

Binfield Heath

Parish Landscape Character Assessment

March 2022



Ref: 2338-TFC-00-ZZ-RE-L-8001

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Appendix A: Local Green Spaces (LGS)

Figure 1 LGS: Map - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces

Figure 2 LGS: Enlarged Inset Maps - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces

Figure 3 LGS: Enlarged Inset Maps - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces

Table 1 LGS: Rationale and Evidence - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces

Photographs of LGS: Provided by Binfield Heath Parish Council

(maps and tables provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)

Project reference: 2338

Date	Rev	By	Chk	Comments
14.3.22	P01	KB	AG	First issue
03.01.23	P02	NT	KB	Comments from Parish / LGS Appendix added / Awaiting revised drawings at Figure 1 and Figure 1 LGS
01.02.23	P03	NT	AG	Revised Settlements and LGS Maps and Tables added
23.02.23	P04	NT	AG	Comments from Parish
21.03.23	P05	NT	AG	Comments from Parish
18.10.23	P06	NT	AG	Updates to PLCA5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Binfield Heath Parish Council appointed The terra firma Consultancy in November 2021 to undertake the Binfield Heath Parish Landscape Character Assessment to inform the emerging policies of the Neighbourhood Plan by identifying the key characteristics, sensitivities and issues of the landscape and the contribution of the landscape to the parish character .
- 1.2. The study builds on the published landscape character assessments produced by Oxfordshire County and South Oxfordshire District Councils and forms part of the Neighbourhood Plan's evidence base to be used in plan-making and planning decisions.

2. Objectives of the study

- 2.1. This study aims to provide a robust, objective and transparent assessment of the landscape of the parish including its key characteristics of value, sensitivities, issues, and visibility to provide the Parish and Local Planning Authority with a landscape evidence base. This study identifies and examines the character of the landscape across Binfield Heath Parish and subdivides it into seven Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCA) which share similar characteristics which make these areas distinct. This study then makes landscape management and development considerations for each area. The PLCA boundaries are themselves based on the boundaries of the wider district landscape study which are further refined by desktop study and fieldwork. The PLCA require boundaries (as do the wider district studies) but it is important to acknowledge that boundaries generally represent zones of transition between adjacent character areas rather than a sudden change. At parish level these zones of transition tend to be smaller than in large-scale studies.
- 2.2. Alongside the landscape character (which includes landform, topography, access, land use, hydrology, visible history, vegetation and tranquillity) this study examines the visual characteristics of the Parish including key views, skylines, and landmarks. Where visual receptors or viewers (the people within the area who experience the views) are particularly sensitive this is also noted.
- 2.3. This study also takes into consideration other factors which may add sensitivity or value to a landscape such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), recreational opportunities (including Public Rights of Way (PRoW)), ecological designations (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR)), heritage designations (including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens), but does not include a detailed examination of these assets.

2.4. Community involvement

- 2.4.1. Prior to undertaking fieldwork terra firma asked the community of Binfield Heath, via the Neighbourhood Plan Group, to provide insight into their valued views and footpaths and any detracting elements. These were used to guide and inform the study. Comments submitted are set out below:
 - *'The good views are all highly important'*
 - *'The bad views are primarily as a result of poor planning decisions in recent years.'*
 - *All footpaths are well used and considered equally important by the Parishioners who can walk from their front doors straight into the countryside'.*
 - *'There are a number of character buildings that provide much of the character of the Parish. The history indicates that the scattered nature of the parish arose due to the settlements being around the entrances to the old Heath. The Parish becomes more sparsely populated as you head towards Crowsley a small scattered hamlet to the west of Binfield Heath'.*
 - *'The general shared feeling is that it is the scattered nature of the Parish that contributes much of its character combined with the listed and iconic buildings and there is a strong will to protect these from more and more building and loss of habitat. The green spaces between individual houses and the gaps between the settlements are a vital part of the character.'* In addition a map was provided which showed where the parish felt its settlement boundaries were (Figure 1) .

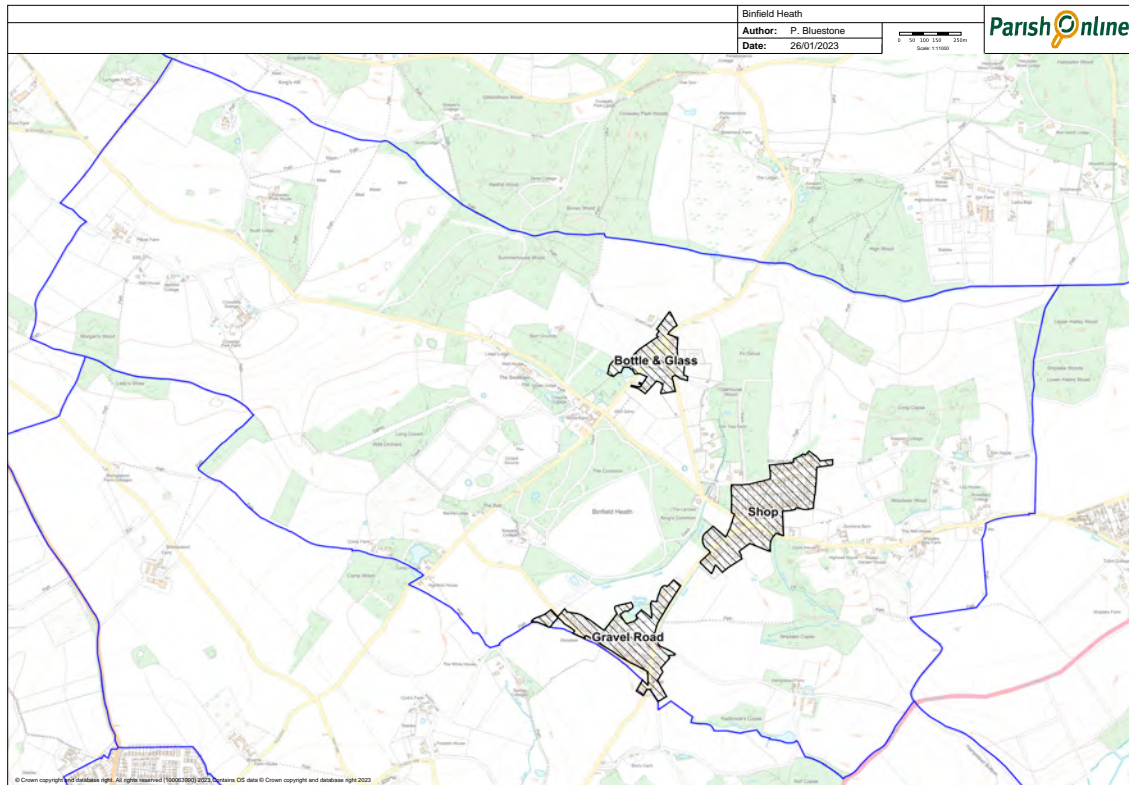
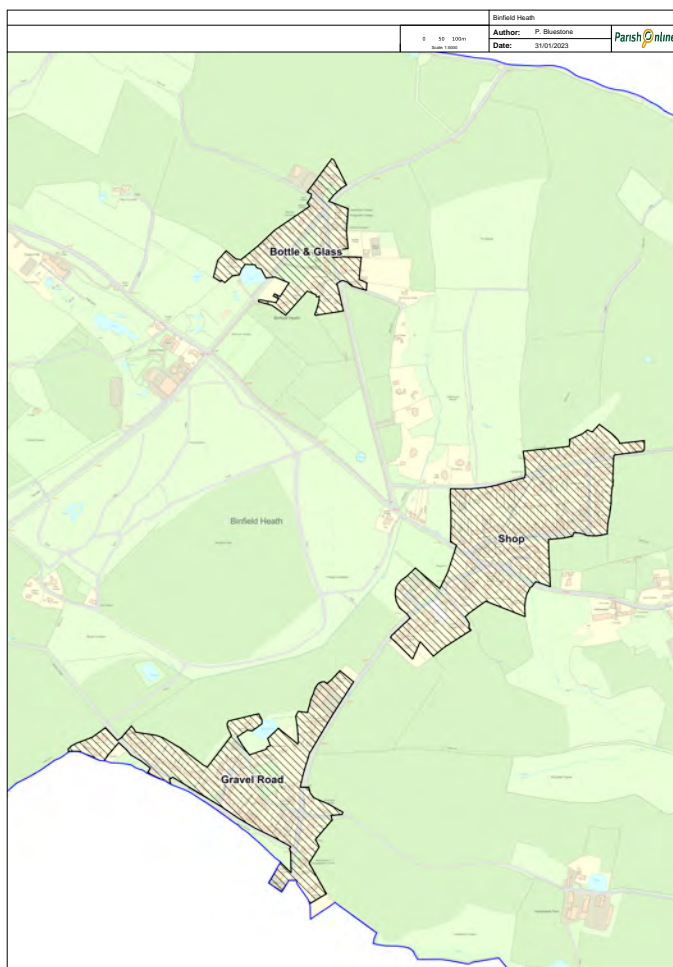


Figure 1: Perceived settlement boundaries (maps provided by BHPC) - Shop settlement; Gravel road settlement; Bottle & Glass settlement



2.5. Local Green Spaces (LGS)

- 2.5.1. A number of proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) have been identified by Binfield Heath Parish Council (BHPC) through a process of input from the Binfield Heath parishioners, reference to the DEFRA database of Priority Habitats, and in discussion with Bluestone Planning. Information on these proposed LGS, including maps, tables and photographs has been provided by BHPC, and can be found at Appendix A.

2.6. Valued Landscapes

- 2.6.1. The NPPF states at para 174 that planning policies

'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' and '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'.

- 2.6.2. The NPPF does not give guidance on what constitutes a 'valued landscape' but this study aims to assist the Neighbourhood Plan with identifying valued landscapes within the Parish which lie outside the Chilterns AONB.

- 2.6.3. Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) (Landscape Institute, 2013) includes guidance on what may constitute an undesignated but valued landscape such as landscape quality (condition), scenic quality, rarity, representativeness, conservation interests, recreational value, perceptual aspects (such as wildness or tranquillity), and historic or artistic associations. In addition it states that :

'Areas of landscape whose character is judged to be intact and in good condition, and where scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity, and natural or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important associations, are likely to be highly valued.' (GLVIA, 2013. para 5.29).

3. Landscape setting

3.1. Location

3.1.1. The study area, which coincides with the Parish boundary, lies within the south-east of South Oxfordshire District. Harpsden Parish borders Binfield Heath to the north, with Shiplake Parish to the east, Eye and Dunsden Parish to the south and Sonning Common to the west. Further afield the River Thames lies to the east and connects the towns of Henley-on-Thames in the north and Caversham in the south (Figure 2). Approximately two-thirds of Binfield Heath Parish lies within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB), with the remainder of the Parish (to the south-east) having the potential to contribute to the setting for the AONB, (see clause 4.3 'Setting of the AONB', and the individual descriptions of the Parish landscape character areas).

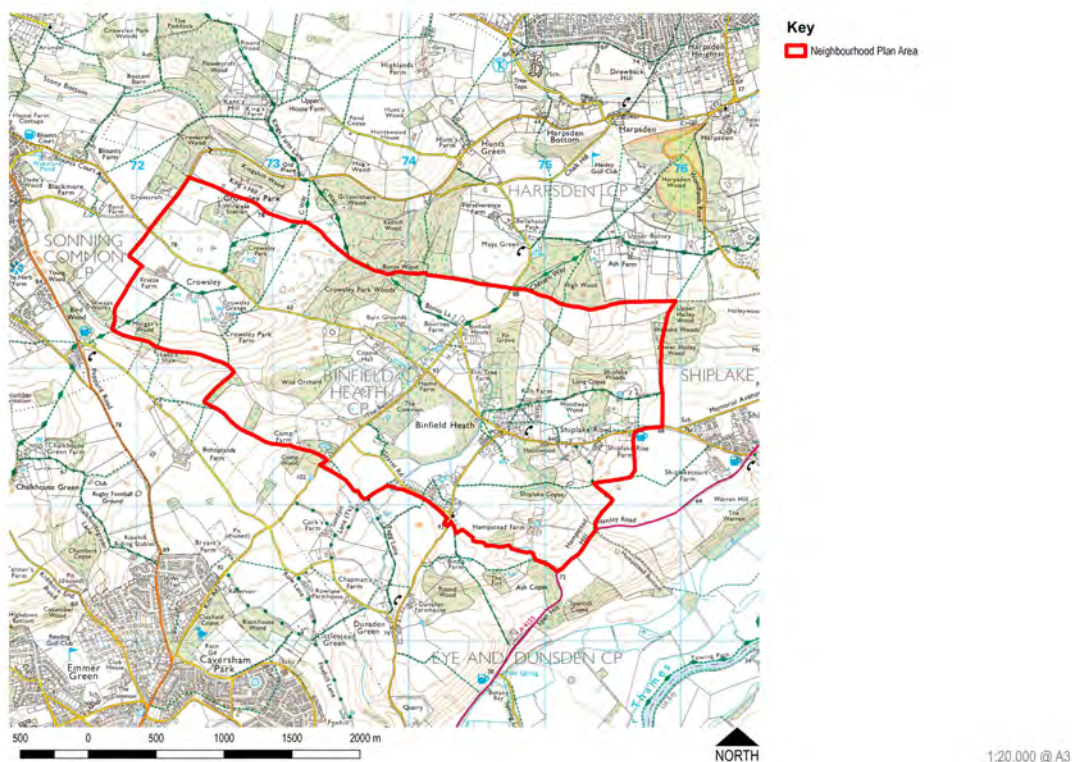


Figure 2: Study area location

3.2. Topography and hydrology

- 3.2.1. The topography of the study area is a key characteristic. The Parish lies on the Chilterns plateau crossed by a dry valley which separates Crowsley and Binfield Heath (Figure 3). The eastern edge of the Parish includes the dip slope which falls down towards the River Thames floodplain. The highest point of the Parish lies close to Comp Farm and Comp Wood at approximately 100m AOD.
- 3.2.2. Some parts of the study area form sensitive skylines when viewed from lower ground, particularly when viewed from the Thames Valley in the east. Development which breaks the skyline has the potential to be particularly visible.

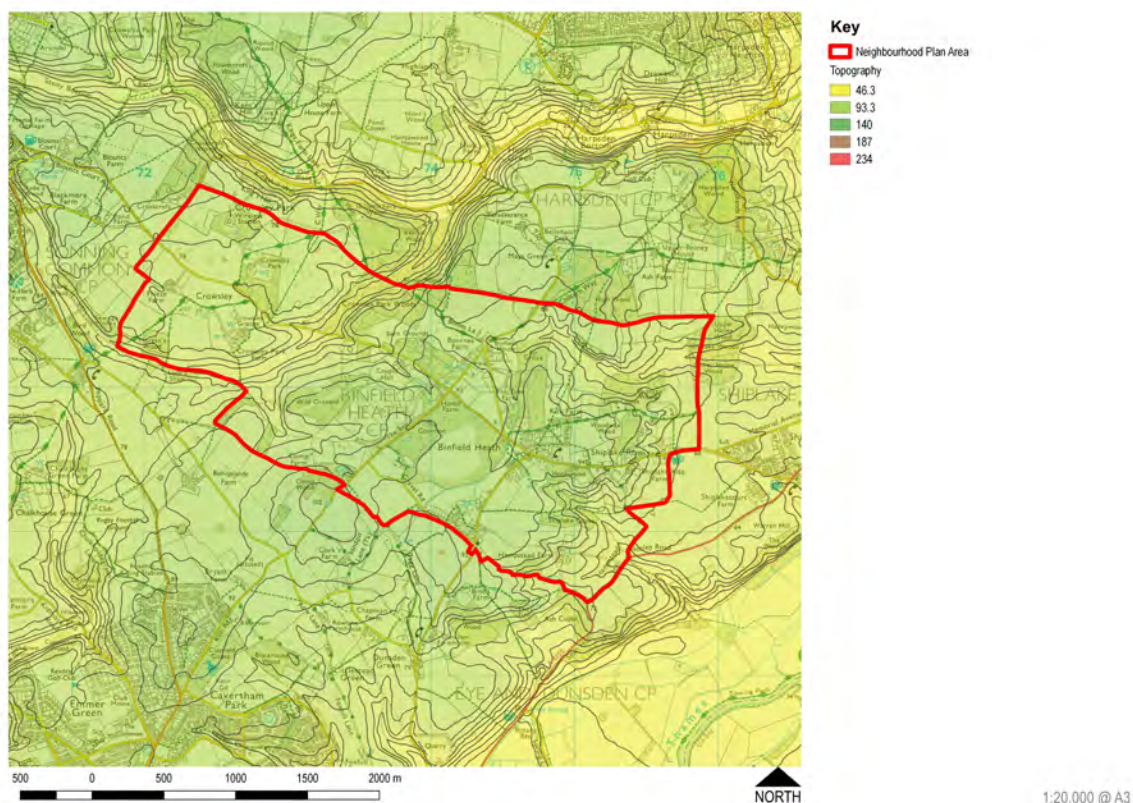


Figure 3: Topography

- 3.2.3. There are no rivers within the study area but due to the clay soils there are a number of ponds and some water-filled ditches. These have the potential to contribute positively to landscape character and ecology and should be considered as sensitive assets which should be safeguarded and managed for biodiversity. There is no recorded risk of flooding within the study area.

3.3. Vegetation and ecology

3.3.1. The Parish is generally well wooded, particularly to the centre. There are a number of blocks of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland which often sit within or adjacent to other areas of woodland. These woodlands sometimes also contain areas of plantation or former plantation which can generally be recognised by the presence of non-native conifers (Figure 4). Crowsley Park Woods is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

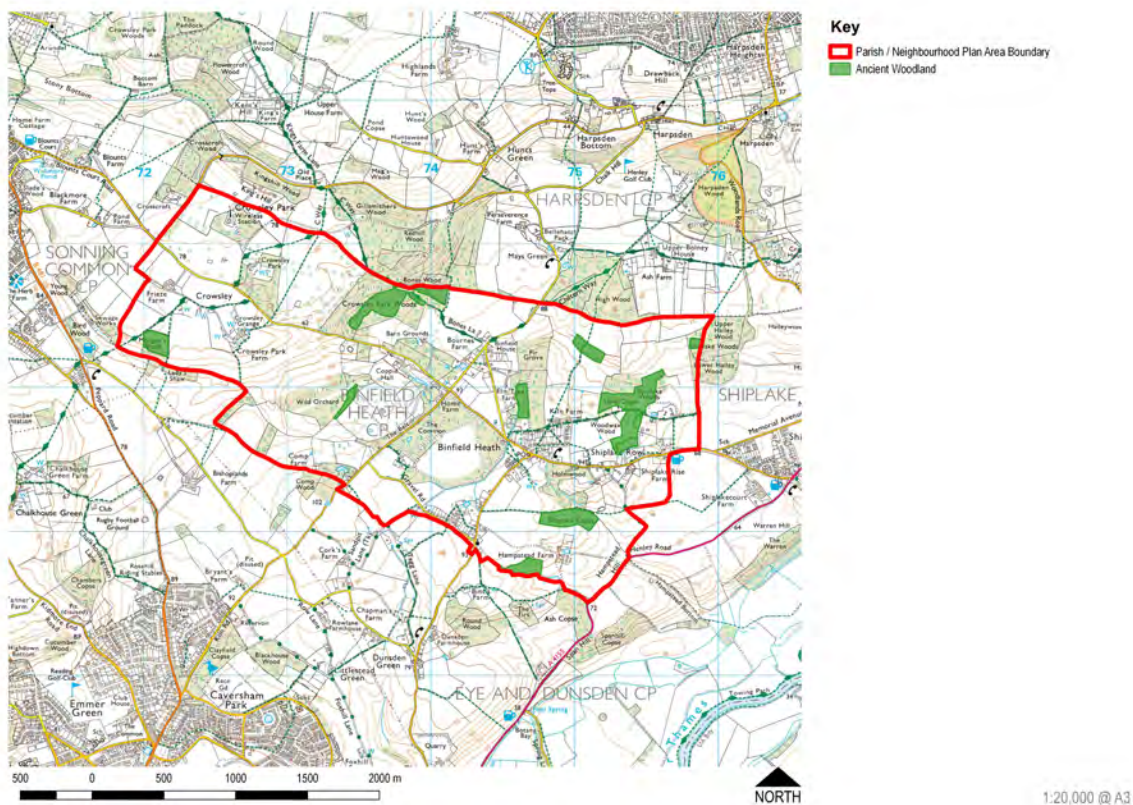


Figure 4: Ancient Woodland

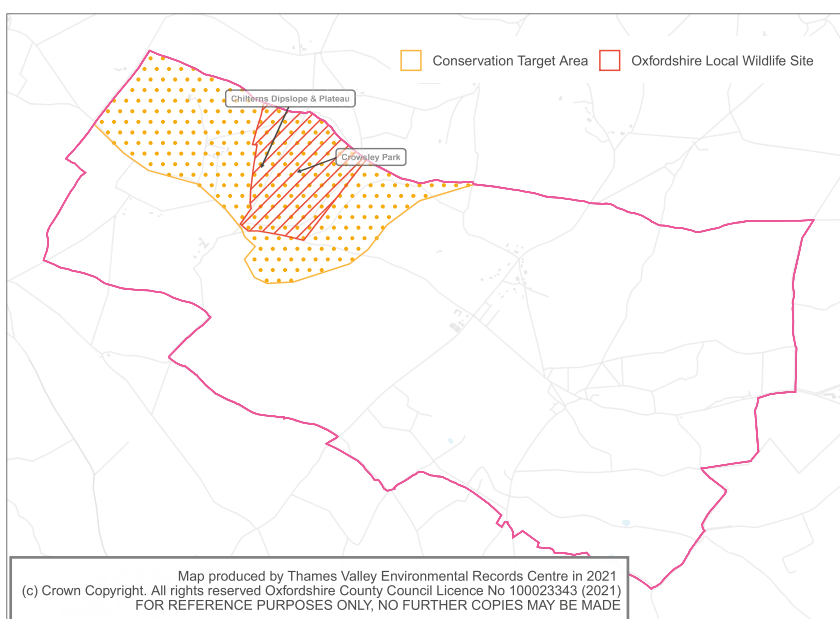


Figure 6: Designated Sites Map
(Extract from Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) Biodiversity Report for Binfield Heath Parish)

- 3.3.2. In addition to woodlands, the study area contains a large amount of agricultural land, which is predominantly used for arable and some smaller areas of pasture and paddocks. Some fields are enclosed by thick hedgerows, other hedgerows are gappy in places and in some instances hedgerows have been removed to create large 'prairie-style fields' with the loss of historic field patterns.
- 3.3.3. The study area contains a number of sites which are listed on the Natural England Priority Habitat Inventory which are listed below:
- Lowland dry acid grassland (located west of Crowsley Park Woods);
 - Deciduous woodland (many areas across the study area);
 - Woodpasture and parkland (located at Crowsley Park);
 - Traditional Orchard (located west of Banda Lodge, east of Binfield House, south of Walled Garden House, at Walnut Cottage, and south-east of Holmwood).

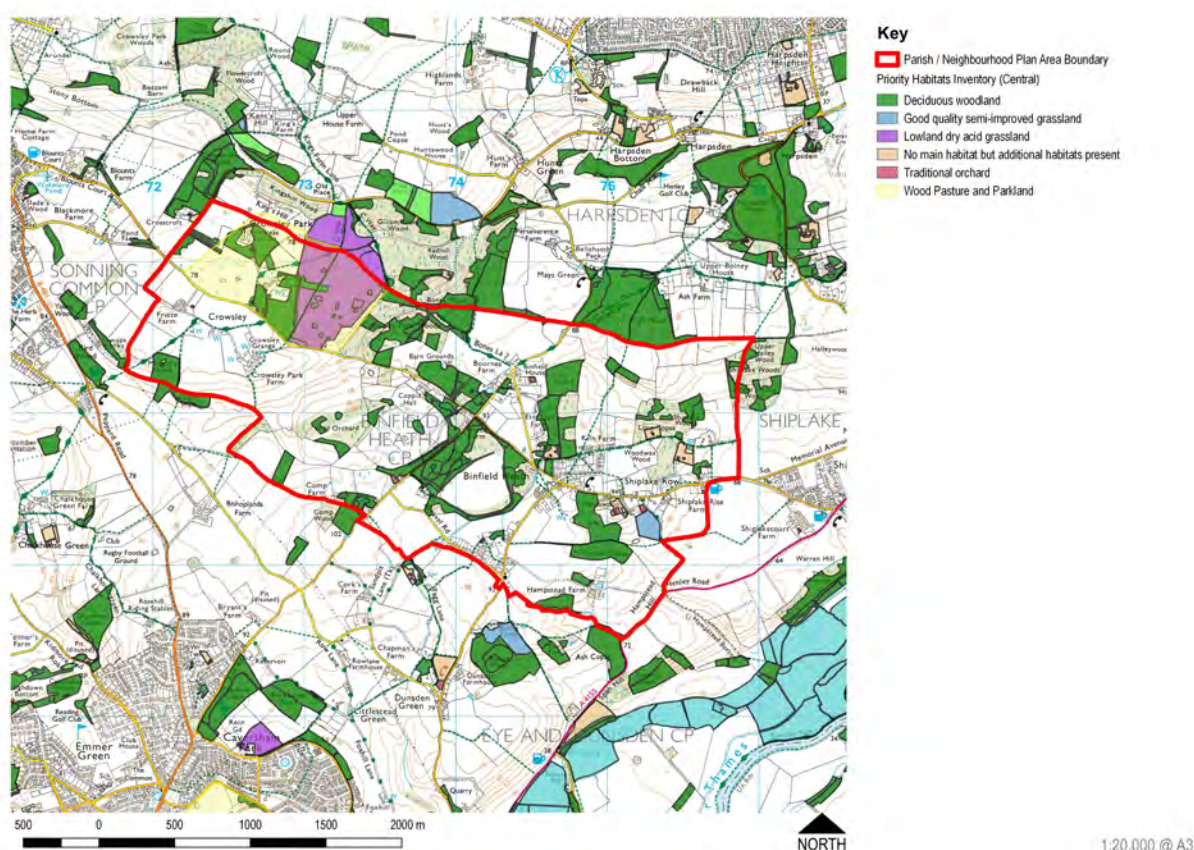


Figure 5: Priority Habitats

- 3.3.4. There are no areas subject to statutory designation for ecology (such as SSSI, LNR, SINC) but there are two locally designated sites in the north of the study area (source: TVERC Biodiversity Report 2021-11-24 Ref TVERC/21/678). A Conservation Target Area covers Crowsley Park and Crowsley Park Woods and within this lies Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site Crowsley Park (located between Crowsley Park and Crowsley Park Woods) which is designated for its lowland wood pastures and parkland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland meadow.

3.4. Historic landscape

- 3.4.1. The Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (HLCA) (2017) describes the historic landscape pattern of the Parish. The Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation project notes that Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC):
- *‘allows us to identify the specific characteristics of an area or district, so that we can understand what makes that place special or distinct, helping us to make sure it is managed appropriately.’; and*
 - *‘recognises that all parts of the landscape – from the Iron Age hillfort to the 1960s housing development – have historic value and contribute to the landscape in which we live.’*
- 3.4.2. In addition to the areas of Parkland associated with Crowsley Park and Coppid Hall are a number of areas designed as ‘Ancient Enclosures’ (1540-1797) south of Crowsley and Coppid Parks and an area in the north-east of the Parish. There are a number of areas of Piecemeal Enclosures (1798-1810) located to the east of the Parish, to the north of Binfield Heath. To the west of Binfield Heath are a number of areas of Planned Enclosure (1811-1881).
- 3.4.3. There are a relatively large number of Grade II listed properties within the Parish including individual dwellings, barns, stables and farmhouses, and a grotto at Crowsley Park (Figure 7). There are no Registered Parks and Gardens in the Parish.
- 3.4.4. There are no conservation areas in the study area.

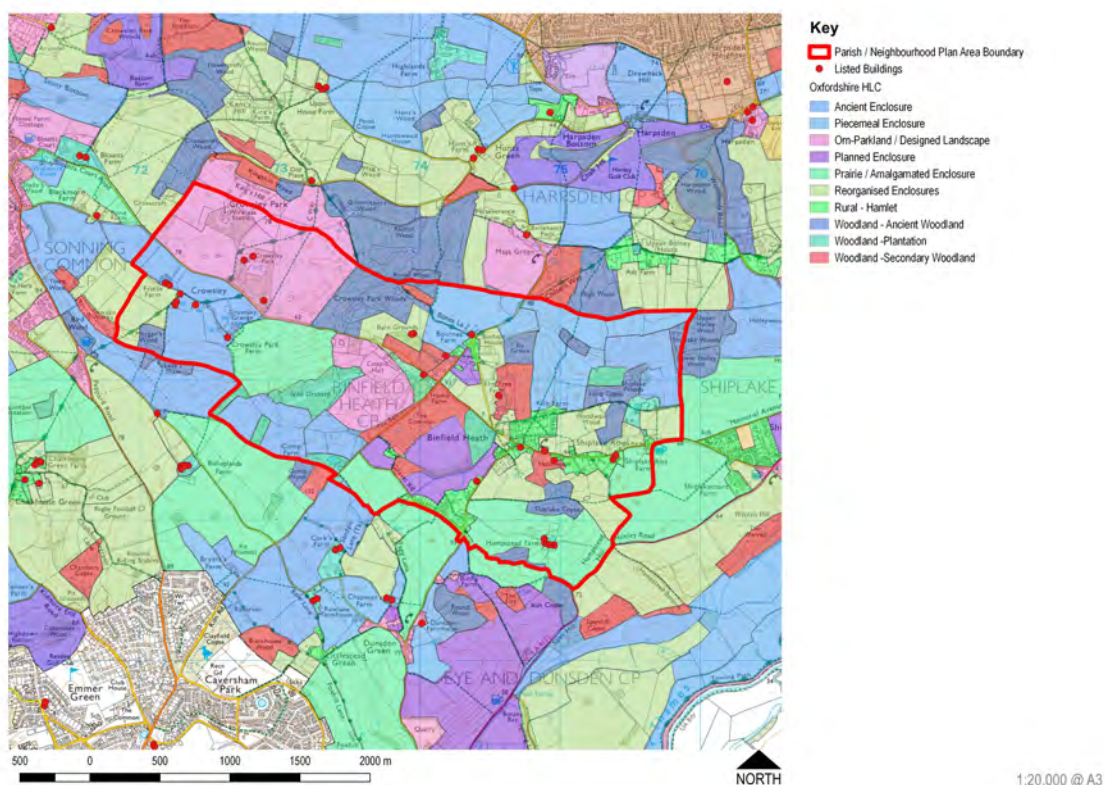


Figure 7: Historic Landscape Character and listed buildings

3.5. Perceptual and experiential landscape

- 3.5.1. The study area retains a generally rural and somewhat remote character despite its location close to urban centres. The parish is not crossed by any railway lines and there is little traffic in the study area which adds to its attraction to cyclists and walkers. The busiest road in the study area is the A4155 Henley Road which forms an

approximately 375 metre stretch of the south-eastern boundary.

- 3.5.2. The study area is generally tranquil and the sound of Red Kites circling overhead is particularly noticeable. The lack of street-lights and the generally scattered nature of the settlement contributes to the dark night skies. The major part of the study area benefits from the darkest night skies but there is some localised erosion of these associated with Crowsley Park. Further afield, Sonning Common, Henley on Thames and Caversham have less dark skies (source: <https://www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk/maps/>).

3.6. Settlement pattern

- 3.6.1. The earliest homes around the heath were built along tracks which connected the homes and farms in Shiplake and Dunsden with higher grazing land at Sonning Common. Simple homes were established on the edges of the common with larger farms and associated labourer's cottages becoming established on fertile land near water. The oldest homes still in existence in Binfield Heath probably date from the late 1600's. In the 18th Century grander houses with associated farms and workers' cottages started to be built, including houses on Shiplake Row. House-building continued throughout the Georgian and Victorian periods. In 1841 there were 35 houses in the Eye and Dunsden part of the parish and 68 in the Shiplake part, including 18 in Shiplake Row and 10 south of Crowsley Park. More building took place within the 20th Century including speculative building and social housing. In 2003, following a referendum, the Parish of Binfield Heath was established. In the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2011-2035) Settlement Hierarchy, Binfield Heath is categorised as a Smaller Village.

3.7. Important visual landmarks and features

- 3.7.1. Within the context of this study the following features were felt to be important to the character of Binfield Heath:
- The former areas of heath around which the village historically evolved and gives it its name and the extant areas of Common-edge settlement;
 - Historic field patterns including Ancient and Piecemeal Enclosures;
 - The scattered and eclectic mix of period properties which demonstrate the piecemeal evolution of the settlement but nonetheless retain a harmonious sense of scale and palette of materials and details;
 - The green spaces which separate and enclose the clusters of built form and contribute to the rural character;
 - The occasional long views across open countryside, especially where an elevated viewpoint allows a unexpected panorama;
 - The influence of gentry houses, their parkland, stables, walls and outbuildings, many of which are close to main routes and highly visible;
 - Crowsley Park House is a landmark from the Chiltern Way and there are directed views within the park created by avenues of trees (some at risk of becoming obscured or lost);
 - The quiet, sunken roads and lanes with overhanging trees, and without streetlights and kerbs;
 - Keeps Well and Green Pond;
 - The chestnut tree, post office and former forge which mark the apparent heart of the village;
 - The Congregational Chapel which marks the gateway to the village when arriving via Dunsden Way;
 - The lack of street furniture which could otherwise have a suburbanising effect.

4. Landscape character context

4.1. National Character Area

4.1.1. The Study Area lies within National Character Area (NCA) 110: Chilterns which extends from Reading in the south-west to Hitchin in the north-east. Key characteristics of NCA 110: Chilterns of relevance to this study are set out below:

- Within the Chilterns, views are enclosed within branching valleys, sunken routeways and extensive woodland and hedgerow-enclosed fields. There are hidden, tranquil pockets along single track lanes and rights of way;
- A mixture of arable, grassland and woodland and the numerous commons reflects the dominance of Grade 3 agricultural land. Ancient woodland has remained on extensive clay-with-flint deposits, while very steep slopes are rarely cultivated. There are, however, not inconsiderable areas of Grade 1 and 2 land that are associated with lower-lying areas and river valleys ;
- The Chilterns are one of the most wooded lowland landscapes in England;
- Pre-18th-century fields defined by ancient, often sinuous hedged boundaries are scattered throughout, including co-axial fields. Parliamentary enclosure fields are limited. Large modern fields, usually with ancient boundaries, cover the better agricultural land, most notably in the north-east;
- Species strongly associated with the Chilterns include the red kite, pasque flower, stag beetle, Chiltern gentian, shepherd's needle, chalkhill blue butterfly and native box. Farmland birds and deer are a feature of the wider countryside;
- Dispersed farmsteads dating from the medieval period and mid-19th-century development around commons are characteristic of the plateau;
- Brick and flint are the dominant traditional building materials, with Totternhoe Stone (clunch) being less common, but still a distinctive feature;
- Numerous parkland landscapes define large, historic estates. Designs by Humphry Repton and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown are represented, and the houses, follies and wooded features provide local landmarks;
- Extensive rights of way, commons, open access downland, woodland and some parklands provide access to the countryside. Locally promoted routes include the Chilterns Cycleway. Private leisure land uses, including golf courses and horse paddocks, are common near urban centres.

4.2. Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

4.2.1. Approximately two-thirds of the study area (PLCA1-4) lies within the south-east of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Figure 8) which stretches from Goring in the south-west to Luton in the north-east.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which is the over-arching guidance that informs all planning policy at lower levels, states at para 176 that:

'Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.'

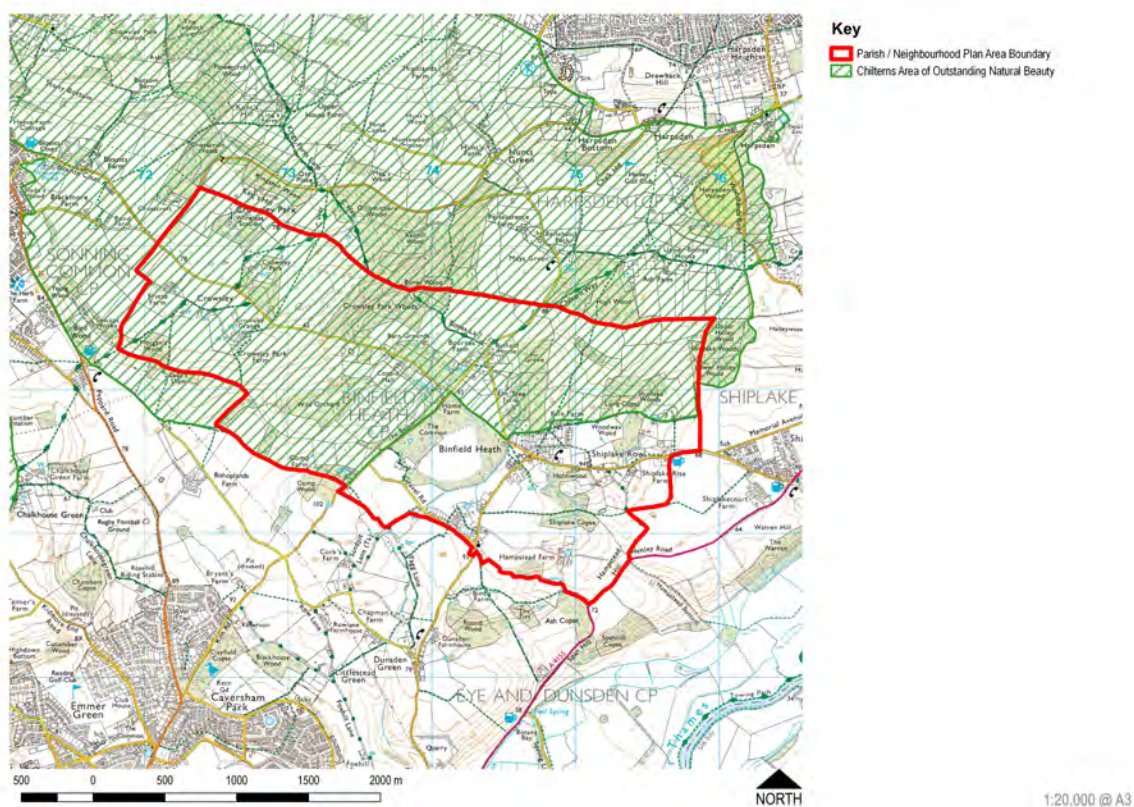


Figure 8: Location of Chilterns AONB

4.2.2. The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019–2024 sets out key issues within the Chilterns landscape. Those of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- Changes in land management practices: A decline in traditional land management practice, such as extensive grazing crop rotation, small scale quarrying and hedge-laying has led to a decline in biodiversity;
- Lack of wildlife habitat management: A lack of support and resources to manage existing wildlife sites, semi-natural habitats and important ecological networks, such as roadside verges and hedgerows;
- Environmental and ecological change: Including climate change, loss of pollinators and impacts of pests, diseases and invasive non-native species (INNS);
- Impacts of people and dogs: The actions of visitors to the Chilterns can damage many of the area's wildlife habitats. For example, dogs can disturb ground nesting birds and high visitor numbers can make it harder to carry out appropriate site management;
- Habitat fragmentation: Housing, transport infrastructure and changes in land use, continue to leave a legacy of habitat fragmentation from severed hedgerows, culverted chalk streams and lack of buffer zones along the rivers, to isolation of chalk grassland and ancient woodland. Wildlife habitats need to be big enough and sufficiently well connected for wildlife to thrive and species need corridors to move through the landscape in response to a changing environment;
- Development pressures: Developments can lead to the destruction of sites of national importance and the alteration of the character, cultural heritage and spirit of the Chilterns AONB. Unsympathetic design choices, inappropriate locations for development, unsuitable materials, and lack of knowledge and time in the planning process are all risks to the historic environment of the Chilterns;
- Farming: Stock farming (sheep, beef, dairy) continues to decline. It is uneconomic to graze chalk grassland yet, without grazing, our species rich chalk grassland is lost to scrub. More intensive stock management, sometimes associated with equine, alpaca and deer enterprises, can lead to the introduction of numerous paddocks and other infrastructure that degrades traditional field patterns. There is now no need for hedgerows

to keep stock in as farmers rely on fencing. An annual flail keeps surviving hedges in check but each year their quality deteriorates. With arable farming, current economics and farming systems are leading to fewer people farming larger areas. Less time and resources are available to manage the 'non-farmed' areas;

- Commons: In the past, many commons would have been grazed and wooded areas managed through the exercise of common rights. Most of these rights are no longer exercised, though over half of the wooded areas have Management Plans;
- Pressure for development: The Chilterns is a highly desirable area in which to live, within easy commuting distance of London. Research shows a four-fold increase in the number of new homes granted planning permission each year in the Chilterns AONB. Local authorities face pressures when preparing their local plans and some, with a shortage of alternatives, are proposing significant housing allocations in the AONB. Government policy confirms that the presence of AONBs can restrict development in order to help achieve sustainable development and that "the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited";
- Small-scale changes: Small piecemeal changes to land and buildings can harm the natural beauty of the Chilterns AONB. Examples include pony paddocks, garden extensions, newly landscaped grounds, the spread of fencing, replacement windows, new external lighting, private leisure buildings, trampolines and children's play equipment. Electric gates, high fencing and CCTV over public rights of way make the area feel more exclusive, and people feel excluded. They change the distinctiveness, heritage and character of the landscape, and leave less space for nature. Refer to 'Chilterns Buildings Design Guide' and supplementary technical notes to help householders and landowners to make well-informed choices so that changes are appropriate to the special qualities of the Chilterns AONB;
- Cumulative impact of development: A single planning proposal may affect only a small area of the AONB. However, a number of similar developments in the area, incremental changes over time, or a series of new developments in sequential views along an important trail, can have a significant cumulative impact. The character of the AONB, its wildlife and people's enjoyment could slowly diminish over time. Refer to 'Cumulative Impacts of Development on the Chilterns AONB'.

4.3. Setting of the AONB

4.3.1. The Chilterns Conservation Board Position Statement 'Development affecting the setting of the Chilterns AONB', notes that:

- *'although it does not have a defined geographical boundary, the setting of the Chilterns AONB is the area within which development and land management proposals, by virtue of their nature, size, scale, siting, materials or design could be considered to have an impact, either positive or negative, on the natural beauty and special qualities of the Chilterns AONB'.*

It continues to state that:

- *'The setting of the Chilterns AONB does not have a geographical border. The location, scale, materials or design of a proposed development or land management activity will determine whether it affects the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB. A very large development may have an impact even if some considerable distance from the AONB boundary. However, the distance away from the AONB will be a material factor in forming a decision on any proposals, in that the further away a development is from the AONB boundary the more the impact is likely to be reduced', and*
- *'Adverse impacts might not be visual. The special qualities of the Chilterns AONB include tranquillity. A development which is noisy may well impact adversely on tranquillity even if not visible from the AONB'.*

4.4. Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (2004)

- 4.4.1. The Study Area comprises mostly Landscape Type Wooded Farmland as defined in the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS). A band of Landscape Type Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes bisects the parish from north to south between Crowsley Park Farm and Wild Orchard (Figure 9).

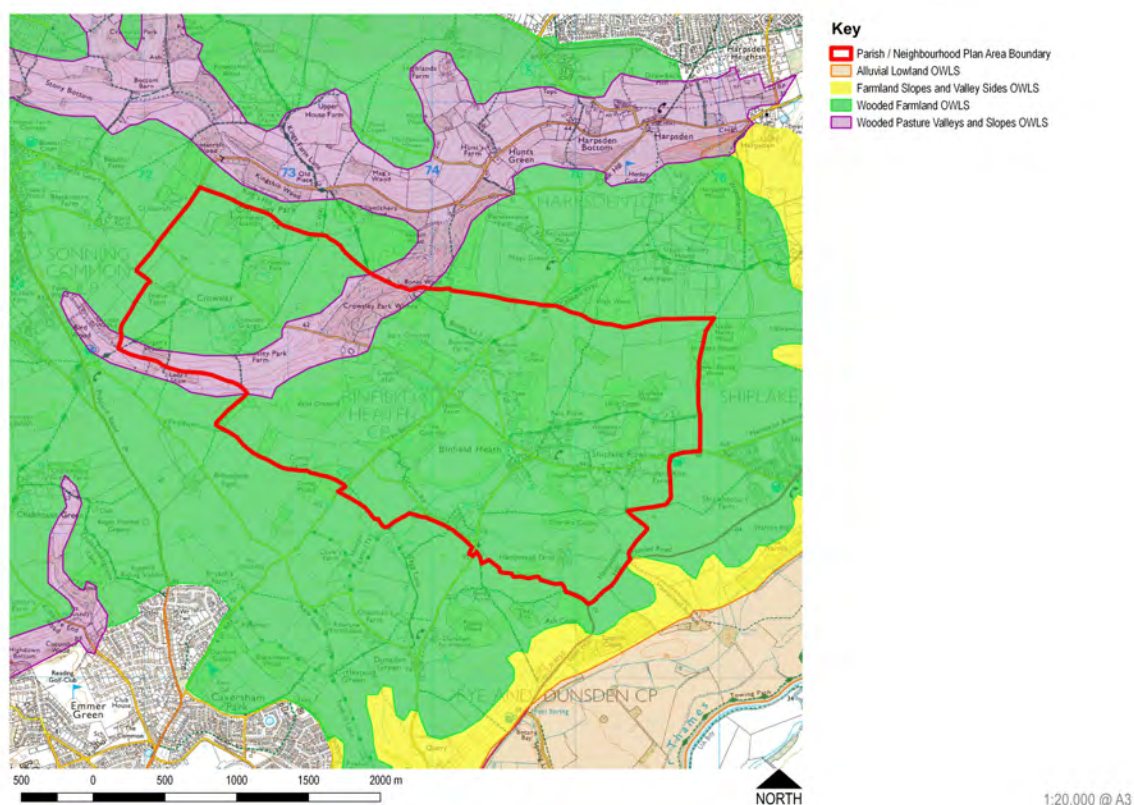


Figure 9: OWLS Landscape Types

- 4.4.2. Key characteristics of Landscape Type Wooded Farmland of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- Large blocks of ancient woodland and a large number of plantations;
- A varied field pattern of arable land and pasture enclosed by woodland and hedges;
- Species rich hedgerows with many hedgerow trees;
- Dispersed settlement pattern with scattered farms.

- 4.4.3. Key characteristics of Landscape Type Wooded Pasture Valleys and Slopes of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- Steep sided valleys and slopes;
- Large, interlocking blocks of ancient and plantation woodland;
- Small pasture fields with localised unimproved grassland;
- Tall, thick hedges and densely scattered hedgerow trees;
- Small, intact villages and hamlets.

4.5. South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment

4.5.1. The Study Area falls mostly within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 10: Chilterns Plateau with Valleys as defined in the South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 which dates from 2017. A small area in the south-east of the parish lies within the adjacent LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes. These LCA are subdivided into the following landscape character types (LCT) (see Figure 10):

- 11: Open dipslope - between Crowsley Grange and Wild Orchard and to the east of Hampstead Farm and Shiplake Rise Farm;
- 15: Parkland and estate farmland - surrounding Crowsley Park;
- 16: Semi-enclosed dipslope - west of Crowsley Grange, south of Gravel Road and to the east of Binfield Heath;
- 23: Wooded dipslope - the centre of the study area stretching from Crowsley Park Woods to Shiplake Woods and south to Gravel Road and Comp Wood.

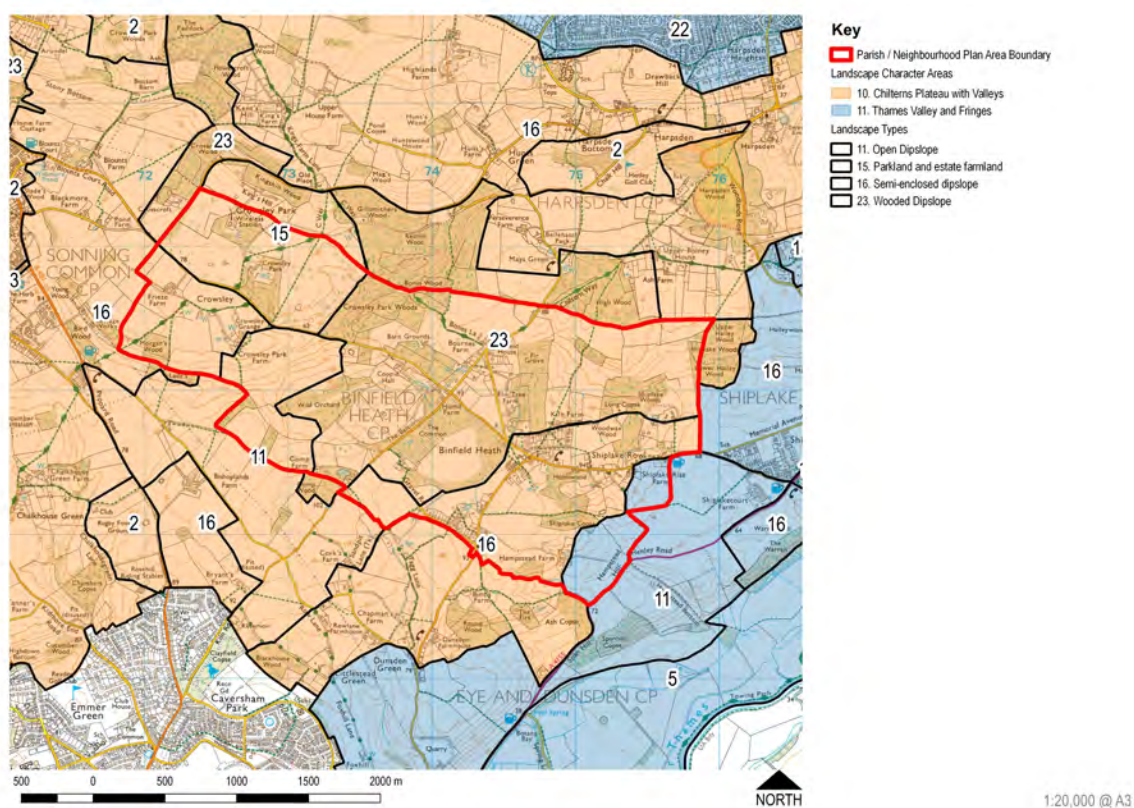


Figure 10: SODC Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Types

4.5.2. LCA 10: Chilterns Plateau with Valleys

4.5.3. Key characteristics of LCA 10: Chilterns Plateau with Valleys of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;
- The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys;
- Heavily wooded landscape
- Extensive areas of Ancient Woodland, some of which are designated as SSSI;
- Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;
- Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;

- Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows;
- Chilterns Plateau with Valleys contains a limited number of watercourses;
- Priority habitats include deciduous woodland, wood-pasture and parkland, traditional orchards, lowland dry acid grassland, semi-improved grassland and lowland calcareous grassland;
- Species-rich hedgerows are distributed throughout different parts of this character area. Priority should be given to safeguarding, maintaining and expanding this resource;
- Chiltern Way crosses through this area;
- The pattern of settlement in the Chilterns is typically one of small hamlets and farms scattered amongst extensive woods and commons. Many of these date from the early middle ages, which saw enclosure and clearance of 'wastes' and colonisation of previously unpopulated areas, during a period of relative prosperity and rapid population growth. Clusters of loosely grouped farmsteads were established on the plateau and new small fields were carved out of the extensive common woods, a process known as 'assarting';
- This process often led to the development of a loose, linear form to medieval settlements (e.g. Nettlebed) and many were also associated with a village green or with larger areas of common land (e.g. Rotherfield Greys). Furniture making was another important industry within this area, using timber from the extensive beechwoods;
- Traditional building materials are typical of the Chilterns as a whole with a predominance of red brick, together with silver-grey flint. Older houses were timber-framed in oak and chalk blocks have sometimes been used on Chiltern buildings. Plain tiles were the rule on the larger roofs, with thatch on cottages with some slate introduced in Victorian times. Farmsteads are often characterised by large timber framed barns, typically clad with black, horizontal weather boarding with gable walls constructed out of brick and flint;
- Large field sizes are widespread across the landscape and are often bounded by woodland. Long distance views are limited from roads across the plateau due to the sloping topography and strong woodland cover. Red kites are often seen in the skies above the area. Narrow lanes with tall hedgerows exist throughout the area.

Landscape types associated with LCA 10: Chilterns Plateau with Valleys

4.5.4. Key characteristics of LCT 11: Open dip slope of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- A few isolated pockets of open farmland with a weak landscape structure occur within the Chilterns dip slope, (e.g. to the north-west and northeast of Caversham, south of Nuffield and to the west of Henley), usually where more gentle gradients have encouraged intensive arable cultivation;
- Gently sloping ground;
- Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;
- Distinctively 'grey' and flinty soils;
- Predominantly rural character but with some limited intrusion from power lines (e.g. on both sides of Caversham);
- Large-scale, open landscape with high intervisibility in immediate area but long distance views contained by neighbouring woodland.

4.5.5. Key characteristics of LCT 15: Parkland and estate farmland of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- There are several areas of distinctive parkland landscape within this part of the Chilterns dip slope, including Greys Court, Checkendon Court and Crowsley Park and several others located around the fringes of Henley;
- Distinctive parkland landscape with formal features such as avenues and free-standing mature trees in pasture, blocks of mature woodland and estate boundaries;
- Rural and unspoilt character;
- Generally enclosed character with strong landform, woodland and tree cover;
- Low intervisibility;
- Generally well-managed character but some parks showing signs of decline (e.g. Crowsley Park).

4.5.6. Key characteristics of LCT 16: Semi-enclosed dip slope of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- This loose mosaic of farmland and woodland is characteristic of the more level ground of the plateau to the south of Nuffield and near Woodcote, and particularly the 'lower' dip slope to the south of Sonning Common;
- Typically level or more gently sloping ground;
- Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;
- Dominance of arable cultivation;
- Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;
- Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';
- Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads (e.g. A4074, A4130), and localised intrusion of built development and power lines (e.g. around Sonning Common and Caversham).

4.5.7. Key characteristics of LCT 23: Wooded dip slope of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- This is the dominant landscape type within the area, with extensive blocks of woodland occupying much of the dip slope and creating a more enclosed mosaic of wooded farmland;
- Distinctive landform of plateaux dissected by a network of shallow, dry valleys;
- Heavily wooded character, including extensive stands of ancient, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, mature beechwoods and more recent plantations;
- Strong structure of woodland and complex landform creates an intimate and enclosed character with a particular feeling of secrecy in some valleys;
- Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';
- Generally rural and unspoilt character with only localised suburbanising influences within villages, along road corridors or around the fringes of the main settlements;
- Low intervisibility.

4.5.8. LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes

4.5.9. Key characteristics of LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes of relevance to the study area are set out below

- Flat valley floor and the steeper valley sides to the west. Topography ranges between c. 40m AOD and c. 140m AOD;
- The River Thames and associated floodplain has a strong influence on the character of this area;
- Woodlands are a feature in this landscape, particularly to the west. Some of this woodland is Ancient Woodland;
- Away from the urban areas, arable farmland is located adjacent to the River Thames.

Landscape types associated with LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes within the study area are set out below:

4.5.10. Key characteristics of LCT 11: Open dipslope of relevance to the study area are set out below:

- Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;
- Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;
- Distinctively 'grey' and flinty soils;
- Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;
- Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.

5. Study area: Parish landscape character areas

- 5.1. The seven Parish landscape character areas are as defined on Figure 11, which are in turn based on the district level assessments, as outlined above. It should be noted that whilst the PLCA require boundaries (as do the wider district studies) these generally represent zones of transition between adjacent character areas rather than a sudden change and as such it is often helpful to refer to the characteristics of the adjacent PLCA in addition.

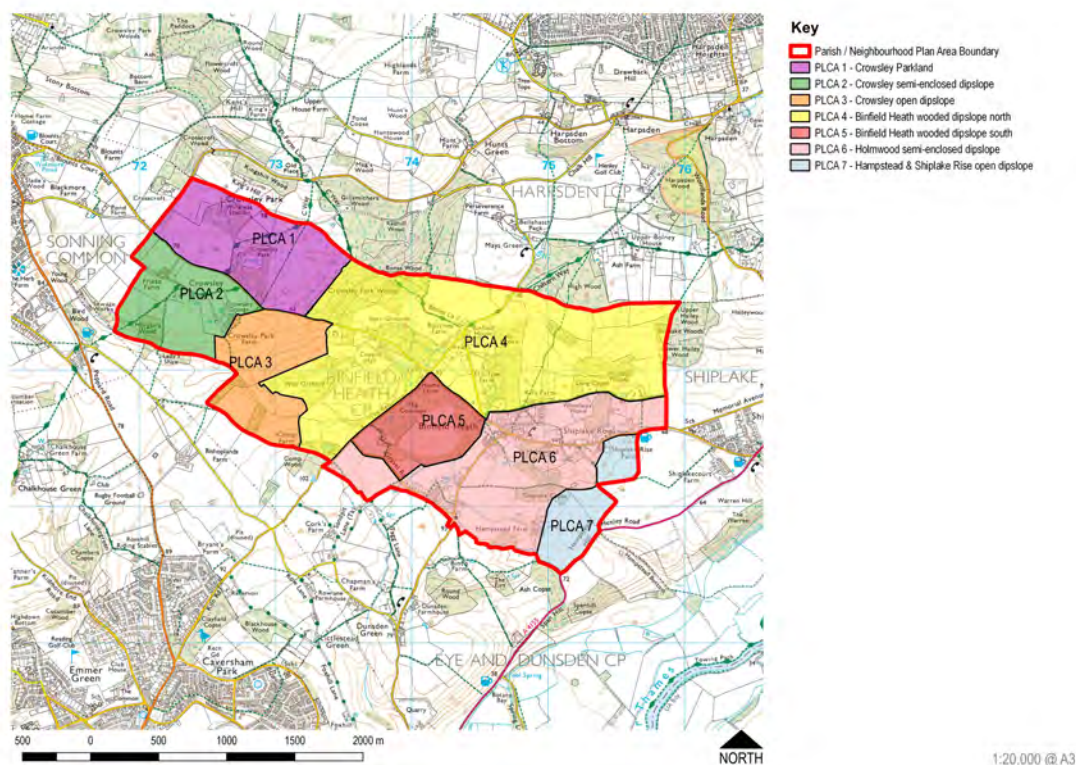


Figure 11: Parish landscape character areas (PLCA)

5.2. PLCA1: Crowsley Parkland

Character area map

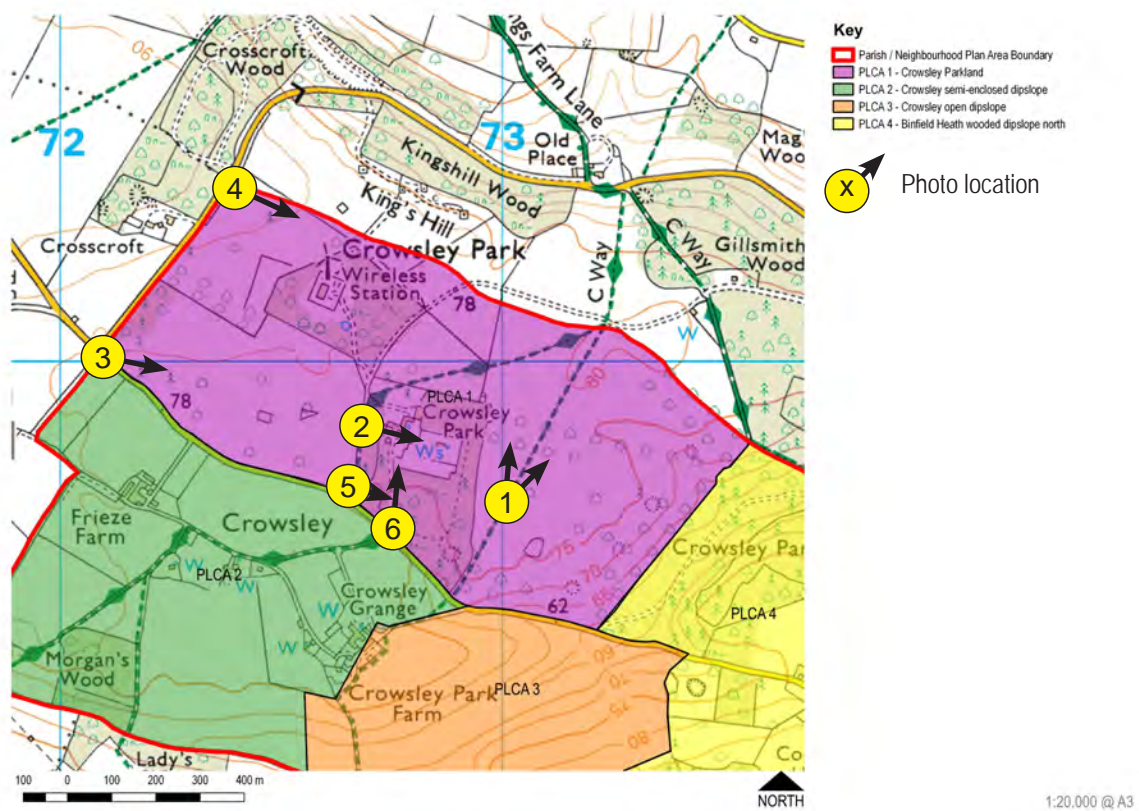


Figure 12: PLCA1 Crowsley Parkland

PLCA1: Landscape character area description

- 5.2.1. PLCA1 comprises the area of LCT 15: Parkland and estate farmland that lies within the parish. It is wholly located within the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.
- 5.2.2. The topography slopes gently from approximately 85m AOD in the north-west to 60m AOD in the dry valley to the south-east. To the south PLCA1 is bounded by PLCA2: Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope, and PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope, and to the east by PLCA4: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope.
- 5.2.3. The majority of PLCA1 comprises open parkland, within Crowsley Park. Crowsley Park House sits within the centre of the PLCA, accessed from Sonning Common Road. The property South Lodge is located at the main access drive and gates on Sonning Common Road. A wireless station is located in the northwestern part of the PLCA, with associated satellite dishes in parkland to the north of the PLCA1 boundary. Blocks of woodland surround Crowsley Park House and the wireless station.
- 5.2.4. A Conservation Target Area covers PLCA1 and within this lies Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site Crowsley Park (located between Crowsley Park and Crowsley Park Woods) which is designated for its lowland wood pastures and parkland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland meadow.

Landscape types within PLCA1

- 5.2.5. PLCA1: Crowsley Parkland lies entirely within LCT 15: Parkland and estate farmland. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in section 4.4.

Historic landscape types within PLCA1 (Figure 7)

5.2.6. PLCA1 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:

- The entirety of PLCA1 is classified as 'Ornamental Parkland / Designed Landscape'.

5.2.7. PLCA1 contains Crowsley Park and House. The park at Crowsley was noted in the 13th century and was one of Oxfordshire's 11 old deer parks. By 1627 there was a house, which was replaced in the 18th century by Crowsley Park House. In the mid 19th century, the owner at the time, Henry Baskerville, planted thousands of trees in avenues in the park and established a fine arboretum within the grounds of the house. Also within the grounds and all Grade II listed are a grotto, icehouse, stable block and coachhouse.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA1

5.2.8. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Contains an Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site (lowland wood pastures and parkland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland calcareous grassland and lowland meadow) which lies to the east of Crowsley Park House;
- PLCA1 lies within a Conservation Target Area;
- Parkland character with evidence of veteran trees and ornamental tree planting;
- Well treed character, with clumps of parkland trees, blocks of woodland surrounding buildings, and roadside vegetation;
- Avenue trees within parkland, leading east / west from Crowsley Park House;
- Ornamental evergreen hedges at the gated entrance to Crowsley Park House.

5.2.9. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- The Chiltern Way crosses PLCA1, passing to the west of Crowsley Park House;
- Landmark Crowsley Park House;
- BBC receiving station within Crowsley Park;
- Crowsley Park House has connections with Arthur Conan Doyle.

5.2.10. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Generally quiet with little local traffic and only distant traffic noise and the distinctive cry of kites overhead;
- Public access limited to The Chilterns Way and footpath crossing the PLCA;
- Parkland trees and surrounding woodland limit distant views.

Visual sensitivity

5.2.11. Views into PLCA1 from:

- The Chiltern Way, public footpath 242/13/30, northern approach to Crowsley Park;
- Historic view along avenue of trees from junction of Sonning Common Road and Devil's Hill, now overgrown / less obvious.

5.2.12. Views out of PLCA1 to:

- From footpath 421/4/10 looking north-east to Crowsley Park Woods and Gillsmithers Wood, and south-east across dry valley to Wild Orchard.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA1 to be conserved and enhanced

5.2.13. Key views into PLCA1 from:

- The Chiltern Way, in particular the northern approach to Crowsley Park.

5.2.14. Key views out of PLCA1 to:

- Open views to the south-east across PLCA 3.

5.2.15. Key views within PLCA1



Photo 1: View north-east across Crowsley Park from footpath number 421/4/10



Photo 2: View east to Crowsley Park House from footpath number 421/3/20, The Chiltern Way



Photo 3: View SE along avenue to Crowsley Park House from the junction of Sonning Common Road and Devil's Hill.



Photo 4: View east from Devil's Hill to satellite dishes to the north of PLCA1



Photo 5: View south-east along Sonning Common Road from South Lodge with 'Baskerville' hounds on gate posts.

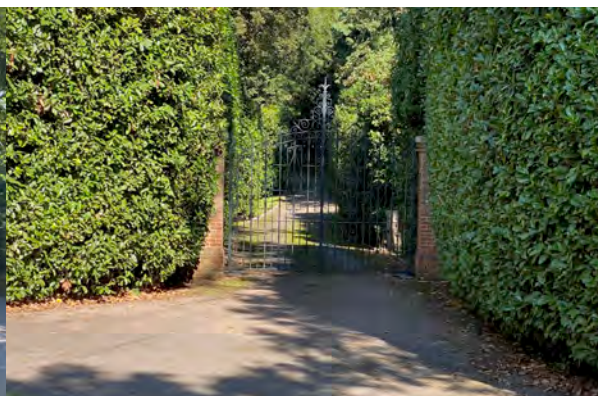


Photo 6: View north along access driveway to Crowsley Park House from Sonning Common Road

5.3. PLCA2: Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope

Character area map:

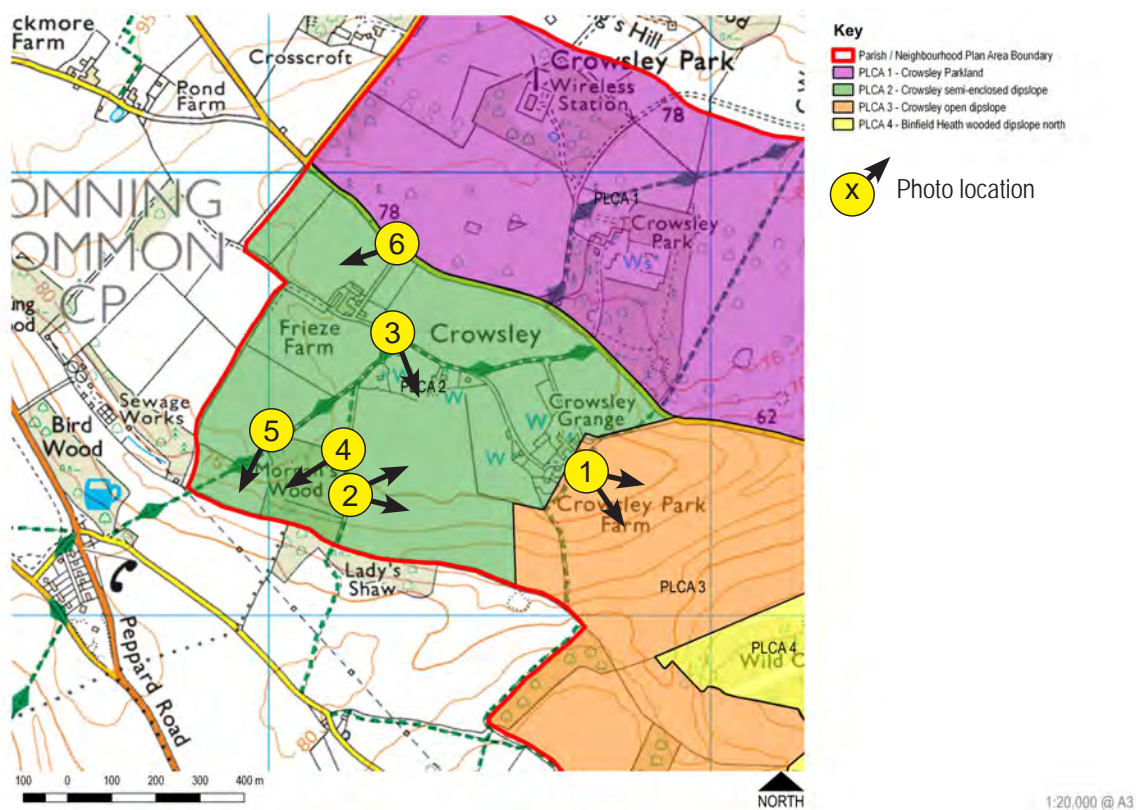


Figure 12 : PLCA2 Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope

PLCA2: Landscape character area description

- 5.3.1. PLCA2 lies entirely within LCT 16: Semi-enclosed dipslope, and is covered by the Chilterns AONB. It is wholly located within the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.
- 5.3.2. The topography slopes gently from approximately 80m AOD in the west to 65m AOD in the dry valley to the south and south-east. To the north PLCA2 is bounded by PLCA1: Crowsley Parkland, and to the east by PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope.
- 5.3.3. PLCA2 largely comprises open farmland, a mix of both arable and horse pastures in the western part of the area. A block of deciduous woodland, 'Morgan's Wood', lies on the southern boundary of the area. Crowsley is formed by Crowsley Grange and Crowsley Park Farm, located on the eastern boundary of PLCA2, along with a number of properties, including Frieze Farm, located on a lane which loops to the south of Sonning Common Road.

Landscape types within PLCA2

- 5.3.4. PLCA2: Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope lies entirely within LCT 16: Semi-enclosed dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in section 4.4.

Historic landscape types within PLCA2 (Figure 7)

- 5.3.5. PLCA2 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:
 - The northern part adjoining Sonning Common Road, and eastern section including Crowsley Park Farm, is classified as 'Ancient Enclosure';
 - The western part, to the north and west of Morgan's Wood is classified as 'Reorganised Enclosures';
 - Morgan's Wood is classified as 'Woodland - Ancient Woodland'.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA2

5.3.6. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Dense hedgerows largely confined to roadsides;
- Large open arable fields to the south, with only occasional gappy hedgerows / lines of trees;
- Deciduous woodland (Ancient semi-natural woodland) at Morgan's Wood.

5.3.7. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- The Chiltern Way crosses PLCA2 from north-east to south-west, passing through Crowsley;
- Adjoins Crowsley Park (PLCA1) to the north, PLCA2 contains associated Crowsley Park Farm and The Old Farmhouse (previously Frieze Farm, which became the home farm for Crowsley Park, as it was favoured over Crowsley Park Farm by Henry Baskerville);
- A number of listed buildings are located within Crowsley; including The Well House, Frieze Cottage, The Old Farmhouse (previously Frieze Farm), Crowsley Park Farmhouse and Jasmine Cottage;
- 'Ancient Enclosure' historic landscape type adjacent to Sonning Common Road and Crowsley Park Farm.

5.3.8. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Generally quiet with little local traffic, and the distinctive cry of kites overhead. Distant traffic noise from southwestern corner;
- Public access on The Chilterns Way and further two footpaths crossing the PLCA, as well as the unnamed lane looping through Crowsley;
- Horse pasture in the northern part of PLCA2 is enclosed by surrounding roadside vegetation. Distant views to the south and south-east from open arable fields in the southern part of the area are contained by surrounding woodland.

Visual sensitivity

5.3.9. Views into PLCA2 from:

- Footpath 421/4/20, looking north-west towards Crowsley Park Farm;
- Unnamed road to the south-east of Sonning Common, off Peppard Road, looking north-east to Morgan's Wood and Frieze Farm;
- The Chiltern Way at the south-west corner of PLCA 2, looking north-east to Morgan's Wood and Frieze Farm.

5.3.10. Views out of PLCA2 to:

- Open arable fields, Wild Orchard and Coppid Hall to the south-east in PLCA 3;
- From The Chiltern Way, looking south-west across fieldscape and woodland towards Sonning Common;
- Woodland in Crowsley Park (PLCA1), and Crowsley Park Woods (PLCA4).

5.3.11. Views within PLCA2 to:

- From footpath 421/2/10 at Morgan's Wood, looking east towards Crowsley Park Farm, and open fields and Wild Orchard in PLCA3;
- To listed buildings within Crowsley; Frieze Cottage, Jasmine Cottage and The Well House.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA2 to be conserved and enhanced

5.3.12. Key views into PLCA2 from:

- Forms skyline when viewed from The Chiltern Way, footpaths and road, to the south-west, south and south-east.

5.3.13. Key views out of PLCA2 to:

- Open views to the east and southeast across PLCA3 and PLCA4.

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

5.3.14. PLCA2 provides a rural setting to the south of Crowsley Park, with scattered rural development set within open farmland. Morgan's Wood and fields occupying sloping land in the southern part of the PLCA provide an interface between the southwestern edge of the parish and the increasingly developed landscape surrounding Sonning Common, Emmer Green and Caversham to the south and southwest.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA2

- Line of pylons clip the southwestern corner of the PLCA.

Summary of PLCA 2

5.3.15. PLCA2 forms a transition landscape between Crowsley Park (PLCA1) to the north and the open, undulating farmland of PLCA3 to the east. A cluster of listed buildings, including farmhouses at Frieze Farm and Crowsley Park Farm, lie within the small rural settlement area of Crowsley. It lies within the Chilterns AONB, and is crossed by The Chiltern Way and a number of public footpaths. Visually linked with PLCA3 to the east.

5.3.16. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle, and planting of new hedgerow trees such as oak and ash;
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- Local building materials should be used, including flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns;
- There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.

5.3.17. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA2:

- Retain, restore and enhance hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Retain, restore and enhance existing woodland with appropriate additional planting and management, and encourage planting of small-scale deciduous woodland blocks;
- Seek opportunities to reduce areas of semi-improved grassland and replace with species-rich grassland.

5.3.18. Development guidance specific to PLCA2:

- Retain the largely undeveloped character of the PLCA;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of existing properties and the installation of close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens;
- Avoid adverse effects on the landscape through overgrazing, untidy paddocks and inappropriate fencing, as a result of horse grazing.

5.3.19. Visual guidance specific to PLCA2:

- Maintain the enclosed wooded character of surrounding roads;
- Maintain long views across open fieldscapes where they occur;
- Maintain the rural setting of listed buildings.

5.3.20. PLCA2: Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope photographs below:



Photo 1: View south-east across PLCA3 from footpath number 421/4/20



Photo 2: View east to Crowsley Park Farm from footpath number 421/2/10



Photo 3: Frieze Cottage from f/p 421/1/30, The Chiltern Way Photo 4: Morgan's Wood



Photo 5: View south-west from footpath number 421/1/10, The Chiltern Way: pylons in view

Photo 6: View from Sonning Common Road, looking south-west across horse pasture towards Frieze Farm

5.4. PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope

Character area map

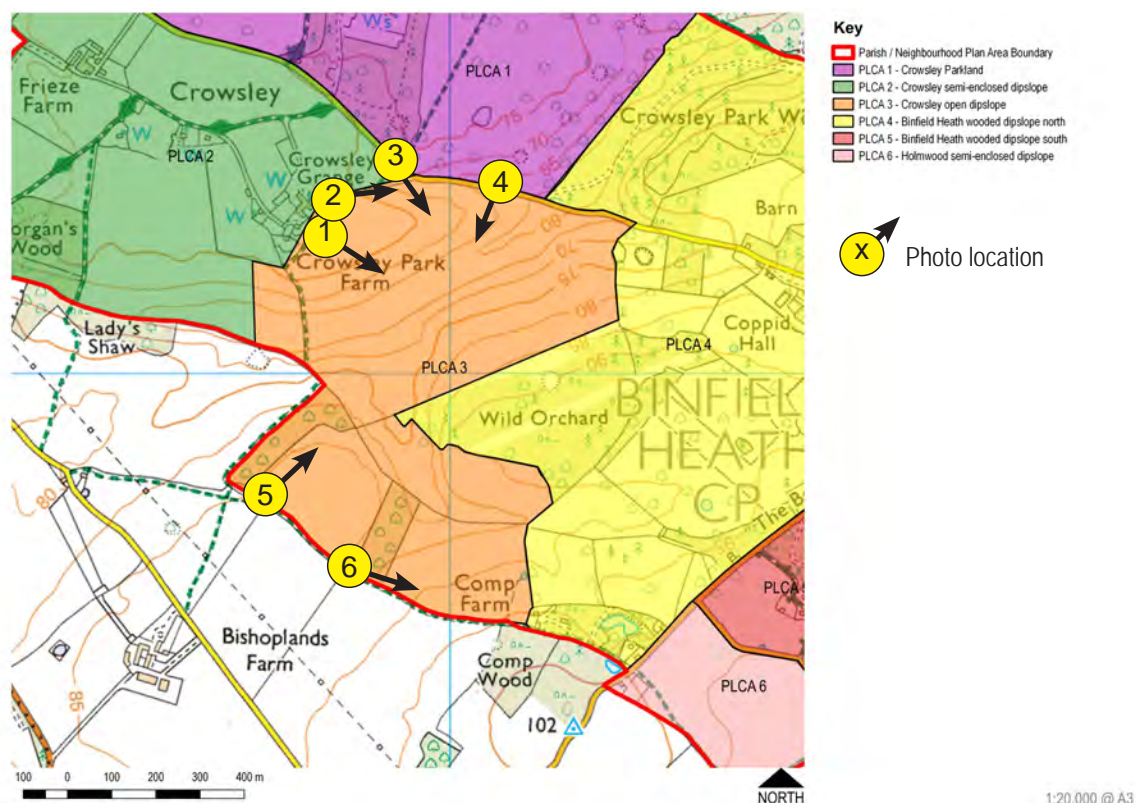


Figure 13: PLCA3 Crowsley open dipslope

PLCA3: Landscape character area description

- 5.4.1. PLCA3 comprises the area of LCT 11: Open dipslope that lies within LCA 10: Chiltern Plateau with Valleys and within the AONB boundary. PLCA3 is wholly located within the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.
- 5.4.2. The topography comprises a branching dry valley with a height of approx. 95m AOD in the south-east and 75m AOD in the west. There is a low point of approx 60m AOD in the north. PLCA3 is bounded by PLCA 2: Crowsley semi-enclosed dipslope to the west, PLCA1: Crowsley Parkland to the north and PLCA4: Binfield Heath Wooded dipslope north to the east.
- 5.4.3. The majority of PLCA3 comprises arable fields with small blocks of woodland and game cover. There are small areas of pasture at field edges. Adjacent to the north-west corner lie a cluster of residential dwellings comprising Crowsley Grange, Crowsley Park Farm, converted barns and cottages.
- 5.4.4. A small area of an Oxfordshire Conservation Target Area lies to the south of Sonning Common Road.

Landscape types within PLCA3

- 5.4.5. PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope lies entirely within LCT 11: Open dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in section 4.4.

Historic landscape types within PLCA3 (Figure 7)

- 5.4.6. PLCA3 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:
 - The large field to the north is classified as Prairie/Amalgamated enclosure;

- To the west of footpath 421/4/20 lies a small area classified as Ancient Enclosure (although evidence from aerial photos suggest this has also been amalgamated);
- The southern fields are classified as Ancient Enclosure - possibly coaxial;
- The strip of woodland to the south-west is classified as Plantation.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA3:

5.4.7. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Complex undulating landform with a dry valley;
- Regular blocks of woodland and good hedgerows with mature trees;
- A small area of PLCA3 south of Sonning Common Road sits within an Oxfordshire Conservation Target Area.

5.4.8. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- Some contribution of parkland landscapes of Crowsley Park and Coppid Hall;
- Nearby Crowsley Park has associations with Arthur Conan Doyle;
- Contributes to setting of Grade-II listed Crowsley Park Farmhouse;
- PRoW to western and southern boundaries;
- Areas classified as 'Ancient Enclosures'.

5.4.9. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Generally quiet with little traffic;
- Sense of openness in the north with long views southwards, more enclosed in south due to woodland;
- Surrounding woodland/parkland of varied texture due to mix of species;
- Barn conversion in the north influences the adjacent footpath and locally somewhat undermines the sense of ruralness.

Visual sensitivity

5.4.10. Views into PLCA3 from:

- Sonning Common Road, (where it forms the skyline) Emmer Green Road and un-named road continuing north from Row Lane where gateways and gaps in boundary vegetation permit;
- Crowsley Park and Coppid Hall, Crowsley Park Farm and Comp Farm;
- Residential properties adjacent to northern boundary of PLCA;
- PRoW 421/4/20, 205/1/20, 205/2/20.

5.4.11. Views out of PLCA3 to:

- Bishoplands Farm, Comp Farm;
- Sonning Common Road;
- Unnamed road continuing north from Row Lane.

5.4.12. Views within PLCA3:

- Forms skyline when viewed from south.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA 3 to be conserved and enhanced

5.4.13. Key views out of PLCA 3:

- Far-reaching panoramic views from higher ground in the north.

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

- 5.4.14. PLCA 3 contributes to the separation between Binfield Heath and Crowsley/Sonning Common and is influenced by adjacent parkland and residential use which somewhat reduces the sense of remoteness in the north. The landscape is more remote and rural in the south.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA 3

- Loss of historic field pattern through amalgamation and hedge removal.

Summary of PLCA 3

- 5.4.15. PLCA 3 comprises farmland interspersed with woodland blocks overlaid on a complex rolling landscape. Some sense of history has been lost due to the amalgamated fields. It lies within the Chilterns AONB, which increases its sensitivity and that of any visual receptors, and affords long views in several directions.

- 5.4.16. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland particularly on land adjacent to watercourses;
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle, and planting of new hedgerow trees such as oak and ash;
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Local building materials should be used, including flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.

- 5.4.17. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA3:

- Retain, restore and enhance hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Encourage the planting of hedgerow oaks to ensure a varied age range;
- Plant field margins with species-rich grassland to improve biodiversity and encourage the creation of conservation headlands and beetle banks.

- 5.4.18. Development guidance specific to PLCA3:

- Retain the largely undeveloped character of the PLCA;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of adjacent properties and the installation of close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens;
- Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanize this area.

- 5.4.19. Visual guidance specific to PLCA 3:

- Maintain the more wooded character of the southern part of PLCA 3;
- Maintain occasional views into PLCA3 from surrounding parkland, roads and PRow;
- Maintain long views across open fieldscapes where they occur.

5.4.20. PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope photographs below:

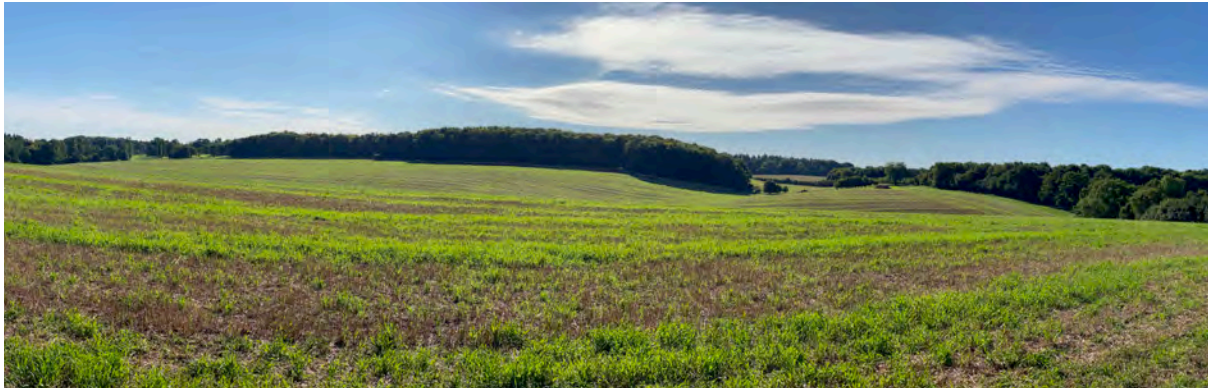


Photo 1: View south-east from PRoW 421/4/20 adjacent to barn conversion



Photo 2: View north-east from PRoW 421/4/20 adjacent to barn conversion into Crowsley Park (PLCA1)

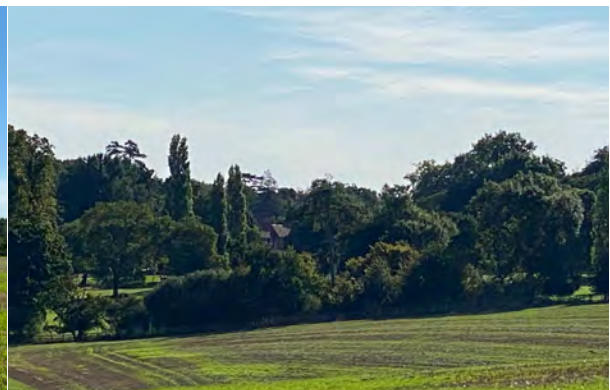


Photo 3: View south east from PRoW 421/4/20 in direction of Sonning Common Road with Coppid Hall visible in distance



Photo 4: View south-west from Sonning Common Road into PLCA3 which forms a skyline.

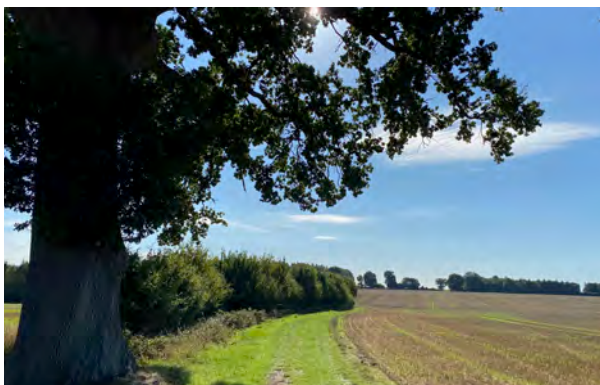


Photo 5: View south-east from PRoW 205/1/20 showing mature hedgerow oaks



Photo 6: View south-east from PRoW 205/1/20 towards Comp Farm, showing woodland blocks

5.5. PLCA4: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope north

Character area map:

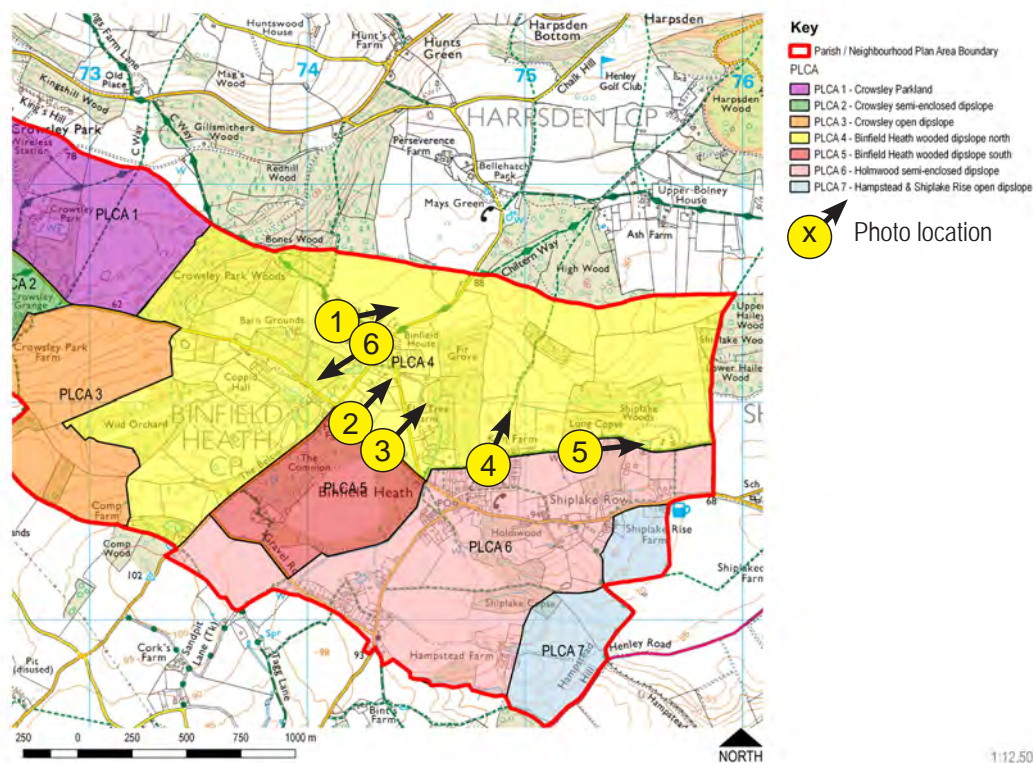


Figure 14: PLCA4: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope north

PLCA4: Landscape character area description

- 5.5.1. PLCA4 comprises the area of LCT 23: Wooded dipslope that lies within the AONB boundary. It is wholly located within the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.
- 5.5.2. The topography includes the edge of the plateau at approx 95m AOD in the south of the PLCA and is incised by small valleys to the north-east and north-west both at approx. 60m AOD. To the south and east are PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south and PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope and to the west lie PLCA1: Crowsley Parkland and PLCA3: Crowsley open dipslope.
- 5.5.3. PLCA4 is a varied landscape which includes areas of arable and woodland, parkland, paddocks, residential and commercial uses. There are scattered residential properties in the south including Coppid Hall and its lodges, and Comp Farm, and a larger settlement centered on the Bottle and Glass public house and stretching along Harpsden Road and Common Lane. The southern boundary of the PLCA follows Kiln Lane and includes those properties on its northern side.

Landscape types within PLCA4

- 5.5.4. PLCA4: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope north lies entirely within LCT 23: Wooded dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in para 4.4.5.(above).

Historic landscape types within PLCA4 (Figure 7)

5.5.5. PLCA4 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:

- Bones Wood is categorised as Ancient Woodland (whilst other sources only class a part as Ancient Replanted Woodland). Other smaller blocks of woodland are scattered in the east. Areas of secondary woodland are shown to the north of Sonning Common Road, at The Belt, Elm Tree Farm, and north of Bones Lane. Plantation woodland is shown at Wild Orchard and north of Long Copse;
- Areas of Ancient Enclosure are shown in the east of the PLCA and north of Comp Farm (which is additionally classified as Pre-18th Century coaxial although it has the appearance of parkland or wood pasture when viewed on the ground);
- Areas of Piecemeal Enclosure (of various dates pre 1810) are located in the north of the PLCA;
- An area between Common Lane and Harpsden Road is categorized as Planned Enclosure;
- Areas of Common edge settlement are located around the Bottle and Glass and on Kiln Lane;
- The immediate surroundings and outbuildings of Coppid Hall are classed as Rural Country House and the wider estate as Parkland;
- Comp Farm is categorised as a Rural Farmstead (and named as Cane Farm);
- Allotments are shown east of Coppid crossroads;
- Re-organised enclosures are shown along Common Lane and at Barn Grounds.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA4

5.5.6. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Areas of formerly unenclosed heath between Common Lane, Sonning Common Road and Harpsden Road and north of Emmer Green Road;
- Well-wooded and generally rural character with mixed species woodland some of which includes areas of plantation and coppice;
- Parkland, gardens and cricket club at Coppid Hall;
- Small areas of pasture and paddocks close to settlement;
- Some mature hedgerow trees;
- Ponds, both natural and designed;
- Blocks of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland at Bones Wood, Long Covert, and Oakhouse Wood. Ancient Replanted woodland at Summerhouse Wood, east of Fir Grove; Long Copse and Shiplake Woods;
- Priority Habitat Traditional Orchards to rear of Binfield House;
- Part of Crowsley Park Woods sits within a Conservation Target Area.

5.5.7. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- Includes part of the extensive Phillimore Estate;
- Includes areas of former common land for grazing and bracken-gathering;
- Forms setting of Coppice Cottage, Fir Tree Cottage, Bottle and Glass public house, Elm Tree Farmhouse and Barns and Barn Grounds (Grade II) which lie within the PLCA;
- Historic field patterns including Ancient and Piecemeal Enclosures;
- Allotments.

5.5.8. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Generally quiet with little traffic and the distinctive cry of kites overhead;

- Small to medium scale landscape often enclosed by blocks of woodland but with some long views. Crossed by well-used footpaths.

Visual sensitivity

5.5.9. Views into PLCA4 from:

- Gravel Road, Sonning Common Road/Arch Hill, Emmer Green Road, Kiln Lane, Bones Lane, New Road, Harpsden Road, Common Lane;
- Local properties within and adjacent to PLCA4;
- Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which cross and bound the PLCA;
- Prestcold Cricket Club / Phillimore Estate;
- Open fieldscape to north and west;
- Northern edge of Shiplake;
- Bottle and Glass public house.

5.5.10. Views out of PLCA4 to:

- Gravel Road, Sonning Common Road/Arch Hill, Emmer Green Road, Kiln Lane, Bones Lane, New Road, Harpsden Road, Common Lane;
- Local properties within and adjacent to the PLCA;
- Phillimore Estate;
- Northern edge of Shiplake.

5.5.11. Views within PLCA4:

- North-east from Bones Lane.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA4 to be conserved and enhanced

5.5.12. Key views out of PLCA4 to:

- Long views northwards towards Harpsden and south-east towards Shiplake.

5.5.13. Key views within PLCA4:

- Long views northwards from Bones Lane and Kiln Lane.

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

- 5.5.14. PLCA 4 makes a major contribution to the wooded character of Binfield Heath and includes areas of the former heath, original common edge settlements, small-scale fields and designed parkland which contribute to a sense of history. Despite the high levels of woodland enclosure long views across the wider countryside are possible.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA4

- Works yard and extensive closeboard fences on Kiln Lane are detracting features.

Summary of PLCA4

- 5.5.15. PLCA4 comprises a varied landscape which illustrates much of the history of Binfield Heath including former heathland and common-edge houses settlements. It sits within the Chilterns AONB, which increases its sensitivity and that of any visual receptors. The village centre lies immediately to the south.
- 5.5.16. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland particularly on land adjacent to watercourses;
- **Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.** Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle, and planting of new hedgerow trees such as oak and ash;
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Protect stone walls from deterioration;
- Prevent scrub encroachment in areas of species-rich grassland. Opportunities for expanding this habitat include the establishment and management of field margins/buffer strips adjacent to existing limestone grassland habitat using native wildflower species appropriate to the area;
- Safeguard, maintain and enhance the characteristic landscape features of existing parklands including veteran trees, avenues of trees, lakes, woods and walls;
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- **Local building materials should be used, including flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns;**
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development that are appropriate to Chilterns Plateau with Valleys (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide , November 2016; and the Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide 2010);
- Bury cables underground and seek opportunities to bury existing overhead cables;
- There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash;
- Traditionally, the commons would have been grazed but are now usually dominated by woodland, scrub and bracken. Selective clearance, followed by fencing and the re-introduction of grazing on appropriate sites, should be actively encouraged. There are opportunities for extending this resource within the landscape type to meet the targets outlined in the relevant habitat action plan.

5.5.17. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA4:

- Seek opportunities to selectively remove non-native woodland and invasive exotic species (such as *Rhododendron ponticum* whose nectar is toxic to native honey bees, and bamboo) and replace with locally-characteristic native species or grazed, species-rich grassland;
- Retain, restore and enhance hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Seek opportunities to reduce areas of semi-improved grassland and replace with species-rich grassland.

5.5.18. Development guidance specific to PLCA4:

- Retain the rural character of the PLCA;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of existing properties and the installation of large areas of glazing, close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens which can erode the rural character and dark night skies;
- Ensure new development is appropriate to the historical character in terms of scale, materials and fenestration and boundary treatments;
- Avoid locating 'back garden features' such as sheds and swimming pools in front gardens;
- Retain character of common-edge settlement where it persists;
- Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise this area;
- Manage commercial activities so that they do not have a detrimental effect on the rural character.

5.5.19. Visual guidance specific to PLCA4:

- Maintain the enclosed wooded character punctuated by small-scale fields;
- Maintain long views across open countryside where they occur.

5.5.20. PLCA4: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south photographs below:



Photo 1: Long view north-east from Bones Lane towards Harpsden and the Bottle and Glass barn



Photo 2: View NW from Sonning Common Road to allotments. Photo 3: View NW from Sonning Common Road to paddocks



Photo 4: View north from PRoW 421/9/10 to north of Kiln Lane



Photo 5: View east along Kiln Lane. Works yard and overhead cables detract from long views
Photo 6: View south-west from Bones Lane towards Barn Grounds and Grade II listed barns

5.6. PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south

Character area map

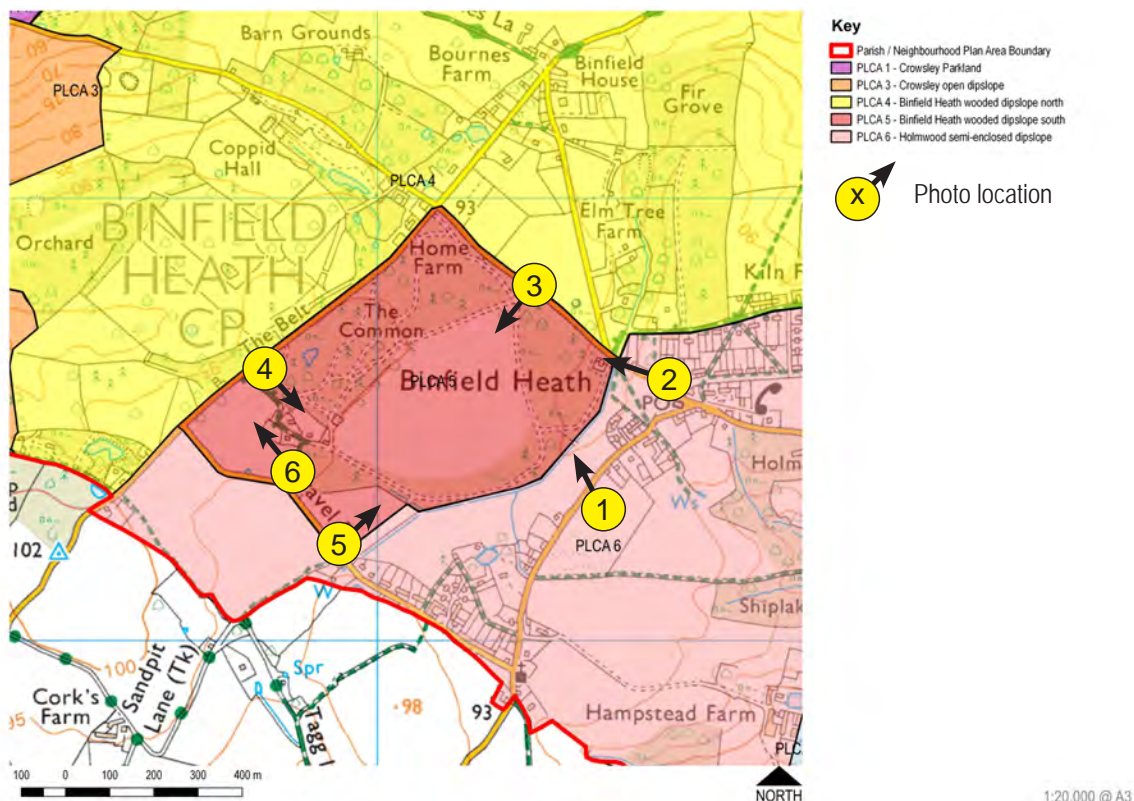


Figure 15: PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south

PLCA5: Landscape character area description

- 5.6.1. PLCA5 comprises the area of LCT 23: Wooded dipslope that lies outside the AONB boundary. Parts of PLCA5 have the potential to contribute to the setting of the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors.
- 5.6.2. The topography slopes gently from approx 97m AOD in the west to approx. 89m AOD in the east. To the north PLCA5 is bounded by PLCA4: Binfield Heath Wooded dipslope north; and to the south by PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope.
- 5.6.3. The majority of PLCA5 comprises private mixed woodland which surrounds an open grass area used for polo. Laundry Cottage and The Larches are located within its eastern corner and on Thanksgiving Lane is a small group of four more dwellings comprising The Thatch, Cosy Cottage, New Cottage and Keepers Cottage.

Landscape types within PLCA5

- 5.6.4. PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south lies entirely within LCT 23: Wooded dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in section 4.4.

Historic landscape types within PLCA5 (Figure 7)

- 5.6.5. PLCA5 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:
- The eastern part, surrounding The Larches and Laundry Cottage is classified as Woodland- Plantation;
 - The central and southern areas and the western corner, comprising of open grassland are classified as 'Planned Enclosure';

- The north-western area, fronting Emmer Green Road is classified as 'Secondary Woodland';
 - The four cottages on Thanksgiving Lane are classified as 'Common edge settlement on the edge of Binfield Heath'.
- 5.6.6. PLCA5 contains the largest area of the former heath at Binfield which historically had been available for inhabitants to graze their livestock on and to gather bracken from. It was in the late 19th Century that Binfield Heath was fully enclosed.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA5

5.6.7. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Well-wooded character with mixed species woodland showing evidence of plantation and ornamental tree planting;
- Large area of grassland to centre of PLCA5 used for polo;
- Avenue of trees leads to centre PLCA5;
- Drainage ditch to southern boundary.

5.6.8. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- Forms part of the extensive Phillimore Estate;
- Historically (although no longer) used as common land for grazing and bracken-gathering;
- Areas of historic Common-edge settlement.

5.6.9. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Generally quiet with little traffic and the distinctive cry of kites overhead;
- Enclosed with limited public access and wooded boundaries which limits views into the PLCA5.

Visual sensitivity

5.6.10. Views into PLCA5 from:

- Gravel Road (along avenue of trees), Sonning Common Road/Arch Hill, Emmer Green Road, Thanksgiving Lane where gateways and gaps in boundary vegetation permit;
- Bridleway 421/8/10 which crosses PLCA5;
- Recreation Ground towards edge of PLCA5;
- Small number of nearby properties including some within PLCA5 on Thanksgiving Lane;
- Views from Dunsden Way across open field towards the edge of PLCA5.

5.6.11. Views out of PLCA5 to:

- Recreation Ground;
- Small number of nearby properties including Banda Lodge and the former mission school at Coppid crossroads;
- Open fieldscape to south-west.

5.6.12. Views within PLCA5

- Across open grassland within centre of PLCA5.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA5 to be conserved and enhanced

5.6.13. None noted.

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

5.6.14. PLCA 5 makes a major contribution to the wooded character of the western side of Binfield Heath and despite the lack of public access is an important part of the area's local history as it comprises the major part of the former heath.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA5:

- Presence of invasive non-native species such as *Rhododendron ponticum*.

Summary

5.6.15. PLCA5 is a collection of landscape types which illustrates much of the history of Binfield Heath, comprising the largest area of the former heath, which has since been enclosed and planted for private use, and a cluster of common-edge houses. It sits adjacent to the Chilterns AONB and forms part of its setting. The village centre lies immediately to the east.

5.6.16. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle, and planting of new hedgerow trees such as oak and ash;
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- Local building materials should be used, including flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns;
- Traditionally, the commons would have been grazed but are now usually dominated by woodland, scrub and bracken. Selective clearance, followed by fencing and the re-introduction of grazing on appropriate sites, should be actively encouraged. There are opportunities for extending this resource within the landscape type to meet the targets outlined in the relevant habitat action plan.

5.6.17. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA5:

- Seek opportunities to selectively remove non-native woodland and invasive exotic species (such as *Rhododendron ponticum* whose nectar is toxic to native honey bees) and replace with locally-characteristic native species or grazed, species-rich grassland;
- Retain, restore and enhance hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Seek opportunities to reduce areas of semi-improved grassland and replace with species-rich grassland.

5.6.18. Development guidance specific to PLCA5:

- Retain the largely undeveloped character of the PLCA;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of existing properties and the installation of close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens;
- Retain discrete 'common-edge' settlement on Thanksgiving Lane;
- Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise this area.

5.6.19. Visual guidance specific to PLCA5:

- Maintain the enclosed wooded character of surrounding roads;
- Allow occasional views into PLCA5 from surrounding roads;
- Maintain long views across open fieldscapes where they occur.

5.6.20. PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dip slope south photographs below

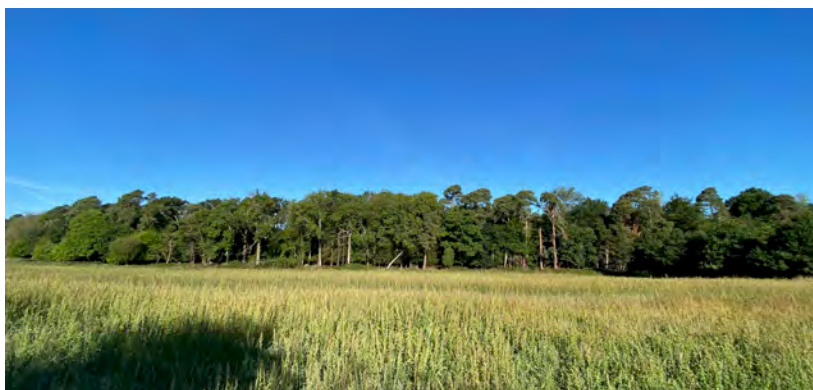


Photo 1: View north from Dunsden Way across open field towards PLCA5 showing mature pine trees.



Photo 2: View north-west across Recreation Ground and drainage ditch to PLCA5.



Photo 3: View south-west from Sonning Common Road into PLCA5.



Photo 4: View SE along Thanksgiving Lane/ b/w 421/8/10



Photo 5: View NE along avenue from Gravel Road into PLCA



Photo 6: View northwest from public footpath connecting Gravel Road and Thanksgiving Lane towards Banda Lodge and Keeper's Cottage

5.7. PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope

Character area map

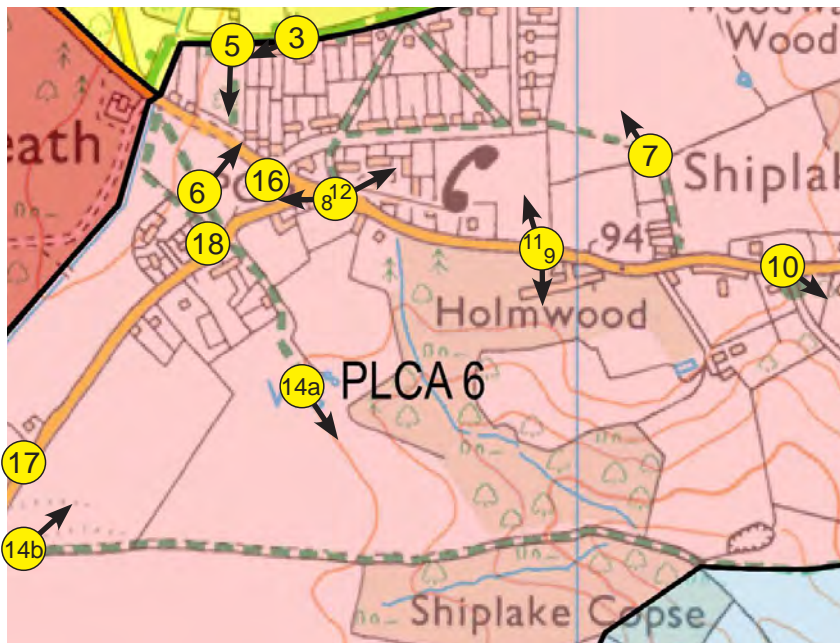
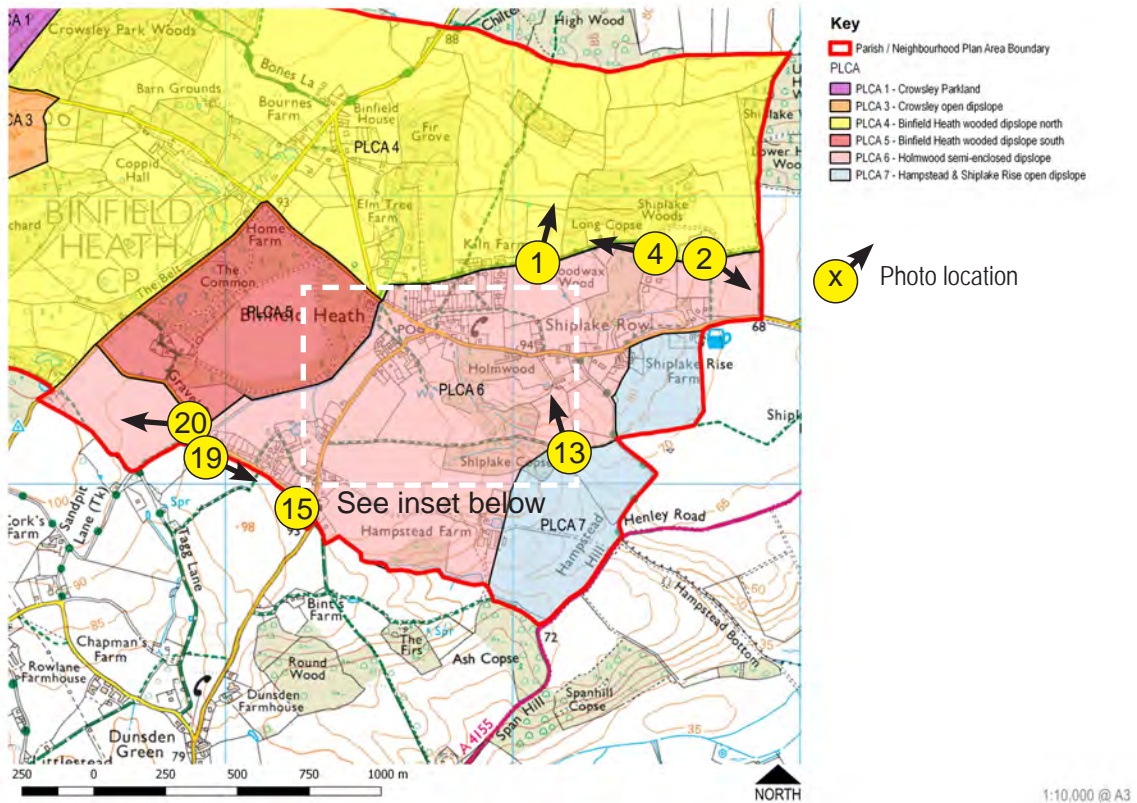


Figure 16: PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope and close-up of village centre

PLCA6: Landscape character area description

5.7.1. PLCA6 comprises LCT 16: Semi-enclosed dipslope that lies outside but adjacent to the AONB boundary. Parts of PLCA6 have the potential to contribute to the setting of the Chilterns AONB which increases the sensitivity of

landscape and visual receptors.

- 5.7.2. The topography of the PLCA slopes gently eastwards on the plateau in the western part of the area, with levels between 95m and 90m AOD. Land falls more steeply eastwards from the central part of the PLCA, to a low point of just below 70m AOD on the eastern boundary of the area.
- 5.7.3. To the north and west PLCA6 is bounded by PLCA4: Binfield Heath Wooded dipslope north, and PLCA5: Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south. To the south-east it is contained by PLCAs7a: Hampstead open dipslope, and 7b, Shiplake Rise open dipslope.
- 5.7.4. PLCA6 contains areas of largely residential development forming discrete clusters at the junction of Shiplake Row and Dunsden Way, and separately at Gravel Road, as well as linearly along a number of roads and lanes crossing the PLCA. Areas of horse pasture adjoin Kiln Lane and Shiplake Row, with open arable farmland, interspersed with blocks of woodland, occupying the eastern parts of the PLCA, as well as the north-eastern and south-western corners.

Landscape types within PLCA6

- 5.7.5. PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope lies entirely within LCT 16: Semi-enclosed dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in section 4.4.

Historic landscape types within PLCA6 (Figure 7)

- 5.7.6. PLCA6 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:
- The northwestern corner, at the western end of Arch Hill, comprising the recreation ground and an area of woodland, is classified as 'Recreation - Other Leisure facilities';
 - Development surrounding the junction of Arch Hill, Dunsden Way and Shiplake Row, extending to Kiln Lane to the north, is classified as 'Rural - Hamlet';
 - Linear development extending east along Shiplake Row, including a discrete area at Orwells Restaurant, is similarly classified as 'Rural - Hamlet';
 - Development on Gravel Road and Green Lane, and extending northwards along Dunsden Way is classified as 'Rural - Hamlet'. This area is described as being 'Common edge settlement on the edge of Binfield Heath. Some modern infill and expansion';
 - Open land to the west of Dunsden Way, including a field at the junction of Gravel Road and Emmer Green Road is classified as 'Planned Enclosure', described as 'Planned enclosure of unenclosed rough ground in 1861';
 - Open farmland to the east of Dunsden Way, and located between Shiplake Row and Kiln Lane, is classified as 'Reorganised Enclosures';
 - Open farmland on the southeastern edge of the PLCA is classified as 'Prairie / Amalgamated Enclosure';
 - Shiplake Copse, Woodwax Wood, and Radbrook's Copse are all classified as 'Woodland - Ancient Woodland';
 - An area of woodland surrounding Holmwood is classified as 'Woodland -Secondary Woodland', with a block of woodland in the northeast corner of the PLCA, adjoining Woodwax Wood classified as 'Woodland -Plantation'.
- 5.7.7. Quarrying clay became an important local industry, with brick and tile making established from the 16th century. A brick-making operation in Kiln Lane, established in 1869 and closed early in the 20th century, called Shiplake Kiln, had two brick kilns at the east end of the road.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA6

- 5.7.8. Natural landscape characteristics:
- Rural village development set within a framework of well wooded roads and sunken lanes surrounding Binfield Heath;

- Blocks of ancient woodland contain the development to the south and east;
- Numerous streams, ponds, springs and wells shown on OS maps. Streams / drainage ditches shown on the western boundary with Binfield Heath, crossing Arch Hill at the NW corner of the PLCA; within the grounds of Holmwood and Shiplake Copse; south of Woodwax Wood; and on the southern boundary of Radbrook's Copse. Ponds shown south of Radbrook's Copse, at Hampstead Farm, and north of Gravel Road.

5.7.9. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- Includes the C18th Holmwood house and grounds;
- Pattern of development resulted from historic settlement on the margins of the heath.

5.7.10. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Contrast between increased activity associated with development on Arch Hill, Shiplake Row, Dunsden Way, and smaller Gravel Road, Heathfield Avenue and Kiln Lane, and open farmland to the south and east;
- Farmland to the south and east generally quiet with the distinctive cry of kites overhead. Some traffic noise approaching south-east boundary of the PLCA and A4155;
- Enclosure provided by areas of woodland, especially Shiplake Copse, with public footpath running through.

Visual sensitivity:

5.7.11. Views into PLCA6 from: (some assumed due to lack of access)

- Footpath to the north of Kiln Lane, looking across farmland to Kiln Lane and woodland on higher ground;
- Memorial Avenue, in Shiplake, looking west towards Kiln Lane and Shiplake Rise Farm on rising ground;
- A4155, looking northwest to Shiplake Copse and Shiplake Row on rising ground;
- Footpath to the south of Gravel Road, looking north-east to development on Gravel Road;
- Arch Hill and Binfield Heath playground, to the rear of the village shop.

5.7.12. Views out of PLCA6 to:

- Farmland to the south-west of Gravel Road;
- Thames valley, from footpath crossing the PLCA at Shiplake Copse;
- Shiplake and Thames Valley from eastern end of Kiln Lane;
- Wooded landscape to the north from Kiln Lane.

5.7.13. Views within PLCA6:

- To listed buildings and landmarks within the parish, including: Keeps Well, and Holmwood Clockhouse on Shiplake Row; listed buildings and important buildings on Shiplake Row, Kiln Lane, Dunsden Way (Binfield Heath Chapel), and Gravel Road;
- To settlement edges at New Road, Dunsden Way and Shiplake Row, from PRoW crossing the PLCA, including Kiln Lane.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA6 to be conserved and enhanced

5.7.14. Key views into PLCA6 from:

- Forms the skyline when viewed from the northeast, east and southeast; footpaths north of Kiln Lane, and roads and footpaths west of Shiplake, including A4155.

5.7.15. Key views out of PLCA6 to:

- Long panoramic views to the south-east, across the Thames Valley from eastern end of Kiln Lane and footpath crossing the PLCA at Shiplake Copse.

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

- 5.7.16. PLCA6 plays a key role in the settlement character of Binfield Heath, with areas of development located around the margins of the heath, and set within a framework of woodland on the main routes through the village. Although woodland beyond the boundaries of the PLCA provides containment to the north and north-west, farmland and woodland at Woodwax Wood, Shiplake Copse and Radbrook's Copse provides a setting to the south-east.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA6

- Development or extensions which do not respect the vernacular materials design or scale of existing built form, and the installation of close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens have the potential to undermine the rural character of the village.

Summary of PLCA 6

- 5.7.17. PLCA6 sits adjacent to the Chilterns AONB and forms part of its setting. PLCA6 contains the village centre, and includes the main routes through the village of Binfield Heath (Dunsden Way and Shiplake Row), along which clusters of development are located on the margins of the wooded Binfield Heath. Farmland on the edge of PLCA6 transitions towards the more open slopes falling towards the Thames Valley to the south-east.

- 5.7.18. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland particularly on land adjacent to watercourses;
- Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows. Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle and planting of new hedgerow trees such as oak and ash;
- Promote environmentally-sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type;
- Maintain the vernacular character of settlements and promote the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns and villages with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Local building materials should be used, including flintstone and brick or red and blue brick and clay tiles in the Chilterns;
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development that are appropriate to Chilterns Plateau with Valleys, (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, November 2016; and the Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide 2010);
- Bury cables underground and seek opportunities to bury existing overhead cables;
- There are a number of ancient semi-natural woodlands distributed throughout the landscape type and the priority must be to ensure that all these sites are in favourable condition and management;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as crack willow, oak and ash.

- 5.7.19. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA6:

- Retain and enhance ancient semi-natural woodlands, through appropriate recording and management;
- Retain, restore and enhance hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Seek opportunities to reduce areas of semi-improved grassland and replace with species-rich grassland;

- Avoid adverse effects on the landscape through overgrazing, untidy paddocks and inappropriate fencing, as a result of horse grazing.

5.7.20. Development guidance specific to PLCA6:

- Retain the largely undeveloped character of the south-eastern part of the PLCA;
- Retain the discrete 'common-edge' settlement on Gravel Road;
- Maintain the vernacular character of Binfield Heath, through: conserving the historically important buildings throughout the settlement; and, promoting the use of building materials and a scale of development that is appropriate to this landscape type;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of existing properties and the installation of close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens;
- Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanise this area;
- (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide, November 2016; the Chilterns AONB Building Design Guide 2010; and the Binfield Heath Design Guide and Codes, February 2022).

5.7.21. Visual guidance specific to PLCA6:

- Maintain existing views across open countryside from roads within PLCA6;
- Maintain long views across open fieldscapes where they occur;
- New development proposals should not be visually intrusive, and should consider/ maintain existing views to the wider countryside;
- Avoid abrupt settlement edges where they front onto open countryside, and the use of inappropriate boundary treatments, such as close-board fences and non-native evergreen hedges. Consideration should be given to the use of appropriate vegetation to provide screening / integrate development into the surrounding landscape.

5.7.22. PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope photographs overleaf:

PLCA6: Arch Hill and Kiln Lane



Photo 1: View north across PLCA 4 from Public Byway number 421/15/30 on Kiln Lane



Photo 2: View south-east towards Shiplake and the Thames valley from Public Byway number 421/15/40 on Kiln Lane



Photo 3: Cottages at western end of Kiln Lane



Photo 4: View looking west on Kiln Lane from Kiln Cottage towards Woodwax Wood

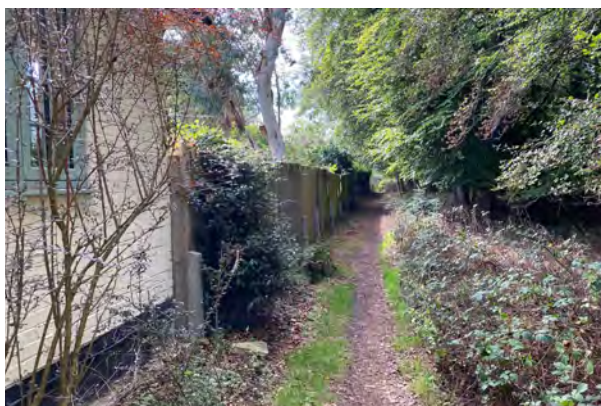


Photo 5: View looking south along footpath number 421/14/10 from Kiln Lane



Photo 6: View looking north-east across the recreation ground towards Arch Hill

PLCA6: Shiplake Row



Photo 7: View north-west to properties on New Road from footpath number 421/11/20



Photo 8: View to the Post Office in Binfield Heath from Shiplake Row



Photo 9: The Clockhouse, Holmwood, on Shiplake Row



Photo 10: Keeps Well, Shiplake Row



Photo 11: Horse pastures on Shiplake Row



Photo 12: 1960's housing on Heathfield Close, Shiplake Row



Photo 13: View from public footpath number 421/20/10 towards new development on Shiplake Row

PLCA6: Dunsden Way and Gravel Road



Photo 14a: View south-east near old well from footpath number 421/13/10



Photo 14b: View north-east from footpath number 421/20/10



Photo 15: Binfield Heath Chapel, Dunsden Way



Photo 16: Thatched Cottage, Dunsden Way



Photo 17: Industrial buildings, Dunsden Way

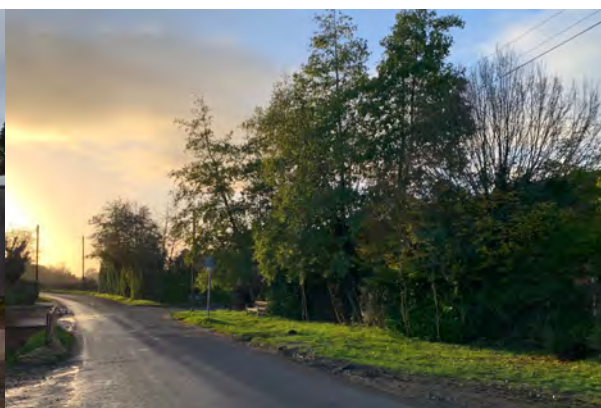


Photo 18: Dunsden Way



Photo 19: Cottages in view looking south-east on Gravel Road

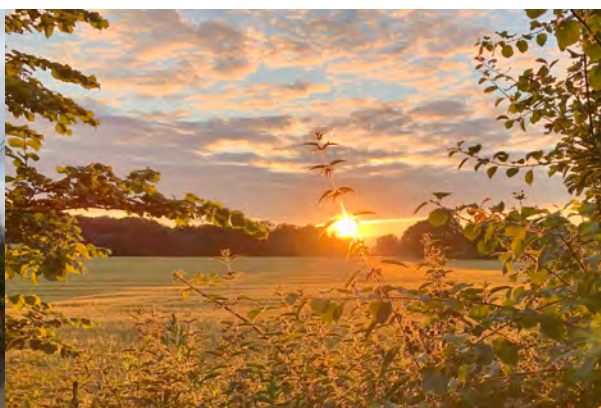


Photo 20: View looking west from Gravel Road

5.8. PLCA7: Hampstead and Shiplake Rise open dipslope

Character area map

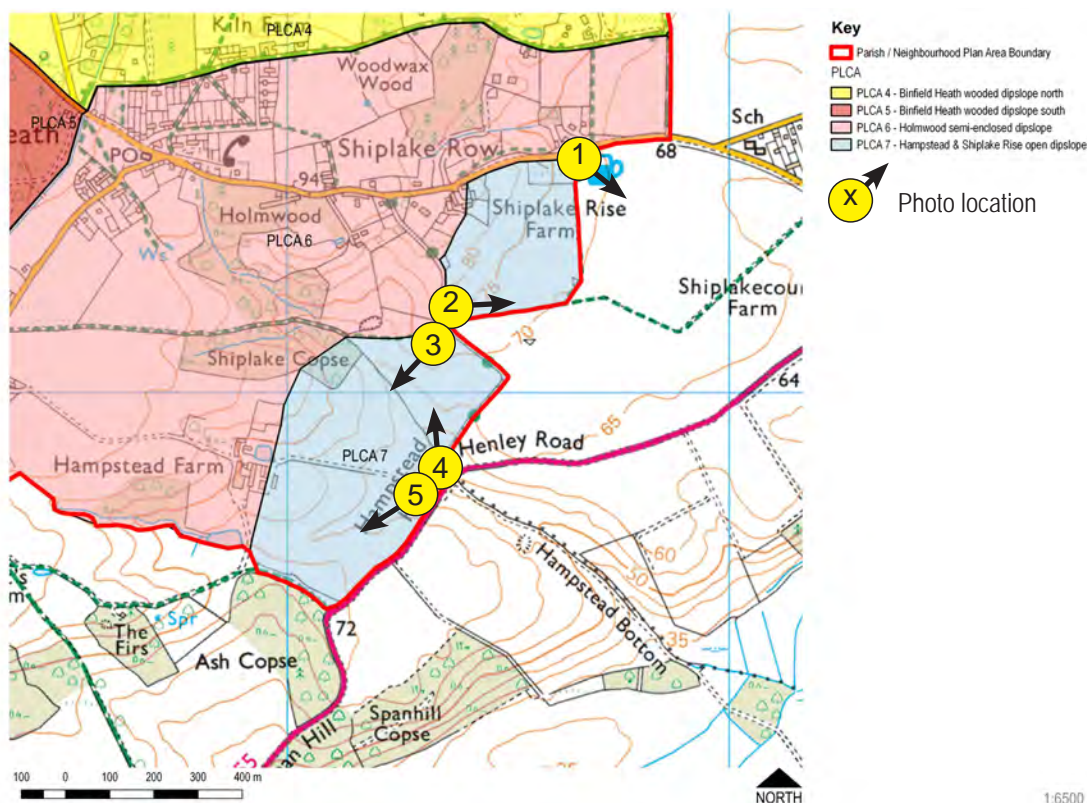


Figure 17: PLCA7: Hampstead and Shiplake Rise open dipslope

PLCA7: Landscape character area description

- 5.8.1. PLCA7 comprises the area of LCA 11: Thames Valley and Fringes which lie within the study area. This comprises two adjacent parcels of land which both lie outside the AONB.
- 5.8.2. The topography slopes from approx 85m AOD in the north-west to approx. 55m AOD in the south-east. Both parcels fall from north-west to south east from the Chilterns Plateau into the Thames Valley. To the west they are bounded by PLCA6: Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope and to the east by the parish boundary.
- 5.8.3. The majority of PLCA7 comprises arable farmland but there are some areas of grassland in the north-west. The only built form within PLCA7 is Orwell's restaurant, Walnut Cottage, Shiplake Rise Farm, and the eastern part of Hampstead Farm.

Landscape types within PLCA7

- 5.8.4. PLCA7: Hampstead and Shiplake Rise open dipslope lies entirely within LCT 11 Open dipslope. The key characteristics of this landscape type are set out in para 4.4.2. (above).

Historic landscape types within PLCA7 (Figure 7)

- 5.8.5. PLCA7 contains the following Historic Landscape Character Types:
 - The major part of both parcels are classified as Prairie/Amalgamated enclosures;
 - The northern part of the southern parcel is classified as Reorganised enclosure;
 - The built form is classified as Rural Hamlet.

Key valued landscape characteristics specific to PLCA7

5.8.6. Natural landscape characteristics:

- Dramatic sloping topography;
- Very good quality agricultural land (Grade 2);
- Adjacent to Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands;
- Small cluster of trees;
- Keep's Lane is well-vegetated.

5.8.7. Cultural landscape characteristics:

- Contributes to setting of listed buildings at Shiplake Rise and Hampstead Farm;
- Keep's Lane is said to be haunted.

5.8.8. Perceptual landscape characteristics:

- Large-scale open landscape with long-range panoramic views eastwards over the Thames Valley;
- Forms a skyline when viewed from the east;
- High Wall House (under construction) to north-west is a prominent feature in an elevated position;
- Henley Road is busy.

Visual sensitivity

5.8.9. Views into PLCA7 from:

- Henley Road, Plough Lane and Shiplake Row;
- Keeps Lane and PRoW 341/11/10, 341/10/20, 341/10/30, 421/20/10, 421/24/10;
- Small number of local properties and farms.

5.8.10. Views out of PLCA7 to:

- Henley Road Plough Lane and Shiplake Row;
- Small number of local properties and farms.

Key valued visual characteristics specific to PLCA7 to be conserved and enhanced

5.8.11. Key views into PLCA7 from:

- Forms skyline when viewed from the east;
- Potentially visible from Thames Path in the east;

5.8.12. Key views out of PLCA7 to:

- Long, panoramic views eastwards across the Thames Valley;

Contribution to the settlement character of Binfield Heath

5.8.13. PLCA7 marks the eastern extent of the parish and the point at which the plateau meets Thames Valley in the dip slope. It plays an important role in the separation of Binfield Heath and Shiplake which are at their closest point on Plough Lane/Shiplake Row. Any additional development east of Orwells/ Waylands or west of the junction of Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue risk coalescence of the two settlements.

Landscape and visual issues specific to PLCA7

- Amalgamation of fields resulting in loss of historic landscape pattern;

- Development within the village which has a visual impact on PLCA7 and undermines its rural character.

Summary of PLCA 7

5.8.14. PLCA7 is an area of predominantly arable land situated on the dip slope which marks the transitions between the Chilterns plateau and the Thames Valley.

5.8.15. Relevant Land Management / Development Considerations from South Oxfordshire Landscape Character Assessment 2017:

- Promote, where possible, the conservation of the surviving areas of permanent pasture and promote arable reversion to grassland, particularly on land adjacent to watercourses. Recognise that grazing sheep and cattle can make a contribution to the landscape's identity and distinctiveness;
- Promote environmentally sensitive maintenance of hedgerows, including coppicing and layering when necessary, to maintain a height and width appropriate to the landscape type (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide , November 2016);
- **Strengthen the field pattern by conserving species-rich hedgerows and sympathetically maintaining all hedgerows.** Where appropriate, replant gappy hedges using species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, wayfaring tree, dogwood and spindle;
- **Safeguard, maintain and enhance the quality of unimproved chalk and limestone grassland with sustainable grazing techniques.** Identify opportunities for calcareous grassland restoration by linking and extending the existing resource;
- Prevent scrub encroachment in areas of species-rich grassland. Opportunities for expanding this habitat include the establishment and management of field margins/buffer strips adjacent to existing limestone grassland habitat using native wildflower species appropriate to the area;
- Minimise the visual impact of intrusive land uses at the fringes of towns, villages and farms with the judicious planting of tree and shrub species characteristic of the area. This will help to screen the development and integrate it more successfully with its surrounding countryside;
- Maintain the nucleated pattern of settlements, and promote the use of building materials to maintain vernacular style and a scale of development and that are appropriate to Thames Valley and Fringes (see also the South Oxfordshire Design Guide , November 2016);
- Minimise impact by locating new communication masts on existing structures or by using existing masts;
- Promote small-scale planting of deciduous woodland blocks using locally characteristic species such as alders, ash, oak and willows.

5.8.16. Land Management guidance specific to PLCA7:

- Retain, restore and enhance native hedgerows with additional planting and traditional maintenance;
- Plant field margins with species-rich grassland to improve biodiversity and encourage the creation of conservation headlands and beetle banks.

5.8.17. Development guidance specific to PLCA7:

- Retain the largely undeveloped character of the PLCA;
- Avoid over-extension and suburbanisation of existing properties and the installation of large areas of glazing, close-board fences, large gates, lighting and hedges of non-native evergreens which can erode the rural character and dark night skies;
- Avoid road improvements such as pavements, street lighting, signage which would urbanize this area;
- Manage commercial activities so that they do not have a detrimental effect on the rural character.

5.8.18. Visual guidance specific to PLCA7:

- Retain long, panoramic views eastwards across the Thames Valley;
- Ensure new development on the skyline does not dominate in views from the east.

5.8.19. PLCA7: Hampstead and Shiplake Rise open dipslope photographs below:



Photo 1: View south-east from PRoW 341/11/10 east of Orwell's across Thames Valley



Photo 2: View east from junction of Keep's Lane and PRoW 341/10/20 towards Shiplake

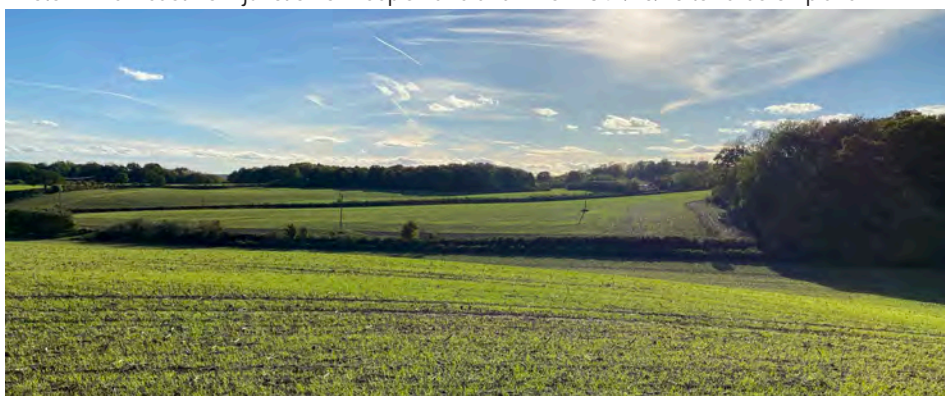


Photo 3: View south-west from junction of Keep's Lane and PRoW 421/20/10 towards Hampstead Farm and Henley Road



Photo 4: View north from Henley Road towards Shiplake Row with High Wall House on the skyline

Photo 5: View south-west from Henley Road towards Ash Copse

6. References

- An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment (2014), Natural England
- Assessing landscape value outside national designations (2021), The Landscape Institute
- National Character Assessment (NCA, 2014)
- National Design Guide, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2019)
- National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
- Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan (2019-2024)
- Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Character Assessment (2017)
- South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033 (2017)
- Magic.gov website
- www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk
- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

Appendix A: Proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) - Binfield Heath

- 6.1. Information on a number of proposed 'Local Green Spaces' (LGS), for inclusion in Appendix A as part of this report, have been provided by Binfield Heath Parish Council (BHPC). These proposed LGS have been identified through a process of input from the Binfield Heath parishioners, reference to the DEFRA database of Priority Habitats, and in discussion with Bluestone Planning. These LGS are illustrated in Figures 1 to 3 LGS, and listed in Table 1 LGS, where the justification process for their selection is set out. Through this justification process a number of the LGS initially identified by BHPC have been discounted.

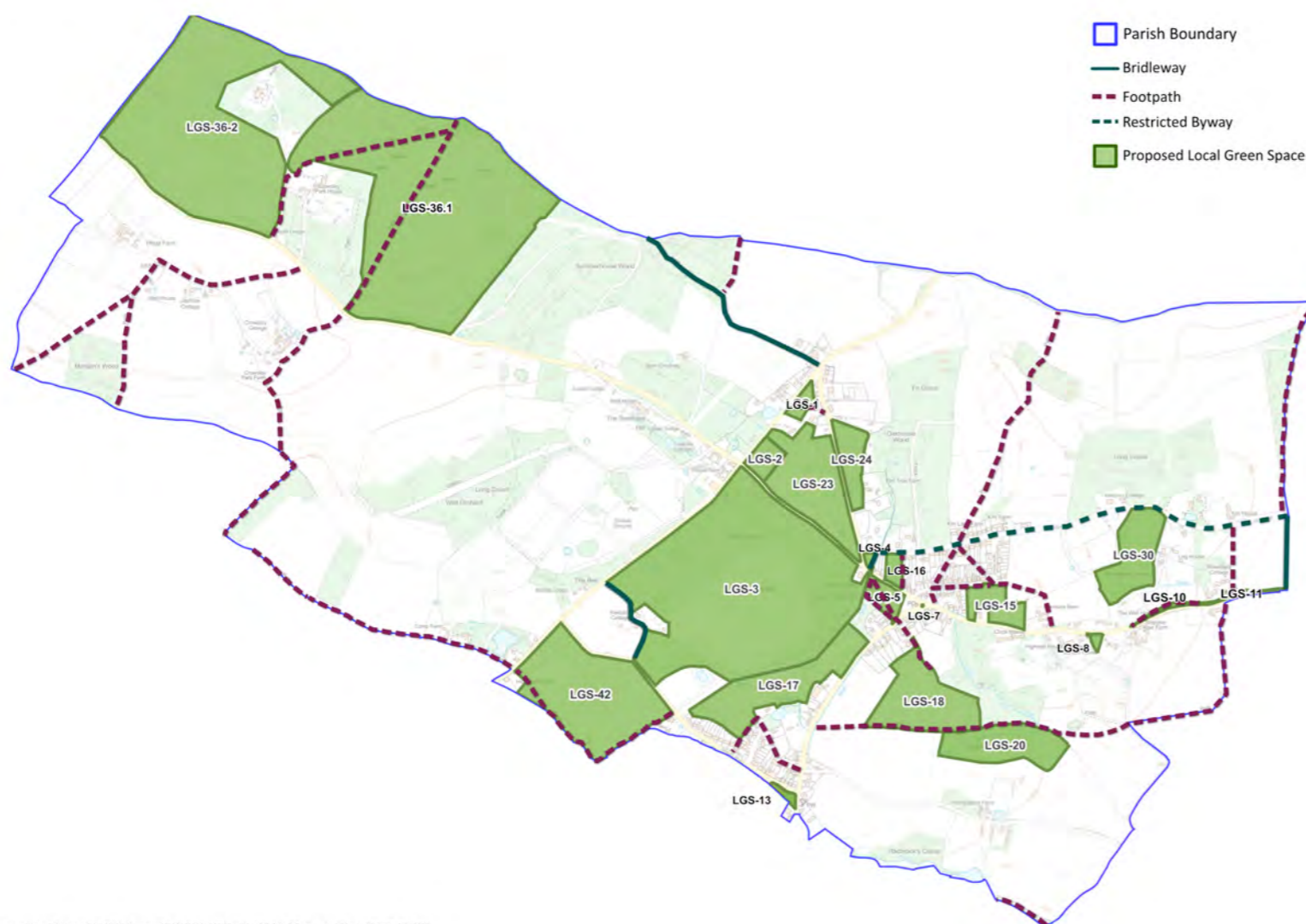
Policy Background

- 6.2. Paragraph 101 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021) states that 'the designation of land as Local Green Space through local and neighbourhood plans allows communities to identify and protect green areas of particular importance to them.'
- 6.3. In addition, paragraph 102 states that 'The Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:
- (a) in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - (b) 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
 - (c) local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.'
- 6.4. Additional guidance regarding the designation of Local Green Space is published on the government website at (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation>), and states that:

gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space#Local-Green-Space-designation), and states that:

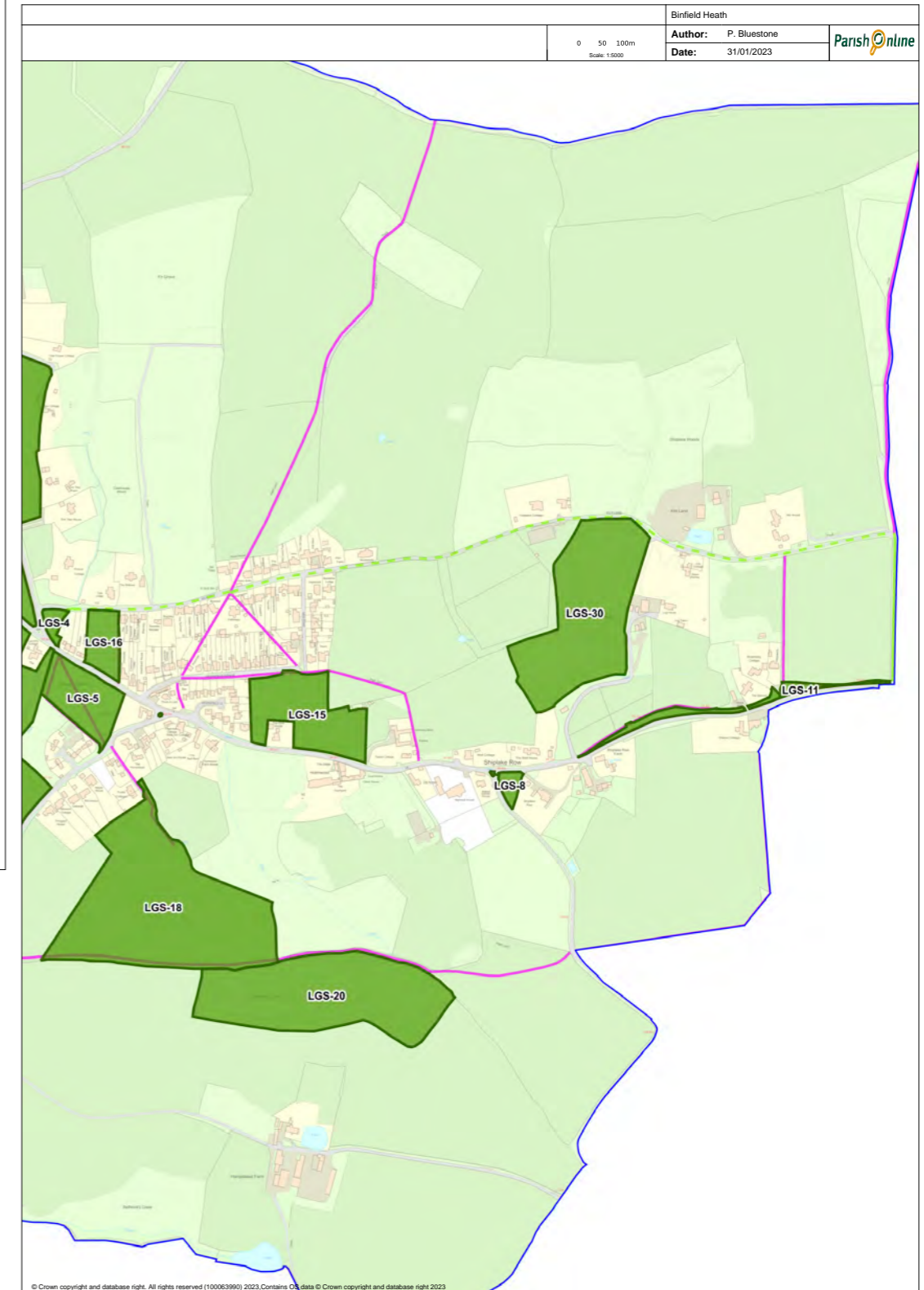
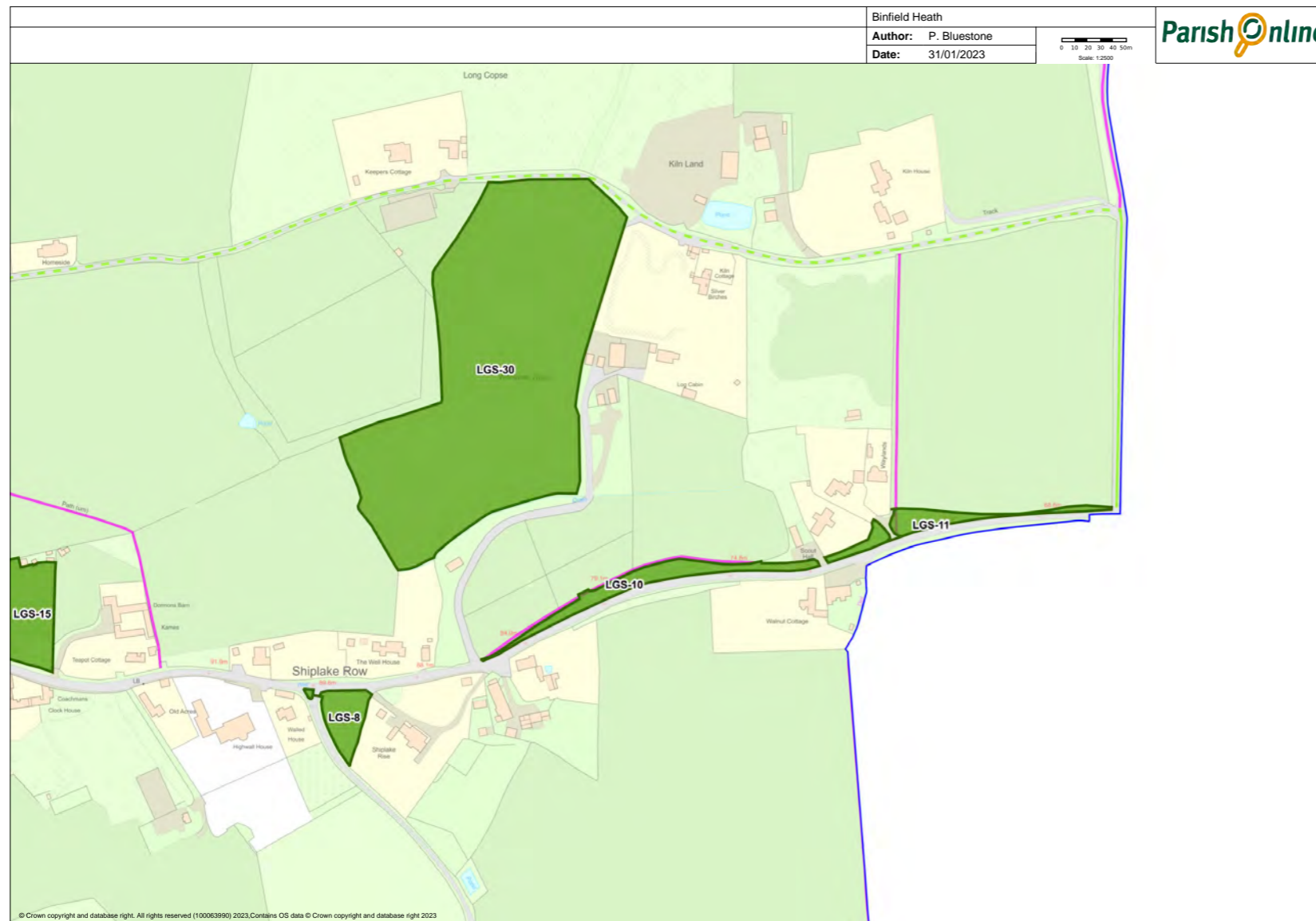
- '...land could be considered for designation even if there is no public access (eg green areas which are valued because of their wildlife, historic significance and/or beauty)';
- 'Designation does not in itself confer any rights of public access over what exists at present. Any additional access would be a matter for separate negotiation with land owners, whose legal rights must be respected.' (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 37-017-20140306);
- 'A Local Green Space does not need to be in public ownership. However, the local planning authority (in the case of local plan making) or the qualifying body (in the case of neighbourhood plan making) should contact landowners at an early stage about proposals to designate any part of their land as Local Green Space. Landowners will have opportunities to make representations in respect of proposals in a draft plan.'; and
- 'Designating a green area as Local Green Space would give it protection consistent with that in respect of Green Belt, but otherwise there are no new restrictions or obligations on landowners.'

Proposed Local Green Spaces

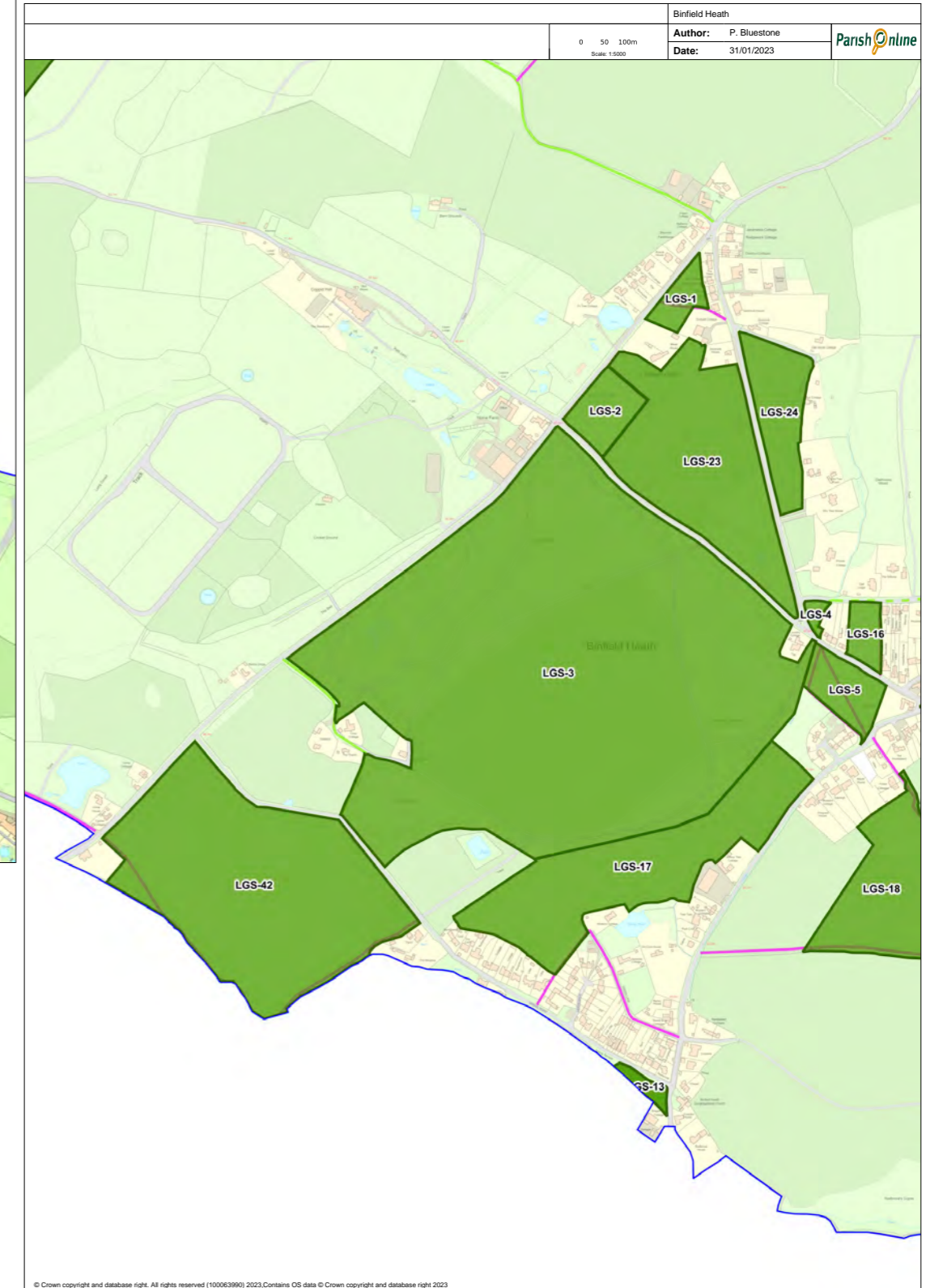
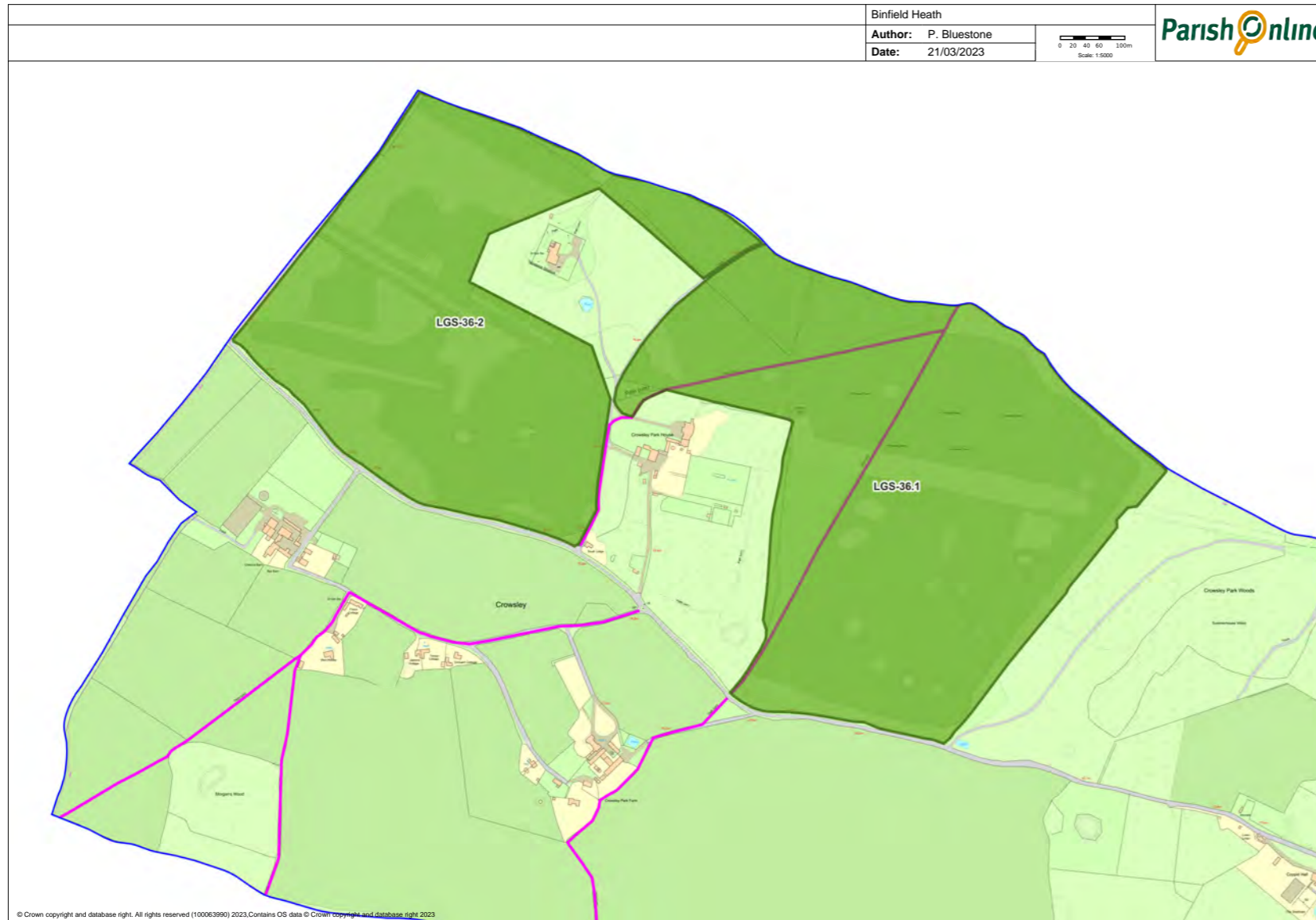


Appendix A: Figure 1 LGS: Map - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces (map provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)

Appendix A: Figure 2 LGS: Enlarged Inset Maps - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces -
(maps provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)



Appendix A: Figure 3 LGS: Enlarged Inset Maps - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces - (maps provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)



Appendix A: Table 1 LGS: Rationale and Evidence - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces (table provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)

Binfield Heath NDP Local Green Space Assessment Matrix

	Name of site (as popularly known)	NPPF 1 - Close proximity to community (yes/no)	NPPF 2 - Demonstrably special to a local community					NPPF 3 - Extensive Tract of land?	Ownership - Owner aware?	Is this site allocated for any other use (yes/no)	Public access	Score	%	Recommendation	Part of Heath?	Comments
			Beauty/ Amenity value (yes/no)	Recreation (yes/no)	Historical (yes/no)	Tranquillity (yes/no)	Wildlife (yes/no)									
LGS-1	Land between Harpsden Road and Common Lane	Y	4	3	2	3	2	N	?	N	Y	18	67%	ALLOCATE		
LGS-2	Allotment Gardens, Harpsden Road	Y	3	3	2	3	1	N	?	N	Y	16	59%	ALLOCATE		
LGS-3	Binfield Heath	Y	5	1	3	5	2	N	?	N	?	20	74%	ALLOCATE	Y	
LGS-4	Land adjacent to Arch Cottages	Y	4	3	2	3	2	N	?	N	Y	18	67%	ALLOCATE		
LGS-5	Recreation Ground	Y	4	5	2	3	1	N	?	N	Y	19	70%	ALLOCATE		
LGS-7	The triangle of land opposite The Post Office	Y	3	2	3	1	1	N	?	N	Y	14	52%	ALLOCATE		potential TPO
LGS-8	Land surrounding The Well and Green Pond	Y	5	1	2	3	2	N	?	Y	?	16	59%	ALLOCATE		Historic pond
LGS-10	Land alongside public footpath 421/16/10 between Shiplake Rise Farm and the Scout Hut	Y	4	1	3	3	2	N	?	N	N	16	59%	ALLOCATE		Important sunken route
LGS-11	Historic green to the front of The Spinney / Waylands	Y	3	2	2	2	1	N	?	N	Y	14	52%	ALLOCATE		Important entrance to the village - combined green space with the others forming part of a historical green
LGS-13	The Allotments in Gravel Road	Y	3	3	1	4	1	N	?	N	Y	16	59%	ALLOCATE		Private allotments

Appendix A: Table 1 LGS (continued): Rationale and Evidence - Binfield Heath Local Green Spaces (table provided by BHPC and Bluestone Planning)

	Name of site (as popularly known)	NPPF 1 - Close proximity to community (yes/no)	NPPF 2 - Demonstrably special to a local community					NPPF 3 - Extensive Tract of land?	Ownership - Owner aware?	Is this site allocated for any other use (yes/no)	Public access	Score	%	Recommendation	Part of Heath?	Comments
			Beauty/ Amenity value (yes/no)	Recreation (yes/no)	Historical (yes/no)	Tranquillity (yes/no)	Wildlife (yes/no)									
LGS-15	Flower show field	Y	5	1	3	3	1	N	?	?	?	16	59%	ALLOCATE		Used for Parish events
LGS 16	Wood opposite recreation ground	Y	4	3	2	3	2	N	?	N	Y	18	67%	ALLOCATE	Y	Potential woodland policy
LGS 17	Field west of Dunsden Way (former Heath)	Y	5	0	2	3	2	N	?	N	Y	16	59%	ALLOCATE	Y	
LGS 18	Field behind Dunsden Way	Y	4	2	1	4	2	N	?	N	Y	17	63%	ALLOCATE		
LGS 20	Shiplake Copse (known locally as Bluebell Woods)	Y	5	2	1	5	3	N	?	N	Y	20	74%	ALLOCATE		Potential woodland policy
LGS 23	Woodland/fields west of Common Lane	Y	4	1	2	4	2	N	?	N	N	17	63%	ALLOCATE	y	Potential woodland policy
LGS 24	Field East of Common Lane	Y	4	1	2	4	2	N	?	N	N	17	63%	ALLOCATE	y	Potential woodland policy
LGS 30	Woodwax Wood	Y	5	3	2	5	2	N	?	N	Y	21	78%	ALLOCATE		Potential woodland policy
LGS 36 (1 & 2)	Crowsley Park	N	5	2	3	5	3	N	?	N	Y	22	81%	ALLOCATE		Special Character Area
LGS 42	Land SE of Highfield House	Y	4	2	2	5	3	N	?	N	Y	20	74%	ALLOCATE		wetland and locally valued for views and walks

Appendix A: Photographs of LGS: provided by Binfield Heath Parish Council



LGS1: Land between Harpsden Road and Common Lane



LGS2: Allotment Gardens, Harpsden Road



LGS3b: Binfield Heath



LGS3a: Binfield Heath



LGS4: Land adjacent to Arch Cottages



LGS5: Recreation ground



LGS7: The triangle of land opposite the Post Office



LGS10: Land alongside footpath 421/16/10 between Shiplake Rise Farm and Scout Hut

Appendix A: Photographs of LGS continued: provided by Binfield Heath Parish Council



LGS15: Flower Show Field



LGS16: Wood opposite recreation ground



LGS18: Field behind Dunsden Way



LGS20: Shiplake Copse (known locally as Bluebell Woods)



LGS23a: Woodland / fields west of Common Lane



LGS23b: Woodland / fields west of Common Lane



LGS24: Field east of Common Lane



LGS30: Woodwax Wood



LGS42: Land south-east of Highfield House