulfil their commitments in the Canterbury City Council Local Development Plan 2017 to extend the Kent Downs AONB

- 10.14. Extending the AONB would provide additional protection to landscape and biodiversity located within the new proposed boundary of the AONB from the harmful impacts of development.
- 10.15. Development within the proposed extended AONB must adhere to the policies set out in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan which provides rigorous restrictions to what development can be allowed within the AONB in order to protect its landscape by mitigating any negative environmental impacts and climate change.
- 10.16. The City Council previously proposed to extend the AONB and this Option would see the Parish Council actively pursuing this for the benefit of the community.

Option 6 – Lobby the Kent Downs AONB to apply for National Park status

- 10.17. Increasing the level of protection to that of a National Park would ensure that the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB remains unspoiled by development, retaining the enjoyment that it provides for its users.

⁷⁰ <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/explore-kent-bucket/uploads/sites/7/2018/04/18112817/Farm-Diversification-Toolkit.pdf>

⁷¹ https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/explore-kent-bucket/uploads/sites/7/2018/04/18113853/Kent_Downs_AONB_Farmstead_Guidance.pdf

⁷² <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/explore-kent-bucket/uploads/sites/7/2018/04/18113912/Rural-Streets-and-Lanes-a-design-handbook.pdf>

- 10.18. According to the Peak District National Park's website⁷³, Sir Arthur Hobhouse provided the requirements for National Park's in the 1940s, these requirements are:

"...it should have great natural beauty, a high value for open-air recreation and substantial continuous extent. Further, the distribution of selected areas should as far as practicable be such that at least one of them is quickly accessible from each of the main centres of population in England and Wales. Lastly there is merit in variety and with the wide diversity of landscape which is available in England and Wales, it would be wrong to confine the selection of National Parks to the more rugged areas of mountain and moorland, and to exclude other districts which, though of less outstanding grandeur and wildness, have their own distinctive beauty and a high recreational value"

- 10.19. The Kent Downs AONB meets the criteria with highly valued landscape and biodiversity merit that is of national significance. It is accessible to a range of populated areas such as Ashford, Canterbury, Sevenoaks, Maidstone, Dover, Folkstone and Rochester, and isn't far away from some of the Greater London towns.
- 10.20. Upgrading the status of the AONB to a National Park would be accompanied by the production of a National Park Authority who would act as the Planning Authority replacing the current system of the AONB which has existing Local Authorities determining applications within their boundaries with aid from the Kent Down AONB Unit.

Option 7 – Identify the importance of the AONB to Chartham and introduce policy that protects it from the harmful impacts of development

- 10.21. The Kent Downs AONB is highly valued in contributing to Chartham's sense of the place. It also creates the potential to attract tourism to the Parish, improve the health and wellbeing of local residents and improve public amenity.
- 10.22. Policy to mitigate the harmful impacts of development include restricting development scale, ensuring sustainability and minimising impacts on landscape, biodiversity and tranquillity.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

- 10.23. The importance of AONBs and the need to protect them is stated in national policy, therefore Option 1 is a viable route to take. However it is felt that more can be done locally to prevent harmful impacts on the AONB.

⁷³ <https://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/learning-about/about-the-national-park/our-history#:~:text=Sir%20Arthur%20Hobhouse%20described%20the,recreation%20and%20substantial%20continuous%20extent.>

- 10.24. Options 5 and 6 are broader and either look increase the size of the AONB or change the status of the Kent Downs AONB to a National Park. Whilst these are valuable objectives, they are beyond the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and so should be considered by the Parish Council to progress politically.
- 10.25. The remainder of the Options, 2, 3, 4, and 7 are all recommended to be progressed by the Steering Group as they are all considered to collectively reduce the harmful impacts of development on the AONB and its setting.

11. ISSUE 9 – COALESCENCE OF SETTLEMENTS

Overview

- 11.1. Chartham and the other settlements within it have grown naturally over some time. Importantly however the Parish comprises different settlements and Parishioners see each settlement as a different rea. There is a concern that continued expansion of these areas will see the coalescence them, and with that harm to our landscape and biodiversity would occur.
- 11.2. The Working Group believe that it is in the best interest of our rural landscape if the settlements remain separate as they each have their own distinct character, history and identity; this is one of the things that makes the Parish so unique and must therefore be protected.
- 11.3. Development in the green gap between Chartham and neighbouring areas will reduce the rural character of the Parish and would be of significant detriment to the valued landscape and views which would be dominated by residential development.
- 11.4. The Community have raised this concern through the Vision and Objectives Survey stating their worry that the green gap to Canterbury is being eroded by infill development on green spaces which could lead Chartham to become a satellite extension of Canterbury.
- 11.5. The Parish Design statement reinforces the need to maintain this green gap in the Natural Environment section stating that:
- *It is important that Chartham keeps its own identity as a rural parish surrounded by open countryside, and should not be absorbed by peripheral development from neighbouring parishes.*
 - *Green buffer zones should be retained within the built-up areas and between the several settlements within the parish. These give a feeling of space and provide wildlife habitats.*
 - *Landowners, residents, businesses and developers should be made aware of the importance to the natural environment of all existing belts of trees, individual trees and hedges.*
- 11.6. The general principle for the natural environment is:
- The rural character of the parish, and the green spaces between its settlements and those which separate Chartham from the adjoining parishes and suburbs of Canterbury, should not be compromised*

Options to address the issue

- 11.7. The Working Group have considered the best way to address the issue and consider that there are several possible ways which this could be done. N.B. there may be ways to address the issue outside of the Neighbourhood Plan and these are included below;

Option 1 – Do not address the issue in the Neighbourhood Plan, and instead leave it to national and local policy

- 11.8. Depend upon National and Canterbury City Council policy to protect this piece of land which is on the boundary between Thanington and Chartham, partly in the flood zone and outside a defined settlement boundary. National policy will seek to protect the valued countryside and avoid the two settlements from merging through development.

Option 2 – Identify green gaps and introduce policy to protect them from the harmful impacts of development

- 11.9. The land proposed would have to conform with Canterbury City Council Paragraph 11.45 which states:

‘The green gaps have been specifically identified between built up areas, such as villages or urban areas, which are gradually expanding, particularly along the road frontages. The designations have been limited to ‘pinch points’, where settlements, often due to linear expansion, are at a particular risk of coalescence.’

This would provide an extra level of protection according to Canterbury City Council Policy OS6 Green Gaps which states:

‘Within the Green Gaps identified on the Proposals Map (see also Insets 1,3 and 5) development will be permitted where it does not:

Significantly affect the open character of the Green Gap, or lead to coalescence between existing settlements;

Result in new isolated and obtrusive development within the Green Gap.

Proposals for open sports and recreational uses will be permitted subject to there being no overriding conflict with other policies and the wider objectives of the Plan. Any related built development should satisfy criteria (a) and (b) above and be kept to a minimum necessary to supplement the open sports and recreation uses, and be sensitively located and of a high quality design.’

- 11.10. Areas which have been identified as being under threat of development yet vitally important to the setting of Chartham align with the seven character areas identified within the Chartham Conservation Areal Appraisal (June 2005) which are:
- Station Road
 - The Green - Village Green / De L’Angle Road Garden
 - Riverside Area - Riverside / Area to the north of Parish Road

- Cemetery, Chartham Corn Mill and Nickle Farm - Corn Mill / Cemetery. Nickle Farm
- Rattington Street
- Shalmsford Street
- Bolts Hill

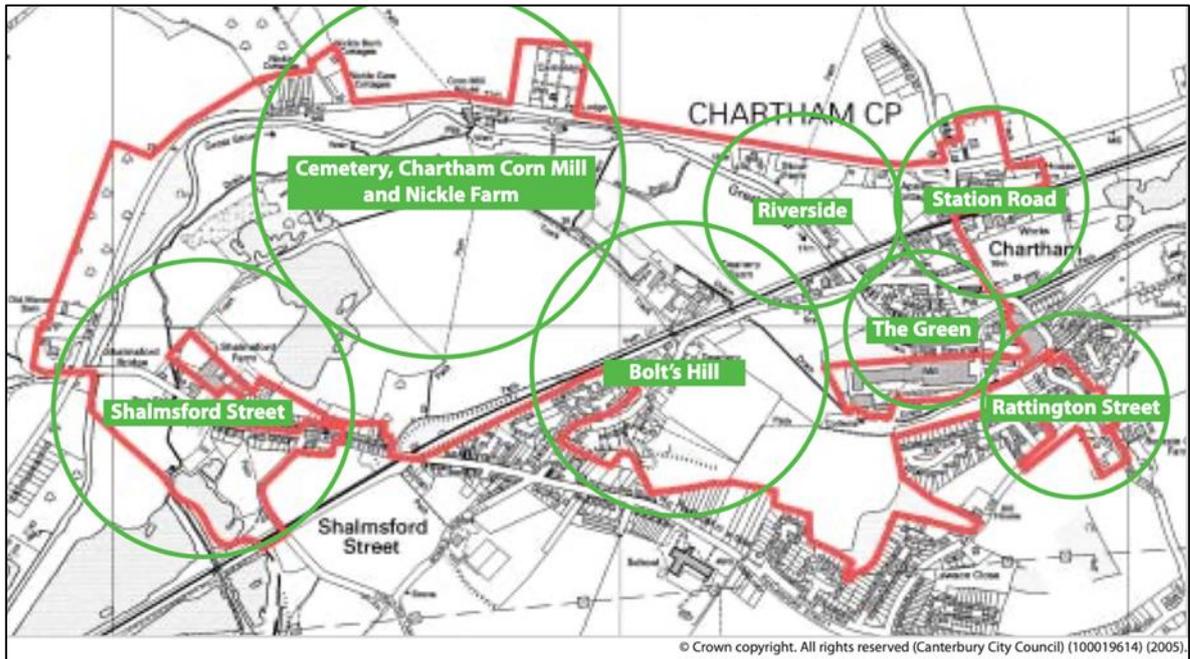


Figure 20 - Chartham Conservation Area Appraisal seven Character Areas

11.11. Further areas identified by the WP as sites that could benefit from being designated as green gaps are:

- Farmland and potential orchard around Deanery Farm
- Memorial Field
- Curtilage of Horton
- Fields to the north of Parish Road
- Woodland adjacent to Arjo Wiggins
- Bakers Wood
- Unwooded fields between houses associated with development to the north of Shalmsford Street and Parish Road
- Green triangle to the north of Chartham station
- Fields forming a triangle between Riverside, the railway and the A28
- Around Perry Court
- Around Iffin Wood
- On either side of rural lanes or roads such as Pickelden Lane, Thruxted Lane, Mystole Road and to the north of Chartham Downs Road
- Within the floodplain between Thanington and Chartham

- Between Larkey Valley Wood and the St Augustine's development - Recent development passed at Cockering Road and Larkey Valley Farm has started to encircle Larkey Valley Wood. The Working Group are concerned that the habitat for larks be maintained on remaining high ground around the bridle path which follows the old route of Cockering Road, which was used for pilgrimage.

11.12. All of these areas provide a meaningful contribution towards wither our rural landscape or biodiversity and this option would see policy introduced through the Neighbourhood Plan to protect these sites from inappropriate development.

Consideration of Options & recommended solution

11.13. Whilst the coalescence of settlements may be seen as being particularly relevant to this topic paper, if settlements continue to grow and merge it will have a lasting impact on our rural landscape and setting and exacerbate the current segregation of important habitats.

11.14. Considering the Options above, it is considered prudent to include such a policy in the Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Option 2. Not only would this prevent coalescence but also preserve the ability of our wildlife to traverse the Parish and maintain our rural landscape which comprises several separate settlements.

12. CONCLUSIONS

- 12.1. This Topic Paper has discussed the context of Chartham regarding landscape and biodiversity and has provided relevant supporting national and local policy. The paper has set out the issues which the Working Group have identified, through community engagement and research collection, and have also detailed Options which can solve these issues. These Options have been considered against each other and the most applicable Options have been recommended to the Steering Group.

Recommendations

- 12.2. The outcome of this topic paper is therefore to recommend that the neighbourhood plan seek to include planning policy which:
1. Identifies and designates sites as Local Green Spaces within the Neighbourhood Plan
 2. Adopts policies set out in Canterbury City Council's 'Enforcement Plan'
 3. Protects rural roads from the harmful impacts of development
 4. Identifies rural tranquil sites and protects them from the harmful impacts of development
 5. Prevents development from producing inappropriate light pollution
 6. Protects public rights of way from the harmful impacts of development
 7. Protects highly valued viewpoints
 8. Surveys the trees and hedges in the Parish and protects them from the harmful impacts of development
 9. Promotes tree planting across the area as part of development
 10. Prevents development within the River Stour valley basin unless that development benefits the landscape and biodiversity of the valley basin
 11. Improves existing public rights of way to avoid erosion and flooding
 12. Identifies key habitat sites in the Parish and protects them from being harmed by development
 13. Requires biodiversity net gain
 14. Provides criteria for development along the A28 and Shalmsford Street to prevent the impacts of ribbon development
 15. Protects landscape and unique sense of place using the findings of local consultation, assessment and documentation
 16. Reinforces the policies set out in the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2021-2026
 17. Introduces design codes to protect the AONB and its setting

18. Identifies green gaps and protects them from the harmful impacts of development

12.3. In addition, the following actions should be picked up and progressed by the Parish Council separately to the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Formalise a process within the Parish Council planning committee and the Parish Council itself to actively report illegal development
- Raise awareness of the PROW network
- Campaign against litter, publicise fines given for fly tipping and dog fouling that degrade the visual quality of the landscape, advertise litter picking group dates and communicate with the Parish about problem areas and bin provision
- Reinforce the significance of TPOs
- Engage with schools and the wider community in tree and hedge planting projects
- Educate residents about preserving wildlife and their habitats
- Encourage the Parish Council to publicise the need to apply for felling and tree work within Conservation Areas.
- Reinforce the significance of the sequential test
- Apply to Canterbury City Council to have the identified key habitats made into Parish Council owned local nature reserves.
- Encourage Canterbury City Council to look favourably upon proposals that lead to net biodiversity gain
- Consult with the community to define valued views to be used to shape policy regarding protection of Chartham's landscape
- Engage with the Kent Downs AONB Unit to further consider the impacts on biodiversity and landscape when deciding on planning applications
- Engage with Canterbury City Council to fulfil their commitments in the Canterbury City Council LDP 2017 to extend the Kent Downs AONB

APPENDIX 1 – PROTECTED SPECIES FOUND IN CHARTHAM

This section provides a detailed list of all the protected species of animal found in the Parish.

Protected Species within the Parish taken from the Kent & Medway Biological Record Centre

Mammals

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Arvicola amphibius	European Water Vole	CCSI SS	1970
Erinaceus europaeus	West European Hedgehog	SS	1991/2000
		CH	1978/2000/2011
		CV	2003
Lepus europaeus	Brown Hare	CCSI DW	2009
		IW	1966
		LVW	2001
Lutra lutra	European Otter	CCSI HGS	2019
Micromys minutus	Harvest Mouse	CCSI CH	2020
Muscardinus avellanarius	Hazel Dormouse	CCSI DW	2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011
		M	2007
		HW*	2005 / 2006 / 2007 / 2008 / 2009 / 2010 / 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014 / 2015 / 2016 / 2018 / 2019
		LVW	2008/

**Data collected from nesting box counts on various days throughout April to October during those years*

Reptiles

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Anguis fragilis	Slow worm	CCSI SB	2018
		UMPF	2018/2019
		HW	2013/2014

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
		PR TR099565	2004
		PR TR102545	2008/2009
		PR TR102546	2003
		DW	2001/2011/2019
		BW	1996
		KSB	2016/2018/
		ML	2009
		SS	2014
		PR TR120539	2000
<i>Natrix helvetica</i>	Grass Snake	CCSI UMPF	2018/2019
		CL	2016
		SS	1990
		RS (SNCI)	2004
		PR CH TR096562	2006
		PR TR099565	2004
		PR TR102545	2009
		PR TR1054	1995
		KSB	2016/2018
		HL	1997
		SA TR118538	2000
		LVW	1999
<i>Vipera berus</i>	Adder	CCSI Chartham Woods??	1901??
<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	Common Lizard	CCSI UMPF	2018/2019/
		HW	2007/2014
		DW	2005/2009/2011/2019
		NMO	2002/2020
		MV	1993
		KSB	2018
		SA	2000
		IW	2002

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
		GG	1983

Moths

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
<i>Acronicta psi</i>	Grey Dagger (moth)	CCSI LVW	1999
<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>	Knot Grass (moth)	CCSI PP	2016
<i>Agrotera nemoralis</i>	Beautiful Pearl (moth)	CCSI DW/PP	2019
		PP	2019
<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>	Mouse Moth	CCSI LVW	1999
		CH/NMO	2004
<i>Anania funebris</i>	White-spotted Sable (moth)	CCSI DW/PP	2017
		DW	2009/2011
<i>Apamea remissa</i>	Dusky Brocade (moth)	CCSI PP	2019
		DW/PP	2019
<i>Atethmia centrargo</i>	Centre-barred Sallow (moth)	CCSI NC	2014/2019
<i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>	Minor Shoulder-Knot (moth)	CCSI DW/PP	2019
		PP	2019
		LVW	1999
<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>	Mottled Rustic (moth)	CCSI LVW	1999
		PP	2016/19
		NC	2015/19
<i>Chesias rufata</i>	Broom-Tip (moth)	CCSI DW	2019
		PP	2016
<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>	Latticed Heath (moth)	CCSI NC	2019
		UHF	2018

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
<i>Diarsia rubi</i>	Small Square-spot (moth)	CCSI NC	2015
<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>	Small Phoenix (moth)	CCSI CH/NMO	2004
		LVW	1999
		DW/PP	2016
		PP	2016/17
<i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>	Dusky Thorn (moth)	CCSI NC	2019
<i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>	Galium Carpet (moth)	CCSI PP	2016
<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>	Autumnal Rustic (moth)	CCSI NC	2019
<i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>	Small Emerald (moth)	LVW	1999
<i>Hepialus humuli</i>	Ghost Moth	CCSI DEW	2018
		DW/PP	2019
		PP	2019
<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>	Rustic (moth)	CCSI NC	2015
		DW/PP	2019
		LVW	1999
<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>	Rosy Rustic (moth)	CCSI CH/NMO	2004
		NC	2019
<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>	Dot Moth	CCSI LVW	1999
		NC	2015
		PP	2016
<i>Melanthia procellata</i>	Pretty Chalk Carpet (moth)	CCSI LVW	1999, 2001
		DW/PP	2016
		PP	2016/19
<i>Minoa murinata</i>	Drab Looper (moth)	CCSI DW/PP	2018
<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>	Shaded Broad-bar (moth)	CCSI LVW	1999
		DW/PP	2000

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
		UMPF	2017
		FNC	2018
		UHF	2018
Spilosoma lubricipeda	White Ermine (moth)	CCSI LVW	1993
		CH/NMO	2006
		DW	2010
		NC	2015/19
		PP	2019
Spilosoma luteum	Buff Ermine (moth)	CCSI NC	2015/19
		DW/PP	2019
		PP	2016/19
Tholera decimalis	Feathered Gothic (moth)	CCSI NC	2019
Timandra comae	Blood-vein (moth)	CCSI TR093554 Ashford Road	2015
		UMPF	2017
		NC	2019
Tyria jacobaeae	Cinnabar moth	CCSI UMPF	2018
		NC	2019
Watsonalla binaria	Oak Hook-tip (moth)	CCSI CH	1980

Plants

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Anthemis cotula	Stinking Chamomile	KRSSI SS	2013
		GG	2014
		PC	2013/2014
		SA	2013/2014
Buxus Sempervirens	Box	KRSSI TR121536	2000
Centaurea cyanus	Cornflower	CCSI LVW	2017

Cephalanthera damasonium	White Helleborine	CCSI DW	2012
		LVW	2015
Cerastium arvense	Field mouse-ear	KRSSI SS	2013
Clinopodium acinos	Basil Thyme	CCSI PC	2013
		SA	2013
Filago minima	Common Cudweed	KRSSI DF	2019
		CH	1971-1980
Galeopsis angustifolia	Red Hemp-nettle	CCSI HW	1979
Glebionis segetum	Corn Marigold	KRSSI LVW	2017
Muscari neglectum	Grape-hyacinth	DF	
Ophrys insectifera	Fly Orchid	CCSI DW	2012
		LV	2013
Platanthera bifolia	Lesser Butterfly-Orchid	CCSI GG	1991-1999
Scandix pecten-veneris	Shepherd's-needle (plant)	KRSSI Street End TR1453	2011
Silene flos-cuculi	Ragged-Robin	KRSSI CH	1950-1956
		DW	2012

Amphibians

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Bufo bufo	Common Toad	CCSI DW	2011/2017/2020
		SS TR102545	2010
		SS TR108543	1996
		PC	2019
		LVW	1988
		MGP	1996
		RS TR1195581996	
		LVW	1981-1990/1996

Other Invertebrates

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
<i>Asilus crabroniformis</i>	Hornet Robberfly	CCSI PC	2019
<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	White-clawed Freshwater Crayfish	CCSI SS	1999
		PD	1993
		NF	1998/99
		CM	1998/99
		H	1994/5
<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (butterfly)	CCSI GG	1991
<i>Bombus muscorum</i>	Moss Carder-bee	CCSI CH TR1056	1976
<i>Bombus ruderarius</i>	Red-shanked Carder-bee	CCSI CH TR1056	1976/1979
<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	Small Heath (butterfly)	CCSI DW	1981/83/84, 2016, 2020
		GG	1991/95, 2008
		CH	1990
<i>Erynnis tages</i>	Dingy Skipper (butterfly)	CCSI DW	2012
		DWW	2012/14
		GG	1992
<i>Hamearis lucina</i>	Duke of Burgundy (butterfly)	CCSI DW	2012
		DWW	2012, 2016
<i>Lasiommata megera</i>	Wall Brown (butterfly)	CCSI DW	1984/90,2014/20
		CH	1984
		LVW	1992
<i>Limenitis camilla</i>	White Admiral (butterfly)	CCSI DW	2009, 2011, 2020
<i>Meloe proscarabaeus</i>	Black Oil-beetle	CCSI DW	2019
<i>Polyzonium germanicum</i>	Boring Millipede	CCSI DW	1972
		HW	1972

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
		DW	1975
		HW	1986
Pyrgus malva	Grizzled Skipper (butterfly)	CCSI GG	1997

Fish

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Anguilla anguilla	European Eel	CCSI SS	1977
		HGS	2005
		MM	1991
Salmo trutta	Sea Trout	CCSI SS	1985

Bats

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule Bat	CCSI PR CH TR103563	2002
		PR CV TR106550	2017
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle (bat)	PR CV TR106550	2017
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-eared Bat	PR CV TR101552	1998

Birds

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Turdus pilaris	Fieldfare	TR1055	2018
Turdus torquatus	Ring Ouzel	Chartham Mill	2016
Turdus philomelos	Song Thrush	TR1055	2019
Turdus iliacus	Redwing	TR1055	2019
Turdus viscivorus	Mistle Thrush	TR1055	2017
Phylloscopus sibilatrix	Wood Warbler	TR1055	2019

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
<i>Locustella naevia</i>	Grasshopper warbler	Chartham Mill	2016
<i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>	Pied Flycatcher	Chartham Mill	2010
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i>	Golden oriole	Joan Beech Wood, Dunkirk	2015
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Red backed Shrike	Denge Woods	2017
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Starling	Chartham Mill	2019
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	TR1055	2019
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow	TR1055	2019
<i>Cardulis cannabina</i>	Linnit	TR1055	2018
<i>Cardulis cabaret</i>	Lessor redpoll	Chartham Mill	2019
<i>Cocothraustis cocothraustis</i>	Hawfinch	Denge Woods/Larkey Valley	2019
<i>Emberiza citnella</i>	Yellowhammer	TR1055	2017
<i>Milliaria calandra</i>	Corn Bunting	TR1055	1993
<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Little ringed Plover	Milton Lakes	1990
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Curlew	Chartham Mill	2016
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle Dove	TR1055	2016
<i>Caulus canorus</i>	Cuckoo	TR1055	2019
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Skylark	Chartham Mill	2017
<i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Tree Pipit	Chartham Mill	2016
<i>Luscinia magarynchos</i>	Nightingale	Chartham Mill	2019
<i>Phoenicurus phoenicurus</i>	Black Redstart	Chartham Mill	2016
<i>Saxicola rubetra</i>	Winchat	TR1055	2019
<i>Aythya ferina</i>	Hen harrier	Chartham Mill	2019
<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Merlin	TR0955	2012
<i>Phyloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Hobby	Larkey Valley/liffin Woods	2005
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey partridge	TR1055	2019
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Lapwing	TR1055	2018
<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Woodcock	TR0955	2018

Name	Common Name	Location	Year
Numenius phaeopus	Whimbrel	TR1055	2015
Palus palustris	Marsh Tit	Chartham lakes	2019
Larus fuscus	Herring Gull	TR1055	2019
Dendrocopus minor	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Chartham Mill	2019
Motacilla flava	Yellow Wagtail	TR1055	2019
Motacilla cineria	Grey Wagtail	TR1055	2019

Species Data obtained from KMBRC are listed in:

- CCSI - Conservation Concern Species Inventory
- KRSSI - Kent Rare and Scarce Species Inventory
- Kent Bat Group Bat records

Key for location of Protected Species in Chartham Parish

- CH Chartham Hatch
- CL Chartham Lakes
- CM Chartham Mill
- CV Chartham Village
- CW Chartham Woods
- BW Bigbury Woods
- DEW Denstead Woods
- DF Deanery Farm
- DW Denge Woods
- DWW Denge Woods Warren
- FNC Farm Near Canterbury
- GG Garlinge Green
- H Horton
- HGS Horton on the Great Stour
- HL Howfield Lakes
- HW Hunstead Wood
- IW Iffin Woods
- KSB Kent Sectional Buildings
- LVW Larkey Valley Woods
- M Mystole
- MGP Milton Gravel Pit
- ML Milton Lakes
- MM Milton Manor

- NC Nickle Cottages
- NF Nickle Farm
- PC Perry Court
- PD Pickledon Dyke
- PP Penny Pot
- PR Private Residence
- RS River Stour
- SA Saint Augustine
- SB Shalmsford Bridge
- SSC Steiner School (now called “New School”)
- SS Shalmsford Street
- UHF Upper Horton Farm
- UMPF Upper Mystole Park Farm

Animal species of the River Stour found in Chartham

The following table provides a detailed list of the animal species found within the River Stour that have been sited within Chartham. The information is taken from the River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board’s *Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025*.

Common & scientific name	National Status	Local Status	Location of Species of Importance within drainage district	IDB Potential for Maintaining or Increasing Species Population or Range (High/medium/low)
Atlantic salmon (Salmo salar)	S41 Species	Non-KBAP Species but Important in District	Great Stour in small numbers - upstream to Wye, mainly Chartham to Godmersham	Low association with IDB watercourses. Low
Great silver diving beetle (Hydrophilus piceus)		Non-KBAP Species but Important in District	Stour Valley, Sandwich Stodmarsh to	Occurs in ditches. Medium
Norfolk Hawker (Anaciaeschna isosceles)	Nationally important (Endangered). Until recently, restricted to Norfolk Broads and a few areas of North Suffolk.	Recent arrival in Lower Stour. Most endangered and highly protected species of Odonata in the catchment.	Records mostly from Westbere/Stodmarsh, scattered records include Hacklinge, Chislet, Ash Levels and Little Stour Valley.	Grazing marsh ditch systems and ponds with good marginal vegetation, trees and shrubs - similar to scarce chaser. Associated with Water Soldier (Stratiotes aloides) in its primary range, which is rare in the Lower Stour. Sensitive to saline and brackish water. Medium

Common & scientific name	National Status	Local Status	Location of Species of Importance within drainage district	IDB Potential for Maintaining or Increasing Species Population or Range (High/medium/low)
Hairy dragonfly (Brachytron pratense)	Patchy UK distribution, mainly southern Britain. Uncommon but increasing in range	Non-KBAP Species but Important in District. KRDB3. quite widely distributed in wetland areas and river corridors; appears to be on the increase but may have been under-recorded before. Lower Stour populations are regionally important	Mainly on the Lower Stour but there are also records from Hothfield, Sevington, Chilham and Shalmsford Street areas.	Prefers still, linear water bodies with good marginal vegetation and occasional trees. Medium
Sky lark (Alauda arvensis)	S41 species	KBAP Priority Species	Throughout open landscapes in the drainage district	May nest on ditch banks. General habitat measures will favour this species and species-specific actions not required. Medium
Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis)	Amber listed species in the 'Birds of Conservation Concern' Schedule 1 WCA 1981 Formerly declining along linear waterways until the mid-1980s, since recovered.	Non-KBAP Species but Important in District	Scarce but widespread in drainage district.	Careful management around likely nest sites: holes in steep or vertical banks. Medium
Water Vole (Arvicola terrestris)	S41 species, Listed in WCA 1981 Dramatic decline in UK - 1989 survey recorded 67% losses	KBAP Priority Species Populations are declining in Kent but the county is thought to be a stronghold for the	Throughout drainage district, but especially abundant in Lower Stour Marshes, which is thought to be a nationally important population	Lives in well-vegetated banks of rivers, streams and ditches but can also be found in ponds, lakes, gravel pits and canals. Very good populations in IDB watercourses. High

*Hairy dragonfly (Brachytron pratense) is recorded as being seen at Shalmsford Street in the IDB