

OUR LIVING LANDSCAPE

**Compiled by the Landscape and Bio-diversity Focus Group -
Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Parishes Neighbourhood Plan**

May 2013 (Draft 4)

“Now we need to turn every neighbourhood into a living landscape” Chris Baines, Vice President of The Wildlife Trusts.

Summary

1. This is the summary of the report of the work carried out by the Lindfield Neighbourhood Plan, Landscape and Biodiversity Focus Group between February and May 2013, the findings of the Group and the policies it is recommending.
2. The Group had access to a considerable body of evidence, amounting to many hundreds of pages, and including: the landscape character studies of the West Sussex County Council and Mid Sussex District Council, the Lindfield Village Design Statement, the Sussex Biodiversity Centre Report for Lindfield Parishes and habitat research carried out in conjunction with the Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitat (MORPH) project and the University of Sussex River Ouse Project. What was missing was an understanding of farming and landscape stewardship within our parishes. Focus Group members spent most of their time in rectifying this gap in evidence so that recommendations would be soundly based. We are very grateful for the time freely, and kindly, given by farmers and landowners in answering our questions.
3. **What do we have?** The Lindfield parishes lie in an area of substantial landscape character and value whose rural nature needs to be maintained and managed. The area north of the river Ouse is within the High Weald Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Ashdown Forest 7km buffer-zone covers much of the Rural Parish up to the Northern Boundary of Lindfield Parish. The countryside is actively farmed primarily for livestock or livestock foodstuffs. Both informal and, increasingly, formal land stewardship is undertaken for the benefit of wildlife. The rural character is much cherished by all residents, including those in the two main villages of Scaynes Hill and Lindfield with their also, much valued, townscapes. Lindfield village's rural character is especially at risk due to the very limited remaining rural boundary, as much of the village borders the built-up area of Haywards Heath. There is a rich biodiversity with many habitats of importance to wildlife not all of which are currently protected. This richness extends into the built-up boundary where wildlife is more diverse than in typical urban areas. There have, however, been no recent records for a number of species, particularly those dependent upon traditional woodland and grassland management practices, or which have been affected by invasive alien species.
4. **The Neighbourhood Plan**, when approved by a referendum, will form part of the local planning system. All such policies have to conform to the National Planning Policy Framework. There is a very good match between what is mandated by the Framework on biodiversity and what residents have confirmed, both in closed and open answers to the residents survey, they want. The Framework, however, mandates that there is a "presumption for sustainable development". The policy recommendations of our Focus Group define what, based upon up-to-date good practice guidance, is sustainable for our Parishes' living landscape.

5. Policy Recommendations

- A. **The Rural Economy:** The rural landscape of agricultural land and woodland has been managed by man for centuries. Continued active farming and local food production should be supported and high standards of husbandry and land stewardship encouraged.
- B. **Wildlife Habitat:** All wildlife habitats within the Parishes can benefit from improved stewardship and management. One habitat giving most concern is the remaining rough/unimproved grassland. Three sites have been identified where we should encourage and support the owners in obtaining formal protection within the planning system.
- C. **Wildlife Corridors:** Preserve the existing wildlife corridors and connect holdings, reserves and other open/green space by further corridors. The restoration of the critical Ouse blue corridor needs to be secured by safeguarded water quality and streamside habitat in tributaries flowing from built-up areas.
- D. **Green Space (Built-up areas):** Protect the amount, amenity and visual attractiveness of public green space and private gardens within the villages' built-up areas and enhance the habitat for wildlife.
- E. **New Development:** Design new developments, in accordance with up-to-date good practice, to be permeable to wild-life. Developers' contributions from the Plan area should finance improvements to the amenity and bio-diversity of the Plan landscape.
- F. **Rural/Built-up Area Boundaries:** Retain the much-valued rural character of the villages by protecting the existing, precious and pressurized, rural/built-up area boundaries. Critical points are where:
 - a. They are crossed by roads and footpaths
 - b. They connect to internal and external wildlife corridors
 - c. Building out would jeopardise the strategic gaps between the villages or intrude onto the slopes of the Ouse Valley destroying its character.
 - d. For Lindfield Village the open countryside viewed from the common should be safeguarded as should the Conservation Area Rural Boundary.
- G. **Amenity in the Rural Landscape:** The existing footpath network does not provide much opportunity for short (2-3km) off-road circular rural walks and safe cycling routes are largely non-existent. The aspiration to improve the rural footpath network can be opportunistically achieved:

- a. Through supporting landowners willing to provide extra permissive paths
- b. Using developers' contributions, and other funding sources, to provide linear green space encompassing footpaths, cycle-ways (where appropriate) and hedgerow/rough grassland corridors which can link into the existing pathway and habitat/corridor network
- c. Through self-funding multiple-use landscape projects such as a Natural Burial Ground when the existing Walstead Cemetery is full. The additional connectivity provided by any such scheme is an essential element.

Every extra link increases the amenity and biodiversity value of the whole.

The provision of safe cycling routes within and between the villages will be a major project which will require appropriate funding. It should be a strategic objective at the relevant local authority level.

- H. **Seeing Ambitions Realised:** Seeing Our Living Landscape policies realised will need a forum to “own the vision”. Actions to implement the policies are divided into three categories as shown on the attached diagram:
- a. the minimum extra (to current activities) to be implemented as soon as the plan is established
 - b. opportunist actions that can be undertaken if the (mostly voluntary) effort is available, funding is found and third party support and sign-up obtained
 - c. Long term aspirations.

	Seeing Ambitions Realised			
	Habitat and Wildlife			Amenity
Community Resource Available	Watching (Monitoring, Recording)	Energising (3rd party support, funding & co-operation)	Doing (primarily volunteers)	Energising and Doing
Level 0 (Current)	Individual habitat, garden and species recording	Parishes' input to MSDC management plans	LNR Friends' Groups; Other groups' initiatives	
Level 1 (Minimum extra)	Wildlife/habitat intelligence group; Improved response to development proposals	Initiate habitat protection; Improved public space biodiversity management	Initiatives for specific purposes (e.g. Himalayan Balsam removal?)	New permissive foot path(s); Funds availability monitoring
Level 2 (Opportunity: 3 rd party support, land, finance, voluntary effort)	Development watchers; Increased recording; Guided visits to habitats	Wild-life friendly gardening; Habitat/corridor improvement measures	Volunteer support to Public & Community greenspace habitat improvement	Linear natural green space links; Self-funding multi-use development (Natural Burial Ground)
Level 3 (Aspiration)	Neighbourhood Habitat Survey; Neighbourhood Bio-Diversity Plan	Supported and resourced Living Landscape Project	Neighbourhood conservation "hit squad(s)" improving public and (possibly) private land	Network of footpaths and wildlife corridors; Inter-village cycle paths

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Annexes and Appendices *(Separate documents, some still to be completed)*

Annex A – Relevant Sections of Draft District Plan

Annex B – Valuable Landscape Views

Annex C – Selected Wildlife Species List

Annex D – Schedule of Evidence

Appendix 1 – Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre: Desktop Biodiversity Report for Lindfield Rural and Urban Parishes (ESD/13/92) 18th February 2013

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1 Introduction

In developing a plan for the Lindfield Landscape, both rural and urban, we had to take into account, and reconcile:

- needs of **people** for homes and gardens, of businesses and the institutional, transport and service infrastructure to support these needs amenity: the use of green space for enjoyment and exercise
- **aesthetics**: retaining the character of the landscape including both green space and the built environment and ensuring well-loved views are protected
- needs of **wildlife**, both land and marine, ensuring that habitat is improved rather than further degraded
- **production** of food and other natural products: arable and livestock farming, woodlands, horticulture and personal food production in allotments, and community and private gardens.

1.1 Our first step was to ensure that the Plan represents the views of the wider community and a questionnaire was issued to all homes in the two Parishes. In **Chapter 2** the results of this are given in regard to landscape issues, together with follow-up discussions and workshop with others: community organisations, businesses, landowners and farmers, and some wild-life and conservation organisations. We also record in this Chapter the feedback obtained from the presentation of landscape and bio-diversity aspects of the plan at various stages in its Development.

1.2 In **Chapter 3** the character of our Landscape and its bio-diversity is described. First we describe the character of the rural and urban landscape including its visual attractiveness. Next the wildlife found in the Plan area is summarized. The various habitats within the landscape, and how they are managed, is then described including current improvement and research projects.

1.3 All Plans have to conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published last year and became operational in March of this year. The NPPF has the enhancement of the natural environment as a core planning principle. **Chapter 4** explains the NPPF paragraphs relevant to the “Our Living Landscape” . A set of principles is then developed from these NPPF paragraphs which inform, and can validate the policies recommended by the Focus Group.

1.4 The policies recommended by the Focus Group are described in **Chapter 5**.

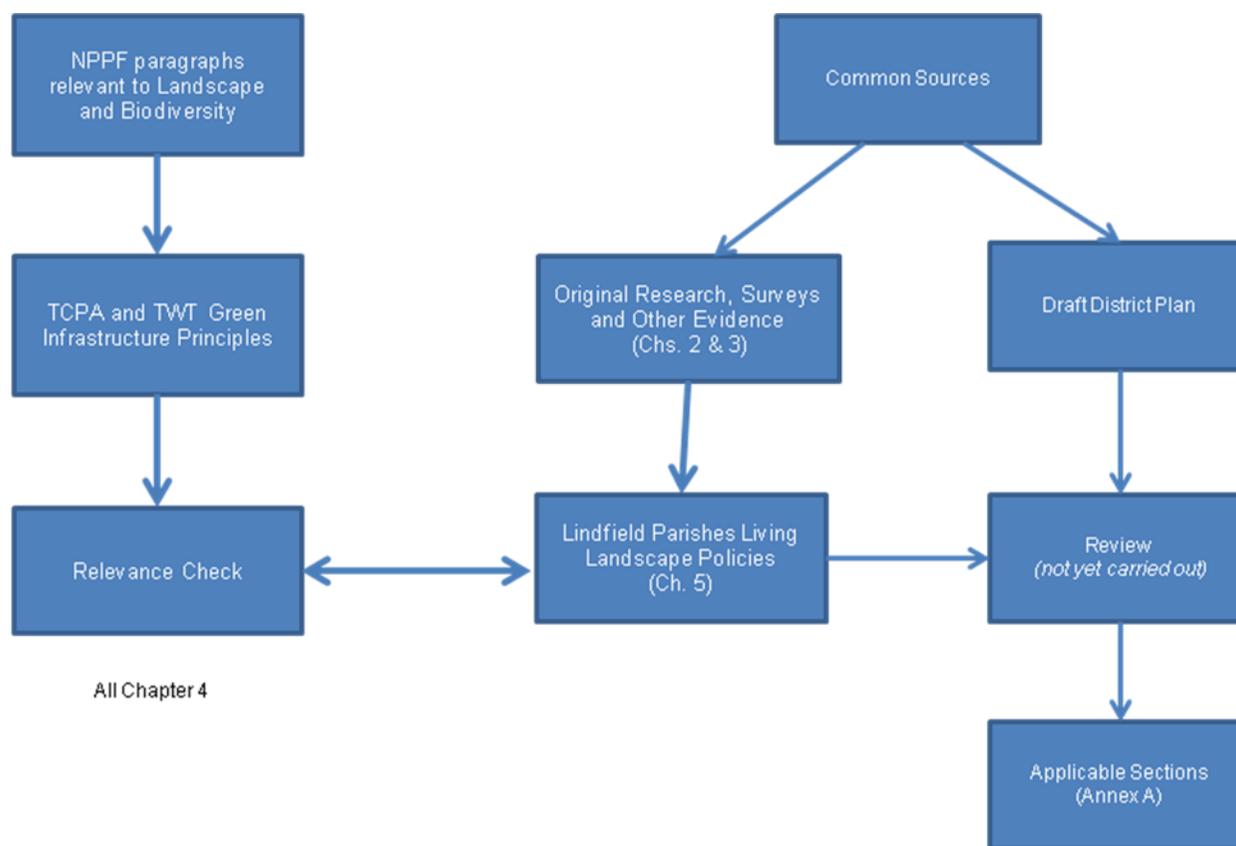
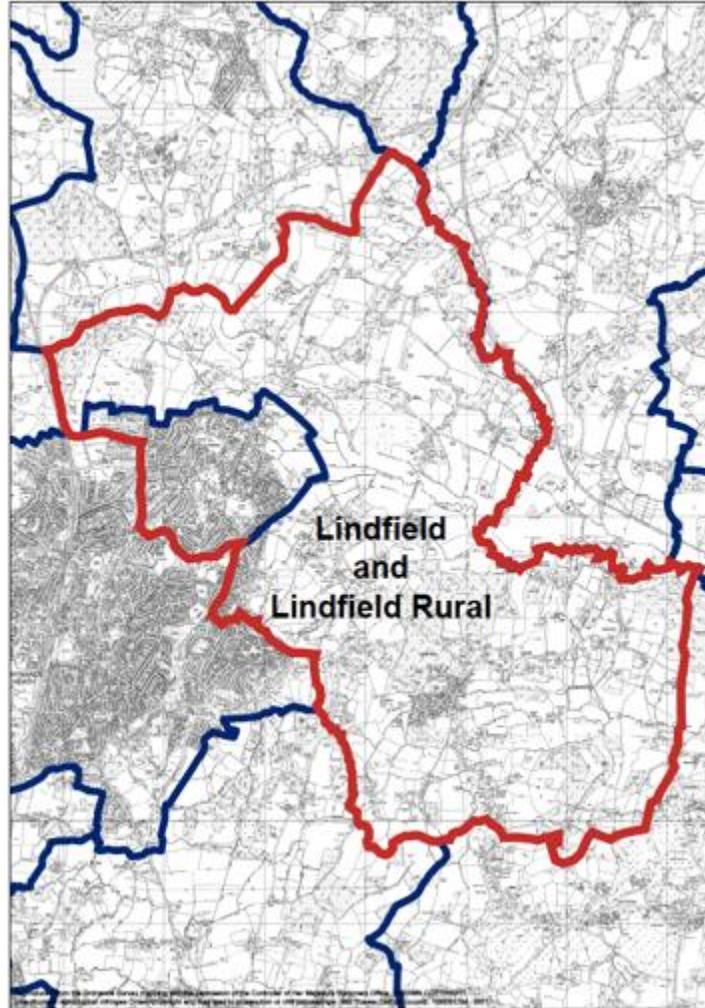


Diagram 1.1: Report structure and formation



Map 1.1 Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Parishes Designated Neighbourhood Area

2 The Views of the Community on Landscape and Biodiversity Issues

2.1 Introduction

Our Neighbourhood Plan will only apply once the residents of the two parishes have voted that it should in a referendum. A key first step therefore has been to ascertain the views of residents in a survey. This Chapter summarizes the survey responses in regard to landscape and bio-diversity issues, together with the results of follow-up discussions and workshops with: community organisations, businesses, landowners and farmers, and some wild-life and conservation organisations.

2.2 The Survey Responses

The survey was conducted using a questionnaire consisting of both closed and open-ended questions, issued to all homes in the two Parishes. The detailed numerical analysis is given in Appendix n.

2.2.1 Analysis of Closed Questions Responses

2.2.1.1 Majorities, exceeding 75% of those responding, agreed that:

- a) Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Nature Reserves which surround Lindfield should be reserved without compromise;
- b) wildlife corridors should be preserved and enhanced within the current development boundaries;
- c) people should be able to cycle between the Parishes and Haywards Heath on safe, and well lit, routes for leisure and commuting;
- d) Parishes should retain their heritage and identity to provide attractive places to live and visit;
- e) future housing developments should preferably be of small scale, geographically spread around the Parishes and delivered at a steady annual rate;
- f) previously used industrial sites (“brown-fields”) should be used for future housing developments in preference to agricultural land (“green-fields”);
- g) the strategic gaps between Lindfield, Scaynes Hill and Haywards Heath should be protected and not subject to erosion by new developments;
- h) any future housing developments should not compromise the character and heritage of Lindfield. In particular, the views in and out of the village should be maintained to provide the sense of space and identity;

2.2.1.2 A similar majority disagreed with the assertion that:

- i) the Parishes should be considered as viable sites for wind farms.

2.2.1.3 Approaching two-thirds of respondents disagreed with the assertion that:

- j) future housing developments beyond the current development boundaries should be allowed if it will improve the sustainability of the community.

2.2.2 Summary of most common answers to open ended questions

2.2.2.1 How would you like to see the Parishes develop over the next 20 years?

- a) The character of villages, as villages, is to be maintained with rural linkages and the avoidance of loss of identity. With Scaynes Hill the visual attraction of the village could be improved.
- b) The maintenance of the separation of the villages and hamlets by strategic green gaps is stressed.
- c) The rural character of the area is to be maintained, its serenity and beauty preserved and active farming encouraged.
- d) Green space within the villages is to be retained. Development in back gardens is to be avoided and their role as natural “lungs” preserved. There is a need for additional sporting facilities, and play areas within the green space, and more allotments are needed. A joint burial ground is suggested. More trees should be planted where there is an opportunity and the Lindfield High Street line trees should be preserved.
- e) Housing developments should be small scale and sustainable with the necessary supporting infrastructure provided. They should not compromise the character of the villages. There is a need for more cycle paths and pedestrian routes both within the villages and between Scaynes Hill and Lindfield. These should be safe and well lit.

2.2.2.2 What are the three most important things about the Parishes that should be preserved or enhanced?

This can best be picked out from the summary of key words. The three words/phrases most often used in regard to Landscape and Biodiversity are: green spaces, open spaces and strategic gap/green belt, rural character. Within these categories the Lindfield Common and Pond, nature reserves and the maintenance and retention of trees were most frequently mentioned. *(For the Focus Group: Rural and the pond are mentioned much more in the responses than is indicated in the Summary of Key Words)*

2.2.2.3 What are your three highest priorities for the Parishes?

The highest priority mentioned in regards to Landscape and Biodiversity is: retention of green space. Different aspects of this are mentioned including the country-side and green belts and corridors.

2.2.2.4 Can you suggest any possible sites for new homes within the Parishes?

Few respondents could suggest where in the landscape new homes should be built. Most mentioned were brown-field sites, with one or two sites specifically mentioned, and Scaynes Hill.

2.2.2.5 Additional comments and suggestions

On Landscape and biodiversity issues most of what was mentioned is already covered in the points identified, above, on the earlier questions.

2.3 Interviews with Farmers and Landowners

The group decided at an early stage that the only way to understand the character of our rural area was to visit local farms and interview the people that manage the land that surrounds us. We visited nine farms and one private school. We had written responses from two landowners, including MSDC who manage much of the public open space in and around the villages

The visits gave us insight into most of the farmland in our parishes because many of the farmers had bought up surrounding farms or were managing land on other farms.

It was discovered that the soil conditions and the boundary layouts in our locality are best suited to grazing and cattle in particular. The production of beef is a thriving business around Lindfield and farmers have used the resources available to them to provide good quality produce and in some cases these are organic. The enthusiasm for farming was very evident and very pleasing to witness.

Grazing land is therefore most evident around us together with silage and maize production to feed the cattle. A major cattle winter shelter is situated just north of the village and this is the work of the Hobbs family who are major local beef producers.

Other sources of income were Christmas trees and Mobile Phone Mast rental.

Land husbandry to increase bio diversity was witnessed in many cases, partly to satisfy grants but primarily to satisfy the farmer's interests in this area it would seem. Woodland planting, coppicing, wild flower meadows, wildlife corridors and water course maintenance schemes were witnessed. In the latter case the farmers were very fearful of urban growth and the adverse effects these have on our streams and rivers.

Public access was supported provided it was restricted to rights of way but the acts of the few that abuse this position were sadly reported in every case. Increased public access is generally an unpopular notion. On the public roads, increased traffic and "rat runs" have proved difficult for farmers to move their stock.

We did not set out to investigate future housing possibilities but one of our set questions was posed in this respect. The majority of farmers were not interested and their concentration was maximising yield from their land. The minority said that they would provide small scale housing land if it did not invade their privacy. There is a need for future farm workers accommodation in some cases.

2.4 Community Feedback

(Still in Progress)

2.5 Confirmatory Interviews and Discussions

(Still to be held)

3. Landscape Character, Wildlife Species and Habitats

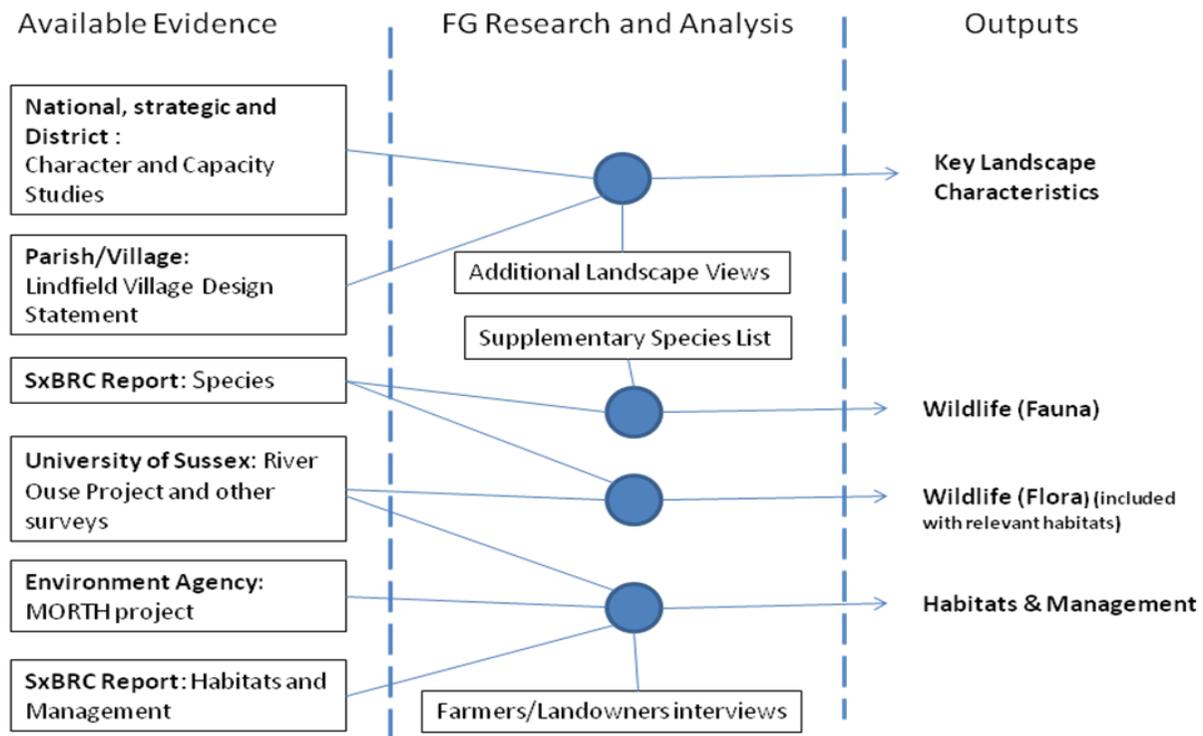
3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the character of our Landscape and its bio-diversity is described. First we describe the character of the rural and urban landscape including its visual attractiveness. Next the wildlife (fauna) found in the Plan area is summarized. The various habitats within the landscape, and how they are managed, are then described including current improvement and research projects.

A key document for the Neighbourhood Plan is the Report prepared for the two Parishes by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC). This has provided valuable input on habitat, land stewardship, sites of nature conservation interest and wildlife species. The following points have to be noted:

- a) The report is only valid for one year, from 18th February 2013. Thereafter a new report is required.
- b) **Copyright.** The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre must be acknowledged in all documents containing any part of the information contained in the report. The whole of the report can be (and is) included (unedited) as an appendix in our own Plan
- c) The SxBRC operates as agent to the individuals and groups who provide their records free of charge. The data suppliers retain copyright on their data, while SxBRC retains copyright on its desktop biodiversity reports.
- d) **Data usage.** The data contained within the report is for use in this Neighbourhood Plan project, for which the data was requested. It is not to be shared with third parties for use in other projects, unless permission is granted from the SxBRC.

The diagram below shows how the outputs given below were obtained from the available evidence, combined with original research and analysis undertaken by the Focus Group



Landscape Character, Wildlife Species and Habitats – Working Process

Diagram 3.1

3.2 Landscape Character

Ministerial Forward to the NPPF: “*Our historic environment – buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers*”;

The Urban and Rural Landscape of the two Lindfield Parishes is well described in a number of sources including:

- A Strategy for the West Sussex Landscape: West Sussex County Council 2005;
- Mid Sussex District Council, 2001. Our Green Heritage. A Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy for Mid Sussex;
- The Lindfield Village Design Statement;
- English Nature, 1997. High Weald Natural Area Profile

We have not repeated the detailed descriptions of landscape character included in those documents but highlight key features which are relevant to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and its living landscape policies.

Key features of our landscape:

- a) Our two parishes are within the High Weald Natural Area although with some characteristics of the Low Weald:
 - Woodlands, many of them ancient, and a dense network of hedgerows and shaws enclosing glades and meadows. Woodland cover is significant in the Southern part of the Rural Parish close to Scaynes Hill
 - Mostly shallow valleys of tree-lined streams providing an intimate and secluded landscape together with a many Ghyll (Gill) streams, usually in a woodland setting
 - Settlement pattern of scattered villages, hamlets and dispersed farmsteads.
 - Pattern of small-irregular shaped fields with some larger fields

- b) The Ouse valley runs through the plan area. Features include:
 - No settlements other than dispersed farmsteads although towns and villages lie on the valley edges
 - Pattern of mixed arable and pastoral medium to large fields which, together with water meadows intermixed with woodlands and hedges, imparts a scenic quality to the landscape
 - Old mills, weirs and bridges line the banks of the river
 - Tributaries on the Southern side run down from the built-up areas of Lindfield and Haywards Heath
- c) The major urban settlement is **Lindfield Village**. It lies within both parishes. Lindfield is a medieval village that has preserved its unique but fragile character over the centuries, a fact recognised by its conservation area status and designation of parts as a distinctive “Area of Townscape Character”. As such Lindfield is to be treated as a heritage asset for the purposes of chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Village Design Statement (VDS) describes the qualities and characteristics of the village and sets out design guidance for future development. To the West and South, Lindfield Village borders the town of Haywards Heath. There is no intervening country side although the narrow Scrase Valley LNR separates some of the two urban areas

- d) **Scaynes Hill** village is primarily surrounded by areas of countryside and woodland, much of which has been designated as Ancient Woodland. The village is set on a ridge and straddles the A272 primary route and there are also scattered dwellings along the roads out of the village, notably the Lewes Road to the east and Church Road to the north. All land outside of the built up area boundary is designated as Countryside Area of Development Restraint. Land immediately to the west of the village falls within the Scaynes Hill – Haywards Heath/Lindfield Strategic Gap. It is a small village with limited services
- e) The area north of the river Ouse is within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The new Ashdown Forest 7km Buffer Zone includes the area within the AONB and extends across the Ouse reaching the north eastern corner of the Lindfield Parish boundary. Development and farming and other business activity may be constrained, or have special conditions imposed, if within these areas
- f) The Lindfield VDS includes photographs of valuable land and townscape views. This schedule of views has been extended to cover the whole of the Plan area. The views are included in Annex B
- g) The Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy for Mid Sussex specifies the following objectives:
- protect countryside for its own sake from inappropriate development
 - conserve overall appearance and character of countryside
 - retain local gaps between villages to protect individual identity
- These objectives are taken to be a given in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3 Wildlife

3.3.1 Our Evidence

The main source of evidence is the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) prepared for the two Parishes on the 18th February 2013 (Appendix 1). As the report boundary includes the whole of the 1km OS square which is crossed by a Parish boundary some records may be just outside the Plan area. We have made no attempt to exclude any record because of this.

The Report does not include all species records held at the SxBRC. Excluded are:

- a) Breeding season records for specific vulnerable birds
- b) Some other very rare or especially vulnerable species which are kept confidential.

No locations are given for common species in the report provided for us. This means, that except for the exceptions noted above, we have location information for Protected, UK BAP Species and other listed species but not for common species.

Species included in lists such as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) 2007 Act are meant to be the subject of co-ordinated actions to improve habitat etc. and, in the case of (NERC,) put obligations on local authorities to do so.

Plan area-wide records are fine for the rural countryside and, because of its small size and full boundary with the countryside, Scaynes Hill. In the more urban habitat of Lindfield Village, with Haywards Heath on two sides, it might be expected that the wildlife pattern would differ. In our summary of taxa (species groups) below we have therefore given the total species for the plan area and total species at/within the Lindfield Village built-up boundary.

In order to do this, especially for common species, we needed additional records and looked at using “Citizen Science” sources such as the British Trust for Ornithology “Garden Birdwatch” database. This database now covers: mammals, amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, bumblebees and dragonflies in addition to birds. What we discovered is that although the various “species champion” groups such as county ornithological and butterfly conservation societies are using the information from such databases to, for example, populate species atlases, the data cannot be put into the public domain on the County Biodiversity Records database. This is because they contain personal information such as addresses. As part of the evidence gathering for the Plan we have extracted one comprehensive list of “Citizen Science” records for input into the SxBRC records. These data are used as a supplementary list in the summaries given below, together with a few miscellaneous observations from other sources.

The summary of species should not be assumed to be exhaustive. It only covers what is in the record databases we have looked at.

In preparing our summary we have:

- a) Only included species with records in the last ten years. Other may be mentioned in the commentary
- b) Included all Protected, UK BAP and other listed species, including “red” and “amber” lists for birds, under the term “listed”
- c) Only covered taxa (species groups) included in the BTO database plus moths (UK BAP species only). All the biodiversity, both flora and fauna, not summarized, is, of course, equally important.

Information on important plant wildlife is included with the relevant habitat in Section 3.4 below.

3.3.2 Our Findings

The wide variety of habitat within the Parishes, produces a rich biodiversity which extends across the built-up area boundaries. Comparison of records, against a couple of sources, for butterflies and dragonflies, indicate that the Lindfield Village is richer in its wildlife than might be expected in a typical urban setting. This is not surprising given its closeness to the country but it needs safeguarding. The NPPF emphasis on no biodiversity loss must be applied to

achieve this. There have been no records in recent years for some species affected by woodland and farmland management practices. This should be addressed in the Plan policies.

3.3.3 Wildlife Summaries

Taxon (Species Group)	Present in Plan Area		Present in Lindfield Village		Comment
	Listed	Total	Listed	Total	
					(See Annex A for the list of species included in this summary)
Mammals - Other	2	20	2	14	The Water Vole was last recorded in 1991. There have been no recent confirmed sightings of otters
Mammals - Bats	9	9	5	5	All bats are protected
Birds	52	96	29	62	There has been no record of the Nightingale since 1999. The Red Kite has been recorded in 2013.
Reptiles	3	3	2	2	All reptiles are protected
Amphibians	2	5	2	4	
Butterflies	7	32	6	28	The Woodland Butterfly: Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary has not been recorded since 1991. Brown Hairstreak butterflies were first recorded in the Plan area in 2012
Dragonflies	1	16	1	15	
Bumblebees (ncl. Cuckoo B.Bs)		12		12	No recording of Bombus Humilis and Bombus Sylvarum, bumblebees of flower-rich grasslands, since 1916
Moths	39		39		These are UK BAP Species only and are out of a Sussex total of 100

3.4 Habitat and its Management

3.4.1 Introduction

It is usual to think of habitat in its relationship to wildlife. Most, if not all, habitats in the Plan area, however, serve multiple functions: economic activity, peoples' needs and wildlife. We describe the use and management of the habitat under the following headings:

- Rivers, streams and streamside vegetation
- Woodland including Ghyll (Gill) woodland
- Farmland, including unimproved grassland, hedgerows and shaws
- Other Green Space including public open space, private gardens and community and organisational green space

3.4.2 Rivers and Streams

The River Ouse flows from North West to South East across the Plan Area. One tributary, the Cockhaise Brook flows southward down from the AONB forming the Rural Parish boundary until it joins the Ouse. Two other tributaries, the Scrase and the Northlands Brook flow down from the higher land in the Haywards Heath/Lindfield built-up area.

The River Ouse does not have the wildlife living in and around it that it should. There are weirs and mills stopping the river flowing naturally. The river is "U" shaped due to previous modifications to enable navigation. There is little habitat diversity and the limited natural floodplain also increases the risk of flooding downstream. Many structures prevent the free movement of fish and sediment through the river system.

The **Middle Ouse Restoration of Physical Habitat (MORPH)** is looking, and implementing, way to make the river better for people and wildlife.

Within the Plan area possible projects include:

- a) **East Mascalls Bridge** where fish passage is to be improved and the river bed made more natural ("V" shaped)
- b) **Pim's lock and Dean's Mill**. A bypass would be provided. Upstream of the weir and lock the river would be made less like a canal.

Currently the fish in the river are mainly "lake" species. Providing fish passages can double the number of fish species in a year. The ones of most interest are brown trout and sea trout.

Farmers and landowners farmers were very fearful of urban growth and the adverse effects these have on the streams and rivers. One farmer reported spawning sea trout in the Northlands Brook. This needs to be regularly cleared of detritus washed down from the Northlands Wood and, more recently, the Kaleidoscope developments.

The University of Sussex, **River Ouse Project**, is being undertaken in parallel with the MORPH work on the water courses. The project focuses on grassland and woodland habitats in upper inundation areas of the River Ouse in Sussex where recent theoretical work suggests that flood alleviation measures could be linked to biodiversity objectives. There are three phases to the project: ecological survey and historical research; field experiments; and grassland enhancement projects linked to flood alleviation. The field survey work undertaken is invaluable in identifying vulnerable river and streamside habitats

As a result of this work, and the farmer/landowner interviews, the following sites have been identified:

- a) **Lindfield Bridge Meadow** has English Heritage class 1 Motte and Bailey castle (most untouched site in the country with same level of protection as Stonehenge) and parts of the meadow are species-rich grassland (2010 botanical survey). The grassland has never been ploughed and is grazed by cattle. From next year this meadow will be included in the farmer's Entry Level of Stewardship scheme so further changes may occur. Grazed neutral pasture can, with appropriate management, be as species-rich as hay meadows. 85 species were recorded in a botanical survey by River Ouse Project in 2010 including a range of plants providing nectar and pollen for butterflies and bumblebees from spring through to late summer – e.g. black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, red clover (*Trifolium repens*) and fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*).
- b) On the **Northlands Brook** corridor, the pony paddocks are less species-rich, but have many characteristic hay meadow plants including indigenous grasses rather than agriculturally-improved ryegrass (River Ouse Project, 2013 survey). Downstream, River Field is still managed as a hay meadow and will be surveyed this summer by the River Ouse Project along with an adjacent field that has been sown with hay meadow seed mix.
- c) An ex-arable field, below **East Mascalls** bridge has been planted with black poplar, willow, hazel, hawthorn and 300 oaks in collaboration with The Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust. The objective is to restore natural biodiversity and riverside landscape.
- d) The Scrase Valley LNR is covered under Public Open Space below.

3.4.3 Woodland

Woodland is well scattered around the Plan area with the largest concentrations: North of Scaynes Hill; North of the Ouse and along the western boundary of the Rural Parish.

Where it has been surveyed, a significant proportion of it is ancient woodland and there are many strips of Ghyll (Gill) woodland with streams and steep-sided habitat.

Ghyll woodlands are important to biodiversity in Sussex because the steep-sided valleys create an almost unique microclimate with high humidity and a low frost incidence. Rare flora including ferns, mosses and liverworts can be found in these conditions. All of these species are rare in Britain and are found predominantly on the western seaboard of Wales. The hilly topography means that the land surrounding ghylls tends not to be intensively cultivated. As a consequence the water flowing in the streams is often relatively unpolluted and the delicate balance and biodiversity of this unique environment is maintained. Any contamination of the water supply, disruption to its flow or the invasion of exotic species, such as rhododendron, could do irreparable damage. Two examples of this very special habitat, in the parishes, are Nash Gill and Henfield Wood. Both contain the bryophyte *Hookeria lucens*: a rare species in the southeast confined to undisturbed ghyll (gill) woodland.

Broadleaved woodland is a priority habitat for conservation in Sussex as it contains a higher number of UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species than any other habitat. Ancient woodland once lost cannot be recreated. Many ancient woodlands have some form of statutory protection and The Action Plan (p.34 MSDC 2001) talks about safeguarding all existing woods in the District. Within the Parishes' woodland the rich flora includes: wet alderwood with opposite leaved golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*) and lesser skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*); and, dry hazel coppice with oak standards woodland, carpeted with wood anemones and bluebells.

There are two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) in the Plan area woodland:

- a) **Wickham Woods.** It consists of coppice with standards with a rich ground flora. There are some wet flushes and a pond. Some areas of the woodland have been planted up as plantations of Pine, Oak and Sweet Chestnut.
- b) **Costells, Henfield and Nashgill Woods.** Although the site is composed of three woods which may be assumed to have different management histories, it is remarkably uniform. The majority is overgrown Birch coppice under Oak and occasional Ash standards, with a ground flora dominated by Bracken and Bramble. Young Pine, Birch, Rowan and Holly occur, especially in areas opened up by storm damage. Traditional management has been coppicing, leaving standard trees. This has been abandoned, but could be reinstated to encourage ground flora species. (There have been no records, in the Parishes, in the past ten years for two species: Small pearl-bordered fritillary and Nightingale, which depend on traditional woodland management practices to maintain their habitat).

The woodland that is owned by Great Walstead School, within the SNCI is the subject of Forestry Commission Woodland Management Grants to maintain open rides etc. but no regular coppicing is undertaken. The Woodland Trust own part of the SNCI.

Our farmer/landowner interviews revealed a range of differing management practices for woodland. Some examples from different farms:

- Coppicing on a 20-25 year cycle to provide heat for three houses. 1 acre a year is coppiced. The coppice has standards which is excellent for conservation with a rich ground flora. There are plans to extend this approach to more cottages.
- Non-intervention ancient woodland
- Ancient woodland managed for nature (practices not specified)
- Investigation into the potential for agro-forestry.

Two landowners use, or are planning to use, woodland for teaching and woodland adventure training. Great Walstead School have offered this facility to other schools in the area and it is used during the school holidays by both parties of all ages.

3.4.4 Farmland

During our interviews with farmers and landowners we learnt that the soil conditions and the boundary layouts in our locality are best suited to grazing and cattle in particular. The production of beef is a thriving business around Lindfield and farmers have used the resources available to them to provide good quality and, in some cases, organic produce. Silage, from, mostly, improved grassland, and maize from arable farming are used as cattle feed.

Farming operations vary from very large, capital intensive beef and dairy units with large central cattle shelters, feeding the wider market, to smaller operations serving local customers. The use of central cattle shelters during the winter is being considered by other farmers. Total stock numbers can exceed 1000.

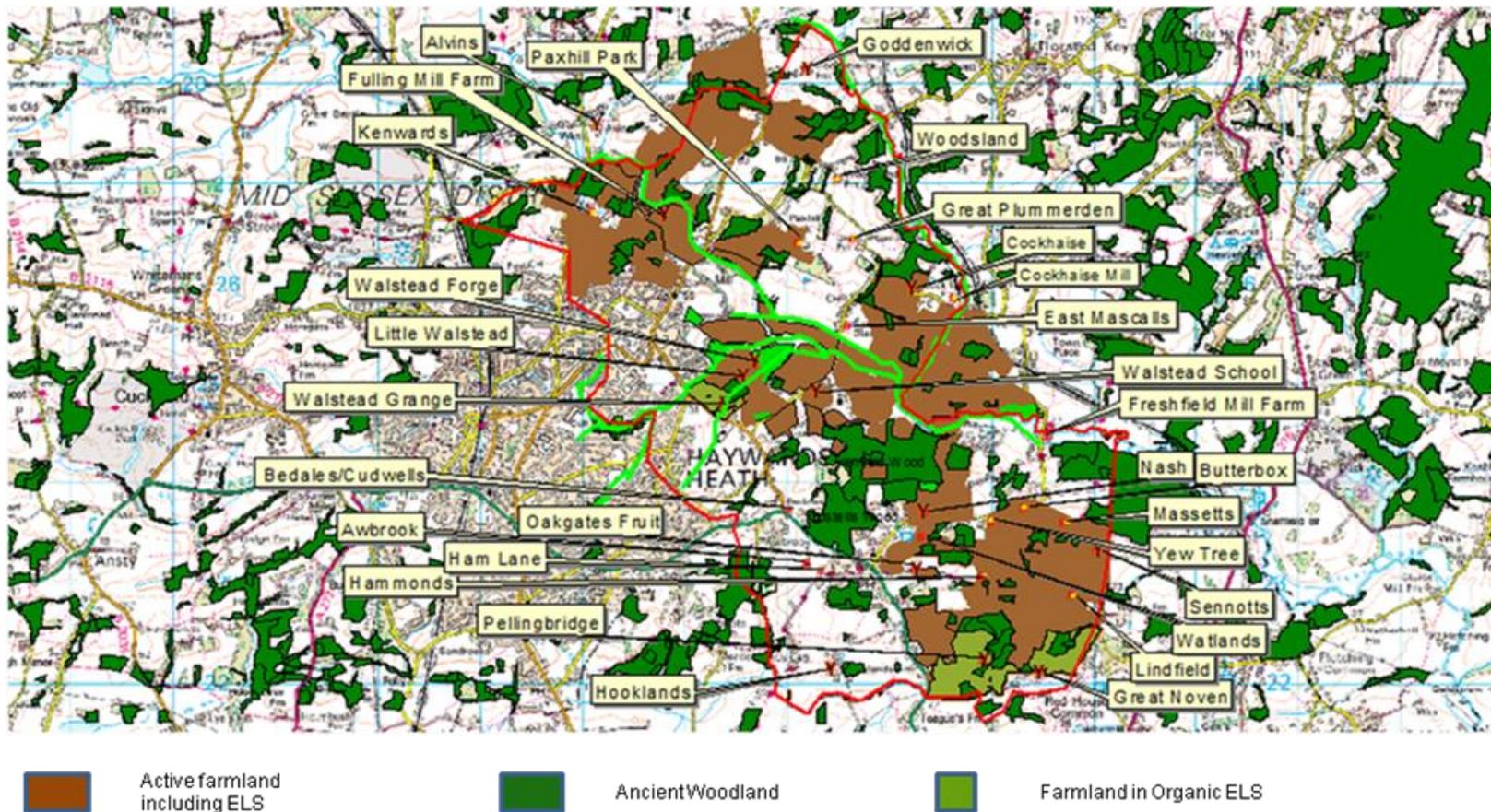
Other sources of income included Christmas tree production, some locally sold horticulture, pony livery, farm building and mobile phone tower rentals.

It became clear that farm boundaries do not follow land ownership boundaries. Some farm holding extend to many hundreds of acres with a mix of owned land, formal tenancies and informal and formal grazing regimes across a number of parishes.

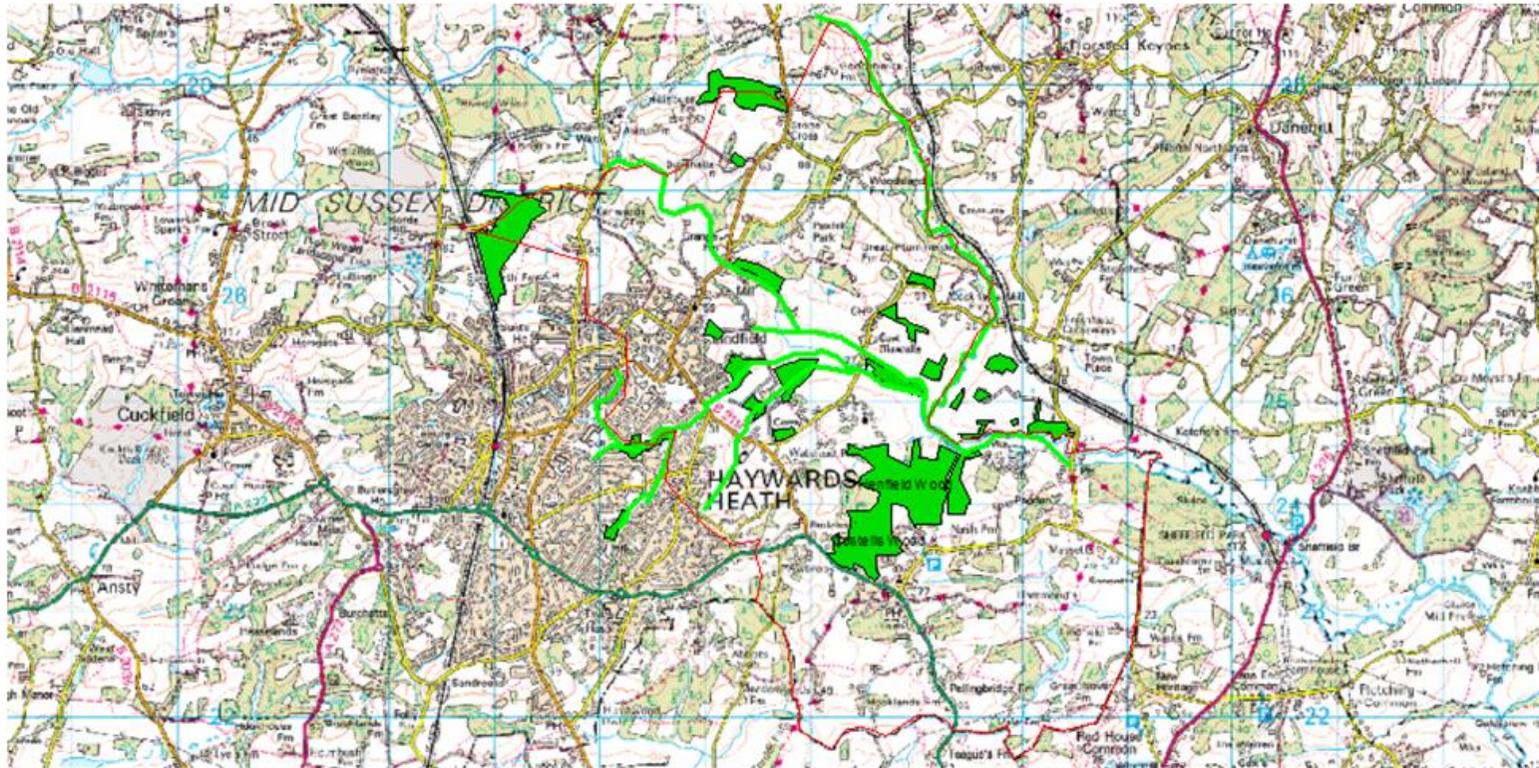
3.4.4.1 Farmland Stewardship and Conservation

Farmers are able to claim Government Grants mandated by the EU Common Agriculture Policy. This is due to be revised this year. The farmers we interviewed mostly consider it an important part of their farm income.

Under the current arrangements most farmers claim the Single Farm Payment and some Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) or Organic ELS. One large farming operation is moving to ELS shortly. Under this stewardship scheme farmers have to institute practices that are considered to be protect and improve biodiversity. The two priority areas, in the Plan area, are: "Bats and Dormice" and "Butterflies, bees and vulnerable grassland".



Map 3.3 Farmland and Ancient Woodland



 Nature conservation areas

 Wildlife corridors

Map 3.4 Nature Conservation Areas and Wildlife Corridors

To qualify for the stewardship payments in these two areas requires practices such as enhanced management of hedgerows and woodland edges and changes to field management, such as low input grassland on field headlands. Farmers, in these schemes, reported these as typical practices they were following. In fact land husbandry to increase biodiversity was witnessed in many cases, not just to satisfy grants obligations but primarily to satisfy the farmer's interests in this area. Management for conservation was occurring on holdings which were not interested in entering into the stewardship schemes.

Two key habitats present on the farm holdings are:

- a) **Hedgerows and Shaws:** These are present in abundance in our landscape and are a priority for management action under stewardship schemes and The Action Plan (p.34 MSDC 2001) says should **all** be safeguarded and the hedge network increased.
- b) **Hay meadows and Neutral Grassland.** A number of these have been identified, above, alongside the rivers and streams and two, protected, sites are described below in public open space. It became clear, from the farmer interviews that creating, or maintaining, species-rich hay meadows is also being undertaken by a number of farmers, not all as a result of participation in stewardship schemes. Further survey work could, therefore, identify further examples of this habitat.

3.4.5 Other Green Space

Other Green Space includes Public Open Space, primarily but not entirely within the built-up area of the villages, private gardens, and the land associated with sports organisations, schools, utilities, and community bodies.

3.4.5.1 Public Open Space

The Public Open Space (POS) is primarily within the two Villages and includes:

- commons, one each in Scaynes Hill and Lindfield
- ponds, including Lindfield Pond which is part of the surface drainage system and challenging to manage for good biodiversity
- road verges
- local nature reserves (LNRs), which are supported by friends' groups and local work parties
- recreation grounds and other open space.

Much of it is in use for sport: soccer and cricket and including tennis courts and also including children's play areas. MSDC manages and, in many cases, owns much of this POS. There are a number of valuable habitats included within the space:

- a) **Scaynes Hill Common (SNCI)** The site is a registered common, located on the north-east edge of Scaynes Hill village. It supports acid grassland with scattered Heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). Some neutral grassland and woodland. It is of value to wildlife both for its combination of semi-natural habitats, and for its location on the edge of a residential area and closeness to the ancient woodland complex of Henfield and Costells Wood.
- b) **Walstead Cemetery (SNCI)** A small graveyard which supports species-rich hay meadow grassland including green winged orchids. It provides an important example of the type of grassland which was common in Lindfield before agricultural improvement as well as being a haven for wildlife.
- c) **Scrase Valley (LNR/SNCI)** An area of woodland, scrub, carr and open grassland, located within the urban complex of Haywards Heath and Lindfield. The site is important both as a mosaic of semi-natural habitats in a built-up environment and because the marshy grassland supports several plants which are rare in a County context. Wet grassland was managed as hay meadow in the 1800s and was grazed by cattle in the 1930s. It is one of only 7 remaining sites for marsh cinquefoil (*Potentilla palustris*) in Sussex
- d) **Eastern Road LNR.** The site has a mosaic of woodland, scrub, rough grassland and wetland. There is a diverse range of plants, insects and birds. The old and new wetland areas support healthy populations of frogs, newts and aquatic insects such as dragonflies.

3.4.5.2 Private Gardens

Private gardens represent the largest proportion of green space in our urban areas. They are increasingly recognised as vital to biodiversity, in themselves, and more importantly, in conjunction with other gardens and the wider landscape where they represent stepping stones, feeding stations and refuges. The supplementary list of species used in conjunction with the SxBRC records in Section 3.3 was a garden record and had 16 species not otherwise included in the SxBRC report. The 39 UK BAP moth species records included in the SxBRC report were all garden records.

3.4.5.3 Community and Organisational Green Space

This includes school playing fields and, in the case of Oathall School (on the Haywards Heath border), a small school farm, allotments (two sites in Lindfield), churchyards, bowling club and two golf courses. Great Walstead School owns substantial farmland and also woodland which is within the only Site of Nature Conservation Interest in this section. Details of the SNCI are included in the Woodland section above. Other than Great Walstead School, the Focus Group has not been in touch with any of the other organisations.

Map 3.5 Areas of Important Open Space within Lindfield Village Built-up Area (not yet done)

Map 3.6 Areas of Important Open Space within Scaynes Hill Village Built-up Area (not yet done)

4. Policy Framework and Principles

4.1 Introduction

All Plans have to conform to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which was published last year and became operational in March of this year. The NPPF has the enhancement of the natural environment as a core planning principle. This Chapter explains the NPPF paragraphs relevant to the Our Living Landscape. A set of principles, developed from these NPPF paragraphs which inform, and can validate, the policies recommended by the Focus Group.

The guidelines for the neighbourhood plans say that they should conform to the strategic policy of the local District Plan. At the time of writing of this report there is no applicable District Plan. This report therefore is driven directly by the NPPF using guidance which relates directly back to the framework. We have used one major source:

Planning for a Healthy Environment – Good practice Guidance for Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity issued by the Town & Country Planning Association and the Wildlife Trusts in July 2012. This guidance is primarily intended to inform local plans, but also includes reference to neighbourhood planning and development management. By using it here, in the absence of a local plan, it should ensure that our neighbourhood plan is based on the same guidance that will inform green infrastructure and biodiversity aspects of both the local plan and the Sussex Local Nature Partnership and also that our plan, in the absence of a local plan, fully considers obligations to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Although there is no extant local plan there is a draft District Plan produced by Mid-Sussex District Council. This contains much valuable guidance and **Annex A** lists those parts of the plan which, irrespective of its status, we wish to include as elements of our own plan. The relevant parts of the draft District Plan will include, for example:

- a) Input sources such as Landscape Character Studies
- b) Applicable legislation not impacted by the NPPF
- c) Policy relating the AONB and Ashdown Forest 7km Buffer Zone
- d) Landscape and biodiversity protection proposals e.g. strategic gaps between villages

Diagram 4.1 shows how the traceability of evidence and legislation through to the development of Living Landscape Policies.

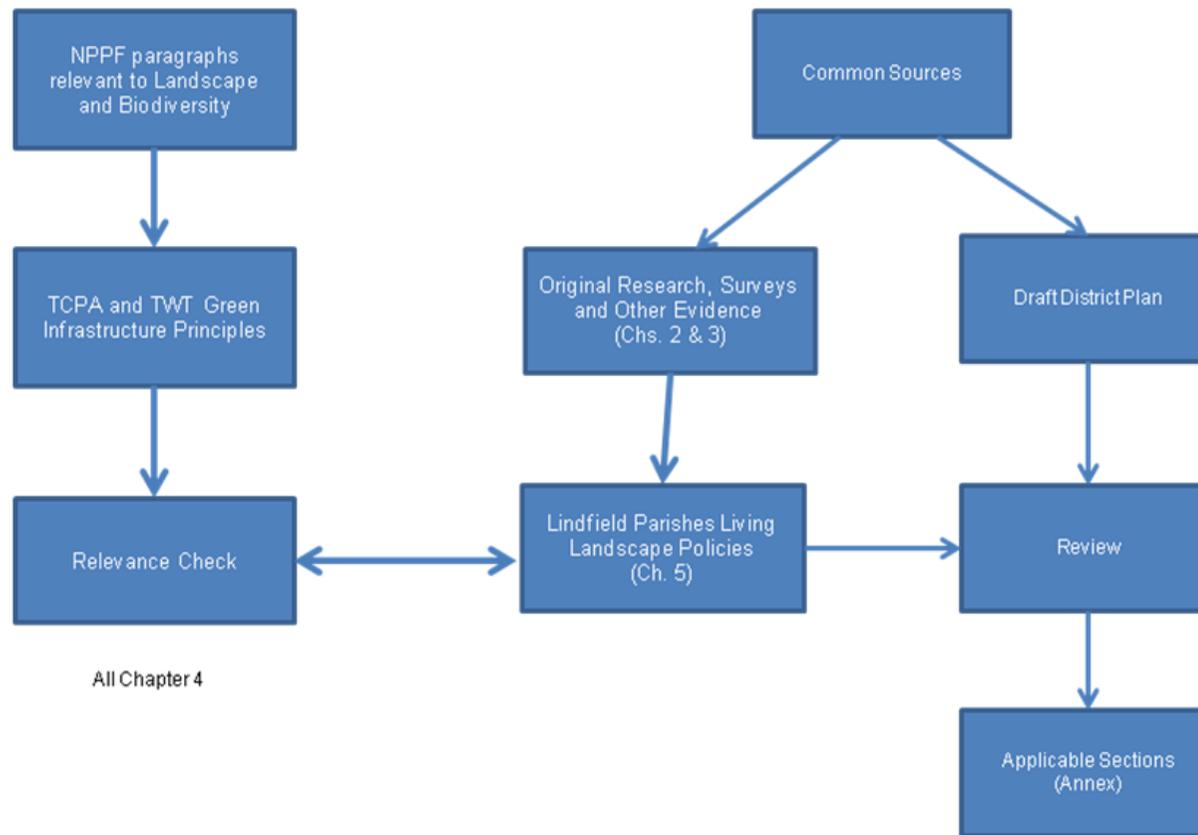


Diagram 4.1: Derivation and Verification of Lindfield Parishes Living Landscape Policies

4.2 Relevant NPPF Paragraphs

4.2.1 Sustainable Development

Relevant Paragraphs: 6, 9, 17 and 117

The NPPF identifies (in paragraphs 6 and 17) sustainable development as the purpose of the planning system and conserving and enhancing the natural environment as a 'core planning principle'. According to paragraph 9 pursuing sustainable development should mean achieving net gains for nature.

In securing sustainable development, the planning system aims to achieve a net gain for biodiversity through the protection, restoration, creation, and recovery of habitats and species (as set out in paragraphs 9 and 117). A net gain for biodiversity means a sustained increase in abundance, quality and extent of all species and habitats that support healthy ecosystems. Any development should seek to increase an area's biodiversity assets and (in rural areas) countryside character, while guarding against the loss of irreplaceable habitats. This involves safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity already present and/or providing new areas of habitat and features for wildlife appropriate to the landscape and the ecology of that neighbourhood.

4.2.2 Enhancement of Biodiversity

Relevant Paragraphs: 109 and 117

The objectives for the natural environment within the planning system are set out in paragraph 109 and state that the 'planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and
- re-mediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'

The NPPF requires local authorities to 'plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale across local authority boundaries' and 'identify and map components of the

local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation' (paragraph. 117).

4.2.3 Protection of Vulnerable Sites

Relevant Paragraphs: 76 and 118

Protection of existing high quality habitat such as unimproved grassland and irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodlands should be prioritised over creating new habitats. 'Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss' (paragraph 118).

Paragraph 76 states that local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a 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
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

Local Green Space must be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and must complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. It can only be designated when a plan is prepared or reviewed, and must be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period.

Local Wildlife Sites are included as locally designated sites within the NPPF. Along with Local Geological Sites they are defined areas, identified and selected locally for their substantive nature conservation value, based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species and geological and geomorphological features with a national, regional and (importantly) a local context. Together with SSSIs, they form the essential building blocks of an ecological network. Local Sites are selected according to robust, scientifically determined criteria within a framework of common national standards (see Defra (2006),

Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management.)

4.2.4 Development Management

Relevant Paragraphs: 99, 110, 173, 175 and 176

The NPPF makes clear that viability and deliverability are key tests of all aspects of decision making, and requires local authorities to assess the cumulative burden of local requirements and plan policy. It states in paragraph 173) that these burdens should not be such as to deny 'competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer'. However, the NPPF states (in paragraph 176) that 'Where safeguards are necessary to make a particular development acceptable in planning terms (such as environmental mitigation or compensation), the development should not be approved if the measures required cannot be secured through appropriate conditions or agreements. The need for such safeguards should be clearly justified through discussions with the applicant, and the options for keeping such costs to a minimum fully explored, so that development is not inhibited unnecessarily.'

'Plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value', when practical and while having regard to other policies in the NPPF. (Paragraph 110).

The NPPF stipulates (in paragraph 99) that 'when new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure'.

Paragraph 175 says 'Where practical, Community Infrastructure Levy charges should be worked up and tested alongside the Local Plan. The Community Infrastructure Levy should support and incentivise new development, particularly by placing control over a meaningful proportion of the funds raised with the neighbourhoods where development takes place.

What is the Community Infrastructure Levy?

The Community Infrastructure Levy (the levy) came into force in April 2010. It allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed as a result of development. This includes new or safer road schemes, flood defences, schools, hospitals and other health and social care facilities, park improvements, green spaces and leisure centres.

4.3 Principles

The TCPA and TWT guidance sets out key guiding principles to follow when planning and creating climate-resilient Green Infrastructure for biodiversity and people. These Principles are geared towards planning at the strategic and local levels but some, or parts of some, are very relevant to Neighbourhood Planning. In the following table We list these principles (1-10) and explain their relevance to our Policies.

Definitions:

Green Infrastructure is ‘a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities’ (Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework. Green space is taken to include rivers, standing waters, coastal waters and estuaries.

Biodiversity describes ‘the variety of life on Earth [encompassing] the whole of the natural world and all living things with which we share the planet’ (Natural England, Biodiversity webpage,

Local Nature Partnerships work at a strategic level for a better natural environment.

Green Infrastructure Principles	Applicability to Lindfield Parishes Living Landscape Policies
<p>Principle 1 – GI needs to be strategically planned to provide a comprehensive and integrated network: GI needs to be planned and integrated at every geographical scale, from a cross-boundary local authority scale to a single development. Local authorities should identify strategic GI within Local Plans which are informed by cross-boundary strategies and cooperation. The duty to co-operate should help to achieve this.</p>	<p>This is primarily relevant to strategic and local plans. Relevant to Policy C on consideration of landscape scale corridors</p>
<p>Principle 2 -GI requires wide partnership buy-in: The strategic planning and implementation of GI requires a co-ordinated approach from a multi-disciplinary, cross-organisational, cross-boundary team of partners. Local authorities are advised to work in consultation with Local Nature Partnerships and communities to achieve this.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Principle 3 - GI needs to be planned using sound evidence: The planning and implementation of GI should be based on up-to-date ecological evidence on and information about GI assets</p>	<p>Relevant to all Policies. Evidence is based on original research and surveys and on identification of the “as is” situation in regard to landscape character, habitats and wildlife species</p>

<p>Principle 4 – GI needs to demonstrate ‘multi-functionality’: The integration and interaction of different functions within a single site is sought where appropriate – and across a GI network as a whole. Within the network some spaces will have primary functions, such as biodiversity within nature reserves or amenity within local parks, but this does not necessarily exclude other functions. Multi-functional GI can also be viewed as the application of an ‘ecosystem approach’.</p>	<p>This is very relevant to Policies A,C, D, E and G</p>
<p>Principle 5 – GI creation and maintenance need to be properly resourced: Planning for resource needs should be undertaken from the outset and should consider costs for purchase, design, implementation, monitoring and management of GI. As part of its maintenance, consideration should be given to the aspects of GI that can generate income, productivity and employment</p>	<p>This is covered in Policies A,E, G and H</p>
<p>Principle 6 – GI needs to be central to the development’s design and must reflect and enhance the area’s locally distinctive character: The GI network should be fully integrated within the design of a development, reaching into the built environment and incorporating gardens, open space, extensive corridors, and improvements that connect with the wider countryside and reflect and enhance local distinctiveness and landscape character. Detailed planning for GI at the initial stages of the development proposal will help to make both the GI and the development as a whole more successful and will contribute most significantly to a sense of place.</p>	<p>Relevant to Policies C, D, E and F</p>
<p>Principle 7 – GI should contribute to biodiversity gain by safeguarding, enhancing, restoring, and creating wildlife habitat and by integrating biodiversity into the built environment: Existing designated sites and irreplaceable habitats of international, national and local importance should be protected from development. In addition, habitats and features can be created, restored, connected and managed for biodiversity. Sites can include appropriate areas of habitat beyond the development which require protection and buffering, along with a wide range of more formal green spaces enhanced for wildlife, even where nature conservation may not be the primary objective. The built environment should aim to be permeable to wildlife, incorporating design features aimed at sustaining and increasing the population of particular species and facilitating climate change adaptation.</p>	<p>Relevant and incorporated in Policies B, C, D and E</p>

<p>Principle 8 – GI should achieve physical and functional connectivity between sites at strategic and local levels: Although a physically joined-up network is desirable, simple proximity can be enough to functionally integrate an individual green space such as a private garden into a wider network, enabling species to move and helping to reduce the effects of climate change. Landscape-scale connections will also be necessary to fragmentation, improve connectivity, and secure functioning ecosystems. Habitats reflecting those found within the ecologically relevant surrounding area should be created off-site, around and within the development, with connections from the countryside into and through the built environment</p>	<p>Relevant and incorporated in Policies C, D, E and F</p>
<p>Principle 9 – GI needs to include accessible spaces and facilitate physically active travel: GI within a development should include attractive, engaging and safe outdoor spaces which meet a variety of social, health and well-being needs for local people, including contact with nature, recreation, education, active travel (including walking and cycling), water management, landscape amenity, and ‘climate cooling’. Such spaces include parks, play areas, community gardens, housing estate landscapes, playing fields, off-road walking and cycling routes, rivers, canals, road verges and structural landscaping, Local Green Space designations, Local Nature Reserves, and private gardens. Accessibility need not always be direct and physical – it can be visual and auditory.</p>	<p>Relevant and incorporated in Policies B, C, D, E, F G and H</p>
<p>Principle 10 – GI needs to be integrated with other policy initiatives: GI should be developed in a way that maximises the opportunities provided by other policy drivers and initiatives – such as the catchment approach to deliver the requirements of the Water Framework Directive in River Basin Districts; Water Company Catchment Management Schemes and Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Schemes; and initiatives stemming from the Natural Environment White Paper</p>	<p>Primarily relevant at strategic and local level. Also applicable to Policies C and F</p>

4.4 Matrix of Principles and Policies

Principles \ Policies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A. Rural Economy		n/a	√√	√√√	√√			√√		
B. Wildlife Habitats		n/a	√√	√√			√√√	√√	√√	
C. Wildlife Corridors	√	n/a	√√	√√√		√√	√√√	√√	√√	√
D. Green Space (built-up areas)		n/a	√√	√√√		√√	√√√	√√	√√√	
E. New Development		n/a	√√	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√	√√	√√√	
F. Rural/built-up area boundary		n/a	√√	√√		√√		√√	√√	√
G. Amenity in the Rural Landscape		n/a	√√	√√√	√√	√√		√√	√√√	
H. Seeing Ambitions Realised		n/a	√√	√√	√√			√√	√√	

Key: √ Limited Applicability, √√ Applicable, √√√ Very applicable

5. Living Landscape Policies

5.1 Introduction

The Landscape and Biodiversity Focus Group have developed eight recommended policies for the Parishes Living Landscape. These are:

- A. Rural Economy
- B. Wildlife Habitats
- C. Wildlife Corridors
- D. Green Space (Built-up areas)
- E. New Development
- F. Rural/built-up area boundaries
- G. Amenity in the Rural Landscape
- H. Seeing Ambitions Realised.

5.2 The Policies

A. The Rural Economy

Summary: The rural landscape of agricultural land and woodland has been managed by man for centuries. Continued active farming and local food production should be supported and high standards of husbandry and land stewardship encouraged.

Farmers, within the parishes, show commitment to continuing farming, with examples of significant investment, to maintaining the countryside and to contributing to the local economy. Sustainable development, within the Plan area, requires locally produced food to reduce food-miles.

To the extent that farming comes into the planning system continued investment in farming should be supported providing:

- There is adequate protection against environment damage including water quality and wildlife habitat;
- Aesthetics are protected or, preferably, enhanced: sight, sound, smell.

We would actively encourage farmers and landowners to undertake more informal and/or formal land stewardship and will need their co-operation in meeting the objectives of **Policies B, C and G**.

All stock, even that mostly reared under cover, spend part of its life, or the year, in the open fields. Active sheep and cattle farming, in fields right up to the rural/built-up area boundary, is of great value in contributing to the rural character of the area and we should contribute to enabling this to continue by:

- Spreading awareness and education on the “country code” reinforced, for example and if necessary, by robustly phrased signage on the need for control of dogs in the presence of livestock
- By making alternative green space available, under **Policy G**, where dogs can be let off the lead. If this is done then it is reasonable to expect owners to follow instructions on where they should be kept on the lead to avoid damage either to stock or to vulnerable habitats and species.

Where livestock grazing would be in accord with sound conservation policy this could also take place in public or private green space not used primarily for farming. “Community Looking” as pioneered by Brighton and Hove City Council, the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust could support the management of such stock.

B. Wildlife Habitat

Summary: All wildlife habitat within the Parishes can benefit from improved stewardship and management. One habitat giving most concern is the remaining rough/unimproved grassland. Three sites have been identified where we should encourage and support the owners in obtaining formal protection within the planning system.

This policy is concerned with individual habitats and how they can be both better protected and improved. The equally important aspect, how they can be connected, is covered in **Policy C**.

The main habitat types are described in **Chapter 3**. We also endorse, summarize in **Chapter 3**, and reference in **Annex A** landscape and habitat protection measures included in the draft District Plan. **Chapter 3** also lists sites which are, and should remain, protected: SNCI’s and LNRs. It shows locations where DEFRA environmental stewardship schemes are in being and describes the priorities for these schemes in our area. Taking all this into account there are three areas where protection and/or improved conservation work should be considered, subject to further consultation with interested parties:

- a) **Woodland.** As described in **Chapter 3** much of the woodland is managed for nature conservation, some has SNCI status and Forestry Commission Woodland Management Grants finance work such as ride clearance. The SxBRC report indicates that there are several UK BAP species in the woodland area, adjacent to Scaynes Hill, and several species which depend on traditional woodland management practices have not been recorded in the Parishes

for many years. We should investigate the opportunity for cross-holding co-operation in improving the habitat, for example, by the interconnection of rides across holding boundaries. Some landowners have indicated that they would be willing to allow field work to establish the validity of such an approach.

- b) **Unimproved Grassland.** Three sites have been identified as having potential for protection. The NPPF identifies two approaches: Local Green Space designation through the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Wildlife Sites as “locally designated sites”. We have recommended one site as Local Green Space and one or two as SNCIs (see Map):
- i. MSDC expect that land made available through the Limes Development, to be Public Open Space, will shortly be transferred to them and be managed in nature conservation interest. One idea is to add wildflowers to the existing grassland. This may be suitable for protection, through the Neighbourhood Plan, as Local Green Space
 - ii. The Walstead Forge Nature Reserve is a privately managed habitat for wildlife and in particular barn owls. We should encourage the owner to apply for SNCI status and the data to be collected from field surveys in the summer of 2013 should help with this
 - iii. Lindfield Bridge Meadow has an English Heritage class 1 Motte and Bailey castle. This may provide sufficient protection. If not it may warrant SNCI status if the owner wishes to apply for it.

'The creation and management of rough grassland is potentially the most important factor in Barn Owl conservation and can also be of tremendous benefit to a vast array of wildlife.' (Barn Owl Conservation Handbook: A comprehensive guide for ecologists, surveyors, land managers and ornithologists. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter, 2012.)

- c) **Newly planted conservation woodland** on an ex-arable field below East Mascalls Bridge. Black poplar, willow, hazel, hawthorn and 300 oaks have been planted, in collaboration with the Sussex Wildlife Trust and the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, in order to restore natural biodiversity and riverside landscape. This may also be suitable for protection as an SNCI site. The owner has expressed a willingness to allow a permissive path through this area and this is covered in **Policy G**.

(Note: The University of Sussex vegetation surveys will provide data to justify the protection of these habitats, and, as further survey work is undertaken, identify and justify additional candidate habitats for protection.)

C. Wildlife Corridors

Summary: Preserve the existing wildlife corridors and connect holdings, reserves and other open/green space by further corridors. The restoration of the critical Ouse blue corridor needs to be secured by safeguarded water quality and streamside habitat in tributaries flowing from built-up areas.

Corridors and stepping stones are needed to allow wildlife to move through the countryside and should be protected, extended and enhanced otherwise isolation of species in a single habitat will occur, which often results in populations dying out.

The major corridor in the Plan area is the river Ouse and its tributaries and associated water meadows and woodland. The current major project to restore the physical habitat of the Ouse (MORPH) is described in **Chapter 3**. Complementary action, through the planning system, is needed in order to ensure that water quality and streamside habitat, especially in tributaries flowing from existing built-up areas and in any new developments, is not compromised.

Other corridors are, or may be created by the extension of, hedgerow and woodland edge habitat across holdings as demonstrated in such projects as the West Weald Landscape Project. It requires the co-operation of farmers and landowners and **Policy G** covers how corridor provision may be combined with the provision of amenity for people.

D. Green Space (Built-up areas)

Summary: Protect the amount, amenity and visual attractiveness of public green space and private gardens within the villages' built-up areas and enhance the habitat for wildlife.

This policy addresses the green space, including water habitat, within the built-up areas of the two villages.

The components of this green space are described in **Chapter 3**. This policy recommends that:

- a) there should be no net loss of green space.
- b) private gardens should be not be built upon, except for reasonable extensions and garden buildings. Such extensions should be constructed to the same good practice as the examples given in Policy E, including greater use of green roofs and permeable surfaces. Awareness should be spread on how to increase the attractiveness of this habitat to wildlife. Recent research, that has demonstrated the importance of gardens for wildlife, has also shown that earlier, demanding and prescriptive, advice is not necessary and guidance can be very simple and straightforward.
- c) complement the wildlife habitat of private gardens by:
 - i. adding insect attracting plants, shrubs and refuges, to amenity spaces and other public areas;
 - ii. ensuring sufficient large trees;
 - iii. planting up odd spaces, e.g. with caterpillar host plants, to complement private garden greenery.
 - iv. Improving pond habitat for wildlife.

((b) and c) would be equally applicable outside the built-up areas)

Corridors for wildlife within, and running through the built-up areas, should be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced, as in c) above. Their access points to the countryside should be safeguarded.

Within Lindfield Village important corridors are:

- The Scrase Valley onto the Common, and through to Black Hill
- From the Conservation area rural boundary through gardens down either side of High Street
- The footpath alongside Finches Gardens through the public land either side of Hickman's Lane.

E. New Development

Summary: Design new developments, in accordance with up-to-date good practice, to be permeable to wild-life. Developers' contributions from the Plan area should finance improvements to the amenity and bio-diversity of the Plan landscape.

The Policy recommends that:

- a) The design of a development should aim to reflect and enhance the area's locally distinctive character. In achieving this, existing biodiversity features of environmental, historical or cultural interest, such as habitats of principal importance; ancient woodland; permanent indigenous grassland including that which is reverting naturally to woodland; and hedgerows, should be retained.
- b) A viable network of green and blue corridors and natural habitat should be created throughout the development which connects larger or more expansive open spaces for both people and wildlife (including dark corridors for bats). Wherever possible and appropriate, habitat creation and enhancement should be designed around existing assets. Great care should be taken in building houses close to trees that either are, or have the potential to become, large
- c) Opportunities should be considered to:
 - i. Create multi-functional habitat on buildings (roofs, terraces, facades, etc.) to provide high quality wildlife habitat equal in quality and function to local priority habitats
 - ii. Include bat boxes, bricks or lofts and bird boxes on all housing, to reflect the species within the area. Priority bird species are: barn owls, house martins, house sparrows, starlings, swallows and swifts
 - iii. Incorporate insect-attracting plants, hedgerows, log-piles and other places of shelter for wildlife refuge/hibernation within structural landscaping and open spaces

- iv. Include provision of hedgerow habitat on at least one side of gardens
 - v. Enhance surface area drainage for biodiversity by incorporating ditch habitat and pond networks.
- d) Ensure that a best practice level of habitat and biodiversity investigation is undertaken in preparing development plans, that all species records are lodged with the SxBRC and all findings disclosed in planning applications.
- e) In accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF, a meaningful proportion of the funds raised from developers in our neighbourhood should be applied to the neighbourhood. This should include improvements to green space for both people and wildlife. The money should be spent promptly and wisely.

F. Rural/Built-up Area Boundaries

Summary: Retain the much-valued rural character of the villages by protecting the existing, precious and pressurized, rural/built-up area boundaries. Critical points are where:

- **They are crossed by roads and footpaths**
- **They connect to internal and external wildlife corridors**
- **Building out would jeopardise the strategic gaps between the villages or intrude onto the slopes of the Ouse Valley destroying its character.**

For Lindfield Village the open countryside viewed from the common should be safeguarded as should the Conservation Area Rural Boundary.

The points/areas listed in the summary are all shown on Maps 5.2 and 5.3

The policy recommendations for the built-up/rural boundaries are:

- a) Roads and footpaths. The further it is necessary to travel from the centre of the villages to the countryside the less the rural character can be said to be maintained. If footpaths into the countryside are too remote from residents' homes then more motor transport will be used and more parking required. The existing rural access points should be protected
- b) Wildlife corridors. Blocking off corridors will reduce wildlife movement thus degrading biodiversity and should not be allowed

- c) The Strategic Gap between the two villages is of immense importance to the residents' sense of village identity and character. It should not be jeopardised
- d) The Ouse Valley is shallow but well defined. It lies mostly in the High Weald AONB and has a pattern of mixed arable and pastoral fields with no settlements other than dispersed farmsteads. The encroachment of the built-up area down the slope would destroy this character and should not be allowed

Lindfield Village. There should be no new development along the small remaining rural boundary of the Conservation Area (see also a), b) and d) above). The open countryside viewed from the Common and Black Hill should be protected (see also c) above. Both are essential to the maintenance of the character of the Village.

Map 5.1 Lindfield Village Built-up Area Boundary showing areas to be especially safeguarded (not yet done)

Map 5.2 Scaynes Hill Village Built-up Area Boundary showing areas to be especially safeguarded (not yet done)

G. Amenity in the Rural Landscape

Summary: The existing footpath network does not provide much opportunity for short (2-3km) off-road circular rural walks and safe cycling routes are largely non-existent. The aspiration to improve the rural footpath network can be opportunistically achieved:

- **Through supporting landowners willing to provide extra permissive paths**
- **Using developers' contributions, and other funding sources, to provide linear green space encompassing footpaths, cycle-ways (where appropriate) and hedgerow/rough grassland corridors which can link into the existing pathway and habitat/corridor network**
- **Through self-funding multiple-use landscape projects such as a Natural Burial Ground when the existing Walstead Cemetery is full. The additional connectivity provided by any such scheme is an essential element.**

Every extra link increases the amenity and biodiversity value of the whole.

The provision of safe cycling routes within and between the villages will be a major project which will require appropriate funding. It should be a strategic objective at the relevant local authority level.

"Everyone should have access to good quality natural green space near to where they live' i.e. 'Nature Nearby'. This provides a broad range of benefits to people and to the quality of their lives, covering all the ecosystem services we depend on." (Natural England: Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace)

The above document includes a range of definitions and standards for access to, and the quality of greenspace. From these standards the most obvious lack, in the Plan area, is for a footpath network which allows for short circular rural, off-road, walks of 2-3km. The improved farmland of our rural landscape scores poorly on the scale of natural greenspace values but residents like to see active farming and it provides views, openness and a good range of other habitat. An “arable desert” it is not. Providing connectivity for people and wildlife through it makes it acceptable natural greenspace.

The standards also specify adequate car parking but if access is based on the current footpath rural access points then all of Scaynes Hill and half of Lindfield Village is within 400 metres, in a straight line, of one. This reduces the car parking need.

There are five access points for Scaynes Hill and eight for Lindfield Village. The proposed Wates Development close to Gravely Lane will impact on this.

The very positive response to the residents’ survey statement: “people should be able to cycle between the Parishes and Haywards Heath on safe, and well-lit, routes for leisure and commuting” means this also has to be addressed.

The policy aspiration is to provide:

- A good variety of short and longer circular walks from a number of built-up area access points, combining this with wildlife corridors linking the various habitats, and minimising the removal of land from productive farming
- A cycleway between the two villages.

This will be achieved:

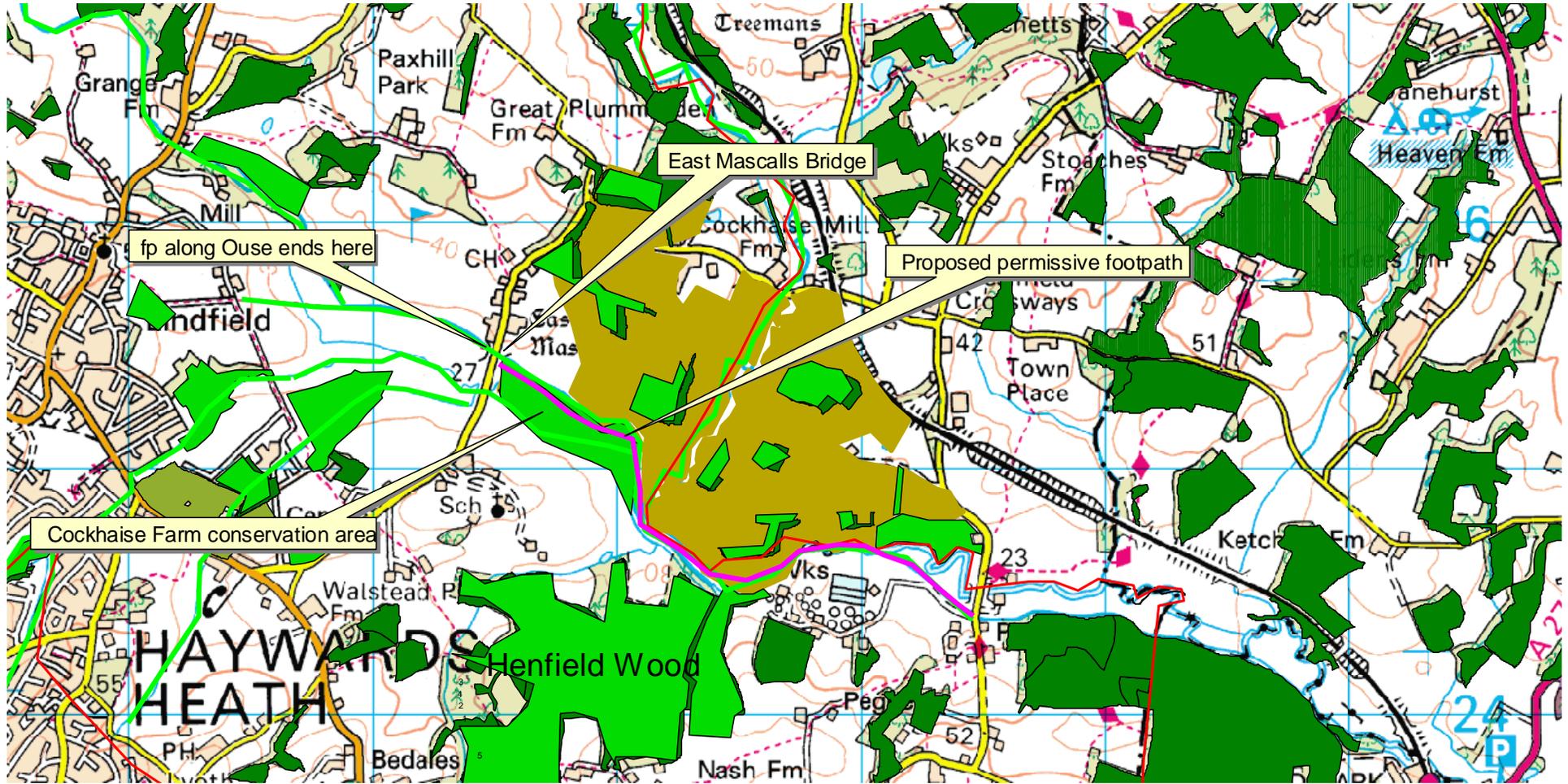
- a) Through supporting landowners willing to provide extra **permissive paths**. The interviews with farmers and landowners have identified one excellent opportunity which will require financial support to make usable and safe. It will run downstream from East Mascalls Bridge, through a new conservation area which has been planted with native trees including black poplar, to the Sloop Pub.
- b) Using developers’ contributions, and other funding sources, to provide **linear green space** encompassing footpaths, cycle-ways (where appropriate) and hedgerow/rough grassland corridors which can link into the existing pathway and habitat/corridor network. Each link might consist of a narrow strip of land with:
 - good quality hedgerow on one side
 - rough grassland, alongside the hedge of, on average, the width of a DEFRA stewardship scheme field headland (12 metres),
 - a footpath and, where appropriate, a cycleway

- a stock fence on the other boundary.

Routing should avoid disturbance to vulnerable habitats. Based on the Ashdown Forest 7km buffer zone criteria for Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), which the Plan could mandate throughout the whole of the Plan area, a population increase of 500 would require a SANG area of four hectares. On an average width of 20 metres this would provide 2km of linear greenspace which would provide significant extra linkage. More variety could be achieved by different widths at different stages, depending upon practical and ecological considerations, and make conservation grazing more practical if needed to reduce invasive grasses. The current mosaic of footpaths provide multiple options for links making an opportunistic approach sound.

- c) Through **self-funding multiple-use landscape projects** such as a Natural Burial Ground when the existing Walstead Cemetery is full In about five years time. Clayton Wood is an example where revenue from graves and ash scattering finances the site, walkers and cyclists are welcome and native species planting provides both habitat and corridors for wildlife. The connectivity to the existing landscape, provided by any such scheme, is an essential element.

The provision of safe cycling routes within and between the villages will be a major project which will require appropriate funding. It should be a strategic objective at the relevant local authority level. The opportunistic approach above will not be adequate although it may provide some valuable links for leisure cycling.



Map 5.3 – Possible Permissive Path

H. Seeing Ambitions Realised

Summary: Seeing Our Living Landscape policies realised will need a forum to “own the vision”. Actions to implement the policies are divided into three categories as shown on the attached diagram:

- a) the minimum extra (to current activities) to be implemented as soon as the plan is established
- b) opportunist actions that can be undertaken if the (mostly voluntary) effort is available, funding is found and third party support and sign-up obtained
- c) Long term aspirations

An outline plan is needed to show the actions and priorities necessary to realise the ambitions covered in the policies for our Living Landscape.

Firstly a forum needs to be established to “own the Vision” for the Living Landscape across the two parishes and take on board the energising of the necessary activity to realise the policies. There is a preliminary list of actions, in the diagram below. Most of these are covered in the above policies. There are two areas which are not covered:

- a) **Wildlife/Habitat Intelligence Group.** This is about knowing what has been recorded, what field work is being done and ensuring that records are lodged with the SxBRC. This should enable the Parishes to get on (*and keep on*) the front-foot in terms of bio-diversity knowledge of the area. Currently they are not able to respond to as adequately to biodiversity aspects of planning applications as they are with other aspects such as village design. **Policy E** specifies the highest possible levels of biodiversity investigation and disclosure by developers submitting planning applications. The Parishes need to be able to respond appropriately. If enough volunteer effort is available then “development watchers” could check that planning approval commitments on habitat and biodiversity are actually delivered.

Why do we need the biodiversity information:

- To justify stringent requirements on proposed developments
 - To inform habitat improvements
 - To act as a baseline against which to monitor future wildlife trends and specifically the impact of future improvements/developments
 - To create an initial, and hopefully ongoing, sense of community engagement by encouraging records from residents, schools, organisations etc.
- b) **Wildlife/Habitat aspirations.** There are a number of “best practice” examples of what is being done elsewhere that the Parishes might aspire to for this neighbourhood:
 - A neighbourhood-wide habitat survey. Steady field work is being undertaken. Could we cover the all the landscape where access is permitted, if the effort was available?

- A neighbourhood biodiversity plan. There are examples of this being done for specific parishes. Selsey is an example.
- A formal neighbourhood-wide “Living Landscape”. Living Landscape projects are identified on a landscape characteristic basis, such as a catchment area. The objective is eventually to make the whole country a Living Landscape but this is not going to be achieved unless neighbourhoods, across the country, pick up the challenge. Supporting this with the necessary ecological and conservation expertise is a serious resource issue. Therefore, this is an aspiration to work towards, undertaking as much as is possible on an opportunistic basis
- Neighbourhood “hit squads” working on conservation work wherever needed on both public and private land. These would be volunteer teams, possibly professionally led like the SWT and South Downs National Park Ranger squads.

Living Landscapes:” The Wildlife Trusts are working to transform the environment we live in: restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife-rich spaces in rural and urban areas by working in partnership with local communities, landowners, schools and businesses” (TWT web-site)

	Seeing Ambitions Realised			
	Habitat and Wildlife			Amenity
Community Resource Available	Watching (Monitoring, Recording)	Energising (3rd party support, funding & co-operation)	Doing (primarily volunteers)	Energising and Doing
Level 0 (Current)	Individual habitat, garden and species recording	Parishes' input to MSDC management plans	LNR Friends' Groups; Other groups' initiatives	
Level 1 (Minimum extra)	Wildlife/habitat intelligence group; Improved response to development proposals	Initiate habitat protection; Improved public space biodiversity management	Initiatives for specific purposes (e.g. Himalayan Balsam removal?)	New permissive foot path(s); Funds availability monitoring
Level 2 (Opportunity: 3 rd party support, land, finance, voluntary effort)	Development watchers; Increased recording; Guided visits to habitats	Wild-life friendly gardening; Habitat/corridor improvement measures	Volunteer support to Public & Community greenspace habitat improvement	Linear natural green space links; Self-funding multi-use development (Natural Burial Ground)
Level 3 (Aspiration)	Neighbourhood Habitat Survey; Neighbourhood Bio-Diversity Plan	Supported and resourced Living Landscape Project	Neighbourhood conservation "hit squad(s)" improving public and (possibly) private land	Network of footpaths and wildlife corridors; Inter-village cycle paths

