

LAND MANAGEMENT AND THREATS



CHASE & CHALKE
LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP



Management Information

Strategies and Policies

The CCCV LP lies within the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB covers 981 sq km of countryside overlapping the boundaries of Wiltshire, Dorset, Hampshire and Somerset. The AONB Partnership's primary purpose is to ensure that these exceptional landscapes are conserved and enhanced for future generations.

The statutory AONB Management Plan focuses on landscape character and considers how all aspects of a living and working countryside can be sustained, whilst giving priority to conserving and enhancing natural beauty. 'Natural Beauty' is not just the look of the landscape, but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries. Community engagement and enhancing public understanding of the semi-natural and cultural landscapes are key features of the Management Plan.

Special characteristics regarding the Cranborne Chase AONB Partnership:

- Inter-authority, cross border joint working to further the purposes of AONB designation.
- The AONB lies within nine Local Authority areas
- A total of eighteen national and local organisations of the Partnership contributing to the development of the strategic AONB Management Plans
- A consistent commitment to 'bottom up' community involvement and engagement in AONB matters
- The national, regional and local organisations represented on the AONB Partnership and a large number of interest groups, local communities and individuals contribute to the AONB Management Plan.
- The multi-disciplinary AONB team have a successful track record of delivering large scale projects through partnership working.



Principal Landscape Management Mechanisms

The Environmental Stewardship Scheme is currently the main agri-environment scheme being delivered in the CCCV LP area. Although it closed to new applicants in 2014 existing agreements continue to be managed until they reach their agreed end date. This scheme is being replaced by the new Countryside Stewardship (CS) Scheme. In addition to this, there were a number of Woodland Grant Scheme agreements. Just over half of all woodland (3,509ha) in the CCCV LP area is in a Woodland Grant Scheme agreement (1,893ha) while under half (3,524ha) of the total area of chalk grassland (7,976ha) is under a management scheme.

Summary of current management and reasons for the lack of uptake of Stewardship Schemes are summarised below:

- There are significant areas of semi-natural chalk grassland areas covered by the a Stewardship Scheme, much of this is protected as SSSI and County Wildlife Sites, restricting landowners to continue to manage these sites as permanent pasture.
- Whilst many protected sites fall within schemes are being grazed and managed under suitable prescriptions, there is little available ecological data on these sites, so we don't know whether schemes are maintaining or contributing towards improved quality of condition. 53% of permanent grassland doesn't fall under the management of any particular scheme, for these sites it is unlikely that condition is being maintained or improved.
- Many of the woodlands, whilst used for game cover and feeding stations, are under managed for timber and biodiversity.
- Only large estates with considerable woodland interest appear to be continuing in grant schemes largely to maintain estate traditions and long-term preferences of how they wish to maintain their land.
- Some current land management practices continue to have a negative impact upon the condition of the River Ebble. It is not a priority for catchment management or supplementary support from the Environment Agency.
- A lack of flexibility of the Stewardship Schemes and the modest level of payments available mean that there is little incentive for many landowners to consider applying.
- There are tensions in making applications under Stewardship for smaller woodland and grassland sites, including SSSIs, due to the cost in meeting the reporting requirements.
- Current agri-environment schemes make it very hard to include all elements of this landscape - small woodlands, woodland belts, patchworks of grassland/ woodland are not normally included in applications.

The lack of uptake and lack of monitoring of current Stewardship Schemes threatens the landscape character of the CCCV LP area.



Mosaic of Land Management

Ownership within the CCCV LP area is mixed, with some very large dominant estates, small to medium sized family owned farms, several woodlands in Forest Enterprise ownership and a smattering of Dorset Wildlife Trust, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and the RSPB owned wildlife sites. In addition the National Trust own Win Green, Fontmell and Melbury Downs and the majority of Martin Down National Nature Reserve is owned by Hampshire County Council.

Rushmore, Chettle, Eastbury, Cranborne and Shaftesbury Estates have been largely managed sympathetically for many generations and most have managed high end game shoots. The new owner of Stubhampton Estate has the primary intention of developing a grey partridge shoot. Many of the large estates have a long-term vision of how they wish to manage their holdings in a balance between maintaining the valued tradition, culture and historic elements of their resources, whilst seeking to generate suitable income in different ways to aid their sustainable management.

Several of the large estates provide exemplars of habitat management. For instance,, Rushmore and Cranborne Estates are leading in practices for managing Ancient Woodland in the UK, undertaking research and providing evidence to encourage Forestry Commission and Natural England to allow them to divert from strict national prescriptions for managing ancient woodland under Environmental Stewardship.



Most landowners are residents in this area, living within and farming the landscape. They are connected to it, appreciate its qualities and many have a keen interest in heritage and wildlife, although they may not be aware of all the qualities and features that are present.

More than 20 of these landowners make up the Chalke Valley Farmers Cluster which seeks to improve the heritage and access across the Chalke Valley. There is a real opportunity to build on this momentum and enthusiasm throughout the CCCV LP scheme. A number of landowners have already expressed great interest in restoring downland dew ponds for instance. When one landowner was told of limes trees that were likely to have been planted as furlong markers. For one of the first racecourses in the country, his immediate response was to suggest replanting the missing trees.



Rural Skills and Traditional Products

Greenwood crafts are synonymous with this area of Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire, but have declined significantly. Before 1900 most of the area's plentiful woods would have been intensively coppiced, providing a constant supply of materials used for firewood, charcoal, thatching spars, gates, fences, hurdles, baskets and furniture. By the mid-20th century this traditional method of managing the woodland was in sharp decline.

The Royal Forestry Society has reported that a period of low timber prices has resulted in a lack of investment in people and training in commercial forestry. As more experienced foresters reach retirement there is a shortage of those who have the wider professional abilities or technical skills to replace them.

Across wider woodland crafts and traditional skills sector, hedge laying, hurdle making, wood turning, charcoal burning and other green woodworking skills have declined as occupations. One of the best hurdle makers across in the CCCV LP area, is still working and laying hedges in his mid-eighties. His apprentice hurdle maker is in his late forties/early fifties; they are representative of the remaining expertise across this sector.

The Landscape Partnership area lies at the border of three counties and therefore a considerable distance from the three colleges Kingston Maurward, Sparsholt and Lackham Colleges which offer land based countryside management skills. Although a handful of individuals from the area do attend these colleges, there are few opportunities to train locally and there is a lack of connections needed to the local connections to link trained students/individuals to land managers or estates within the CCCV LP area.

Similarly rural arts and crafts for which the area was known for have almost died out during the 20th Century. This part of Wiltshire and Dorset were highly prized for button, glove and basket making and other rural skills often undertaken during the winter when many weren't working on the land.



Management standards and requirements in relation to designated and protected areas

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's)

Written consent of Natural England will be required where works such as scrub removal are identified and planned on a SSSI. In most instances Natural England will be involved in planning this work before grants are agreed or volunteer conservation work scheduled. Natural England has confirmed that they would seek to turn around consents as quickly as possible to aid the programme, these normally take between 4-6 weeks.

County Wildlife Sites (CWs)

There is no mandatory requirement to consult on the proposals planned for CWs but we will be liaising with the respective County Wildlife Trust and Natural England on prospective management and practical enhancements that will aid condition.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

Plans to improve grazing, create water points and improve recreational management of vehicles on Martin Down NNR require the consent of Natural England. They don't need to give themselves consent for the works on parts of the site under their ownership (e.g. informal parking area), but have already given consent to Hampshire Council for the corral and pond proposed under the scheme.

Scheduled Monuments (SMs)

Consent is required through Historic England for works affecting a Scheduled Monument, even if it is likely to provide a benefit. Consent for this work normally takes 4-6 weeks. Nick Croxton from Historic England is already working with us to help prioritise improvements with landowners.

Works to Ebbles River and its banks

Any modification to the banks or the bed of the river, construction of permanent or temporary structures will require the permission of the Environment Agency. This can take up to 2 months. Permission for the creation of wetland and weir solutions designed for implementation during year 3/4 will require consent.

The planting of new pollards and conservation work (not involving temporary or permanent structures) to improve habitats along the banks of the river do not require consent although the Environment Agency will be consulted.

Felling Licences

Felling Licences from Forestry Commission (FC) are required where we might work with landowners to reintroduce positive management to small and medium size woodlands in the area. As partners to the programme, FC have indicated that felling licences for the area would be dealt with as quickly as possible, but on average this could take between 4-6 weeks.

Works to re-pollard and coppice important features in a number of woodlands will be permissible without permission so long as they fall under the requirements for lopping, topping and felling under a specified diameter measurement.



More General Protection

Under various forms of legislation (e.g. Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, Hedgerow Regulations etc) species and some features of the landscape are more generally protected against disturbance, harm and removal. Meeting the requirements of this legislation means that sensitive consideration is required in the timing and nature of conservation work we may carry out to benefit wildlife or heritage throughout the programme

Figure 1 - Summary of main interests and concerns of stakeholders

| Stakeholder | Nature of interests or concerns | Action |
|---|--|--|
| Landowner community | Concern over access and promoted routes near active game shooting areas, particularly those with open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW) 2000 | We have liaised with every landowner where promoted access, interpretation or events have been considered as part of the scheme. In some instances diversions in Autumn and Winter months are provided. |
| Landowner community | That physical access for people will be required for every initiative to safeguard natural or historic environment they are being asked to provide (with grant/ volunteer support) | We have reassured most that additional benefit for the public will come from better intellectual access (online and local promotion of activity) and with most sites, that open days and visibility from local rights of way and access land may be sufficient to provide additional benefits for all interests (people, heritage, wildlife and landscape). |
| Landowner community | Concern over promoting sensitive ecological areas of the landscape for wider use and tourism | For every route and interpretation point planned we've liaised with all significant landowners together with Natural England, Historic England and Forest Enterprise to ensure the proposed routes and sites meet their requirements. The larger estates in particular have been very helpful in suggesting parts of their estates where they would welcome greater numbers of people visiting and the landscape, wildlife, heritage and infrastructure can accommodate this. |
| Small rural communities | Concern over visitor demand being increased through promotion and development of infrastructure, marketing and new resources resulting in higher numbers of vehicles parking and congestion in small villages. | Sites where activity is planned have been carefully selected, capable of taking a sustainable increase in visitors. Many modest additional parking opportunities will be provided near these sites. Pubs and other village services in the vicinity of sites and walking and cycling routes will be promoted to help support the local economy. |
| Existing individuals who understand, use, appreciate and understand the landscape | Loss of intrinsic quality of quiet, inspiring landscape and its appeal to them – if they have to share it with others. | We are promoting a balanced selection of attractions and routes spread throughout the landscape. Parking to service many of these opportunities is limited, putting a physical limit on the number of people that can park in close proximity to sites of interest. At places where there is more capacity for visitors to arrive, have large open access and extensive networks of rights of way to enable users to spread out naturally to enjoy the landscape in isolation if they wish. |
| Existing individuals who understand, use, appreciate and understand the landscape | Concern over increased physical aids (signs, boards etc) cluttering the countryside. | New structures in the landscape will be kept at a minimum. |



| Stakeholder | Nature of interests or concerns | Action |
|--|---|--|
| Rural tourism related businesses | Demand to promote the area more and link in with local services and visitor infrastructure. They don't feel any real promotion is happening at present. | Where possible we are using attractions and suitable local resources as starting point for trails, interpretation, events and promoted initiatives (e.g. Ansty Farm shop & Larmer Tree as starting points) |
| General population in area and large gateway communities on the doorstep | Most don't know, understand or visit the landscape. Barriers include game shooting with worries about safety or little information about where to go and what to do to entice their interest. This is explained fully in the Audience Development Plan. | This is a main focus of the programme. A step change in awareness, appreciation, engagement and involvement in caring for this landscape. We want individuals and communities within it and on the doorstep to connect with it, enjoy, value it and become its advocate. |
| Doorstep communities/towns | A desire to attract visitors to their towns, services and attractions whilst their own unique link to landscape is promoted and celebrated | This wish has been very cleverly integrated into our plans across the board. The CCCV LP will engage with the surrounding market towns and encourage them to become gateways to the LP area. It will strengthen the links between the towns and the surrounding countryside. |
| People suffering from rural isolation with no or limited transport | Concern over access to opportunities being provided as part of the scheme (either places to visit, volunteer opportunities or events) | Most LP resources and information shared on-line (in different accessible formats) as well as on site. Where these are available, transport links will be provided for events, trails and promoted opportunities to engage with the landscape. This issue influenced the nature of the outreach work (taking heritage to people) in this LP Scheme. Transport for some groups to access volunteer, training and other opportunities to engage with the landscape in a positive way – will be provided and planned into projects (e.g. woodland training, woodland wild things and volunteer transport service for key training and events. |



Threats to the Landscape and Opportunities to Address These

Broader Issues

Climate change

A changing global climate, principally caused by the activities of man, is now regarded as an indisputable fact. There is a broad consensus on the likely changes to the climate of southern England, and therefore the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley area, over the next few decades.

The evidence of recent years is that:

- Summers will become warmer and drier
- Winters will become milder and wetter
- Extreme weather conditions will become more frequent
- Precipitation is liable to increase by 20% in winter and reduce by the same amount in summer

The changes predicted have the potential to affect the landscapes, wildlife and communities of the CCCV LP area. The range of crops grown by farmers will change and water flows in rivers and streams could become more erratic. Habitats may expand, contract or shift faster than local species can migrate. New species may enter the area, some bringing disease or pests that will harm 'native' species. Or they may compete with the 'native' species for food and shelter. Rising trends in population and visitors to the area, plus a changing climate place increasing pressure upon the natural environment as a resource for recreation, affecting the condition of the landscape. All of these factors could affect which flora and fauna can flourish in the area. A more resilient landscape in terms of habitat connectivity can help facilitate the movement of species while sustainable land management practices can reduce the impacts of climate change on water resources.



▲ Volunteer team excavating a WWII emplacement on Compton Down looking towards Fontmel - Martin Papworth, National Trust



Political Issues and Policy Changes

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. It also commits to undertaking a review of National Parks and AONBs.

The review of English AONBs and National Parks, led by Julian Glover, will consider whether there is scope for the current network of 34 AONBs and 10 National Parks in England to expand, in either size or number. It will report on the options for improving access to these landscapes, and on the support needed by those who live and work in them. It will also explore the role these designations have in growing the rural economy. DEFRA has made it clear that weakening or undermining existing protections or geographic scope is not to be part of the review.

The review will report in 2019 (the 70th Anniversary of the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act). There may be a need to review some of the CCCV LP projects in the light of the review's findings and recommendations e.g. if funding for improving access to the landscape became available.

Particularly concerning is the Government's proposal to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market whose outcomes more closely match the needs and aspirations of all households; and which supports wider economic prosperity (*Department for Communities and Local Government, Fixing our broken housing market, Cm Paper 9352 HMSO, February 2017*). The drive to build ever more houses is more relevant to the countryside around urban areas but there are implications for the landscape character of the CCCV LP area.

Britain's withdrawal from the European Union is highly likely to impact the landscape character of the CCCV LP area; most probably through the direct and indirect effects of changes to farming and forestry.

DEFRA statements and consultation documents are clear that in future 'public money for public goods' will be the basis for financial contributions to farming (*See Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, February 2018*). Money will be for conservation and environmental gains that benefit the public at large. It will not simply be to support commercial farming activities. These changes will not happen overnight. DEFRA has indicated that there will be an 'agricultural transition period' during which time some funds will be withdrawn from existing support mechanisms in order to fund pilot projects that, for example, restore healthy soils, improve air quality, provide clean water, and enable the countryside to teem with wildlife.

DEFRA wants 'a more dynamic, more self reliant agricultural industry as we continue to compete internationally, supplying products of the highest standards to the domestic market and increasing exports. But, alongside this, we want a reformed agricultural and land management policy to deliver a better and richer environment in England' (Paragraph 5, DEFRA, *Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit, Cmd paper 9577, HMSO, February 2018*).



Social and Economic Changes

The UK economy has been in recession with periods of slow, or minimal, growth since 2008. Government and Local Authority budgets have been cut, whilst the demand for services remains. Many charity and volunteer organisations have felt the effects. It is clear, however, that whether it is agriculture, a village shop, numbers of visitors or public transport, the current austere economic conditions affect every facet of life.

There are fluctuations in the price for cereals and associated products as well as variable costs of growing those products. This is making it hard to predict future profits from arable farming. Livestock farming is crucial to the management of special habitats, like chalk grassland. It experiences considerable variations in costs and returns. Profits have been in decline for some time.

The fluctuating market for UK timber has had a pronounced effect on the area's woodlands. Many woodlands no longer produce significant volumes of timber. They are often more valuable for game management, recreation, or conservation than timber products. However, the increasing demand for carbon neutral wood-fuels may support some woodland management.

Britain's drawn out withdrawal from Europe, and DEFRA's development of new agri-environment schemes in England, each add uncertainty for farming over the period of this Landscape Partnership scheme. The direct effects on farming practices will influence the extent to which farmers undertake conservation work as part of their operations.

Attitudes and understanding

Knowledge of the area's special qualities, landscape character, its traditions and its historic and natural assets is not widespread. Innovative digital or site based interpretation would increase understanding and appreciation of its special qualities. Regular engagement with residents and visitors of all ages over the life of the Landscape Partnership through a range of projects and programmes of walks, events and activities would also positively increase involvement and pride in, and enjoyment of the area as well as raising its profile.



Local Issues

Risks to Priority Habitats

Chalk Grassland

The CCCV LP area has some of the best remaining unimproved chalk grasslands in Europe.

While supporting a vast diversity of plant, animal and invertebrate species, the fragmented nature of the chalk grassland in the CCCV LP area often denies those species the opportunity to flourish through expanding their range or populations.

The impact of climate change on chalk grassland wildlife can be mitigated by increasing the size of the habitat and reducing fragmentation

The declining profitability of livestock farming is one of the biggest risks to this habitat. In the citations for chalk grassland SSSIs in the CCCV LP area, lack of grazing and encroachment of scrub is the most common reason for unfavourable condition. In an effort to improve the productivity of marginal grassland by using fertilisers, species diversity is considerably reduced.

The Chalke Valley Farmer Cluster in the heart of the Cranborne Chase involves over 20 neighbouring farmers and landowners who are working together to restore the wider landscape for wildlife. The CCCV LP scheme will assist chalk grassland improvements through the provision of grants (the Capital Grant Fund) for items such as fencing or water troughs.

Woodlands

“Visit most woodlands in the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley LP area and you are likely to find them dark, overgrown and quiet” Ted Green

The decline in active woodland management of small woodlands in particular has led to fragmentation, loss and degradation. Many are considered uneconomic to manage for timber. Woodland species are often not very mobile and the fragmentation of their habitat means isolated wildlife populations are at risk of local extinctions.

The long history of coppicing within the CCCV LP area has profoundly influenced the plants and animals now found in many semi-natural woods. The decline in coppicing has led to structural change within the woods, a lack of trees at different stages of growth and a lack of opportunities for animals such as the Dormouse to thrive.

The future survival of many of the woodland butterflies and moths depend on positive management of woodland. For a number of these species selective thinning to enable coppicing stands to thrive and a multi-layered structure to woodland is a good way to ensure that there are a variety of different light levels in woodland.

Natural woodland regeneration is being limited by larger deer populations. Their overgrazing endangers their future by reducing regrowth of young trees.

The arrival of new diseases like ash dieback may also have far reaching consequences as the structure of woodland belts and copses is impacted, potentially affecting the quality of the landscape.

Climate change may increase vulnerability of trees and woodland through changes in temperature, in rainfall and in the frequency and severity of storm events. The species composition of woodlands will also change as the results of climate change.



Both the lack of uptake and lack of monitoring of current Countryside Stewardship schemes threatens the landscape character of the CCCV LP area – see Section 7 for more details.

The CCCV LP ‘Wonderful Woodlands’ project will work with woodland and landowners to enable continued management of small woodlands in particular, improving connectivity between woodlands and investigate markets for woodland products. This will increase the viability of this habitat across the LP area that is vital to their continuation into the future.

Riverine Habitats

The following factors pose serious risk to the riverine habitats of the CCCV LP area.

Applications of fertiliser and pesticide close to the river are harmful to wildlife. Away from the river, surplus agro-chemicals can build up in the soil and groundwater or are washed into watercourses by rainfall. The use of buffer zones or a change to less intensive farming adjacent to the watercourse can provide protection.

Soils washed from fields by rain pollute the river and smother the gravel bed impacting on fish spawning areas. This is a serious issue in the Chalke Valley where there are a many springs (due to the geomorphology) and run off from arable land, droves and trackways. Ploughing the slopes of the valley exacerbates this problem. Buffer strips can intercept run-off and prevent soil from reaching the watercourse, as can ploughing across the slope.

High sediment loads covering the beds of chalk streams and rivers soak up more of the sun’s energy than gravels and chalk, increasing water temperature as well as reducing the spawning habitat in gravels.

Open access to riverbanks by stock causes poaching and damage to the banks. It can lead to the loss of habitat by the destruction of marginal vegetation, impede river flow and increase siltation, smothering gravels needed by spawning fish and aquatic invertebrates. It can also increase nutrients as faecal matter from livestock is washed into the system.

Unsympathetic management of river banks such as mowing and the use of pesticides can seriously affect local populations of birds, mammals, amphibians and insects. Techniques used to provide bank protection are not always wildlife friendly.

Dumping of garden waste and other rubbish into the river or onto banks smothers valuable habitat and encourages the spread of undesirable species. It can also create a flood risk.

Non-native plants such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and floating pennywort are now causing damage to river habitats. Invasive species such as American Mink (*Mustela vison*) and the Signal Crayfish (*Pacifastacus lenivsculus*) are competition for the native wildlife.

Under current climate change projections, southern England may experience higher mean temperatures and lower summer precipitation. For cold-adapted fish species, at the southern limit of their UK distribution, extended periods of high temperatures (close to their upper thermal tolerance) may result in increased stress, and reduced foraging and growth.

In warming rivers with reduced flows, thermal and flow refugia may provide increasingly important habitat for cold-adapted salmonids (such as brown trout, *Salmo trutta*).



▲ Soil run-off



Hedges, small tree belts and woodland provide valuable complimentary habitat along the river valley and more widely. Like buffer strips, they provide an opportunity to intercept run-off and prevent soil reaching the watercourse. Placement, design and structure of trees belts and hedgerows need careful consideration in the Ebble Valley to maintain open landscape character, whilst assisting in providing a mosaic of habitats and intercepting water and silt in the catchment.

Where trees are located along the riverbank they should be appropriately managed as this will encourage marginal vegetation and their spacing is important to ensure maintaining some sunlight and an appropriate corridor for other species such as bats.

Maintaining bank-side trees such as willows and alder by pollarding or coppicing provides dappled shade, encouraging healthy tree growth whilst extending the life of the trees. Old pollards can become hollow providing important roost sites for bats and birds.

Without monitoring and appropriate management and control of alien species, many of our more sensitive native species will continue to decline.

Water Quality of Chalk Streams

Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat, confined mainly to England and North West Europe. They are home to a wide range of wildlife, including some of the UK's most threatened species. Some current land management practices continue to have a negative impact upon the condition of the River Ebble.

Under classification by the Water Framework Directive, one of the River Ebble's three water bodies is failing to meet the Good Ecological Threshold due to high phosphate levels as a result of diffuse and point source pollution (Chalke Valley Stream). In addition, the overall condition of the other two water bodies is progressively moving towards moderate condition. Status in several environmental classification parameters have fallen from high to good in the last five years. This deterioration ties in with the overall state of the River Avon SAC system into which it flows.



▲ Soil run-off following heavy rain into the River Ebble - T Adams



Species Recording and Monitoring

Lack of Species Records and Monitoring of Designated Sites

There is a lack of up to date comprehensive biological records across the CCCV LP area. This makes setting targets for improvement and measuring outcomes for biodiversity difficult. This is a problem that the Farmer Clusters across the CCCV LP area have come up against.

In the CCCV LP area over 50% of designated sites have not been surveyed to assess the species for which they were designated for since 2011 (or earlier). Trained volunteers could help fill the gaps caused by reducing numbers of Natural England staff who check the statutory sites. It would also allow changes in management to be employed before significant damage occurs.

Lack of Biological Surveying Expertise

A lack of records does not equate to an absence of species. More recording by trained individuals is urgently needed so we can better assess the state of the wildlife across the CCCV LP area and act accordingly. Joining up local volunteers with local farmers would benefit local communities.

Cranborne Chase woodland has an exceptionally diverse ground flora associated with ancient woodland and is one of the richest sites for lichens in southern England. There is a limited pool of species recorders/experts generally and across all county recorder groups (in Dorset, Wiltshire and Hampshire) and the number of county recorders or experts collecting lichen records is critically low.

Light Pollution

Even in the countryside the stars are becoming harder to spot, with the sky glow caused by light pollution now visible for up to 50 miles (80km). According to the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) only one 10th of the country now enjoys a truly dark sky.

Cranborne Chase and the Chalke Valley provides one of the few remaining dark sky areas in Central Southern England, but without local interventions and campaigning, the quality of dark skies in the area will continue to suffer from continued impacts of new development and inappropriate design.

We can only imagine how the wonder of the dark skies in the mysterious landscapes of the Chase would have impacted on previous generations. Many residents, visitors and businesses already value how our dark skies add to the quality of people's lives and in some modest way towards the local economy. There is an opportunity to build on this; protect the dark skies across the landscape for the future and widen their appeal to many others.



Risks to the Historic Environment

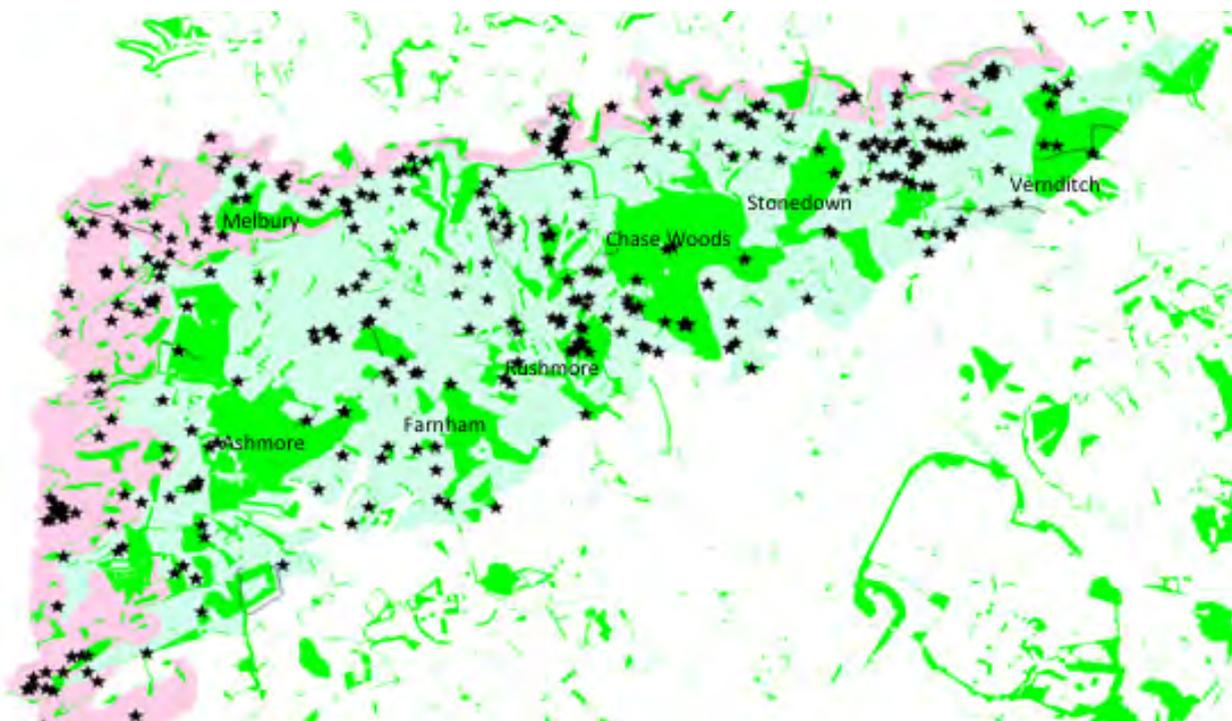
The risks identified below are taken from the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's extensive Historic Environment Action Plans (http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk/conserving_heap.html). Historic Environment Action Plans (HEAPs) assesses the significance, condition and forces for change acting upon the historic and archaeological characteristics of a site, place, area, theme or landscape in order to identify actions that will address threats and pursue opportunities. This work was guided by an expert panel and was subject to wider consultation which helped to hone the priorities and actions that were incorporated into Historic Environment Action Plans.

Poor Knowledge of Woodland Archaeology

The woodlands, a key feature of the CCCV LP area, conceal a wealth of information on past human activity. This includes archaeological sites including settlements and field systems, as well as information on the historic management of the woodland, such as ancient pollards and wood banks, and evidence for historic woodland industries including saw pits, charcoal pits and lime kiln. The lack of information on the archaeological and historic features in the woodland means potentially nationally important and locally distinctive historic assets could be under threat from inappropriate management.

Map 14 shows that there is generally a high density of sites across the Cranborne Chase area, but there is an obvious lack of information for woodland sites, including Ashmore Woods, Melbury Woods, Farnham Woods, Chase Woods, Stonedown, and Knighton. This demonstrates the potential for many more archaeological sites to be discovered especially within the areas of ancient woodland.

Map 14 - Summary of Archaeology in the Cranborne Chase



Source: GIS Record of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, County based Historic Environment Record



Limited Appreciation of the Prehistoric Archaeology of the Area

Although the Cranborne Chase is widely accepted in academic circles as containing internationally important complexes of Prehistoric archaeology, this is not widely appreciated by local people and visitors.

Understanding of Medieval Landscape Elements of the AONB

There is a perceived lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the landscape amongst academics, teachers and the public. Features include settlements, buildings, castles, fields, pastures, woodlands, roads, mills, hunting chase, parks etc, all of which contribute greatly to the fabric and character of the CCCV LP area.

Historic Highways and Routeways

The historic highways of the CCCV LP area are an underappreciated component of the landscape and there is no coherent approach to their management and maintenance. The numerous routeways that thread through the countryside, and the lines they take, reveal much about their complex history. They are often the means by which people still move around and appreciate the landscape. They are, however, subject to change and the erosion of character and fabric can lead to a loss of historic meaning.

Although individual historic features associated with ancient highways, such as milestones, are recorded, the way that these features relate, and the setting of the historic highways, is often ignored.

Attention could be focused on the droveways as these represent some of the oldest routeways and are served by a good Rights of Way network. Researching and incorporating something of the history of the routeways and the key features into any trails created would increase understanding, appreciation and knowledge of these historic highways and by doing so ensure that their key features are retained and appropriately managed. The creation of new routes will enhance people's enjoyment of the CCCV LP area.



▲ Rights of Way



Unintended/accidental Damage to Buried Archaeology

One result of cultivation can be the unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments and the loss of buried archaeology. This is especially damaging in the CCCV LP area due to the complex archaeological remains such as prehistoric settlements set within extensive field systems.

This damage can be mitigated against through advice to land owners delivered, in part, through agri-environment schemes. Another area where advice can be of assistance is in increasing awareness and appreciation of more recent components of the historic landscape such as historic field boundaries.

Lack of Appropriate Management of Monuments

Currently, scheduled monuments are affected mainly by burrowing animals and scrub invasion. Unscheduled archaeology can be affected by these factors as well as land management practices such as ploughing, tree felling, the creation of tracks, and livestock management.

Lack of Knowledge - Hazel Underwood Trade

Hazel coppice is a major component of the woodlands of the Cranborne Chase which until recent times were still managed traditionally. However, there is a lack of easily available information on the recent economic and social history of the industry (who practiced it, what the markets for produce were, why it flourished here in particular, and why it declined, etc), historic management practice and the condition of surviving hazel coppice. With increased understanding should come better material for presenting this part of the area's history, and a clearer rationale for any efforts to revive aspects of the industry. This information would help assist with the modern management of the woodland and provide an opportunity for increasing awareness and understanding of this important historic land use.

It is likely that such understanding would best be developed through discussion with people of the area, those who may have practiced coppicing or those who remember aspects of the activity. The individuals who were involved in the traditional hazel underwood trade are now retired and there is an opportunity to record their thoughts and memories.

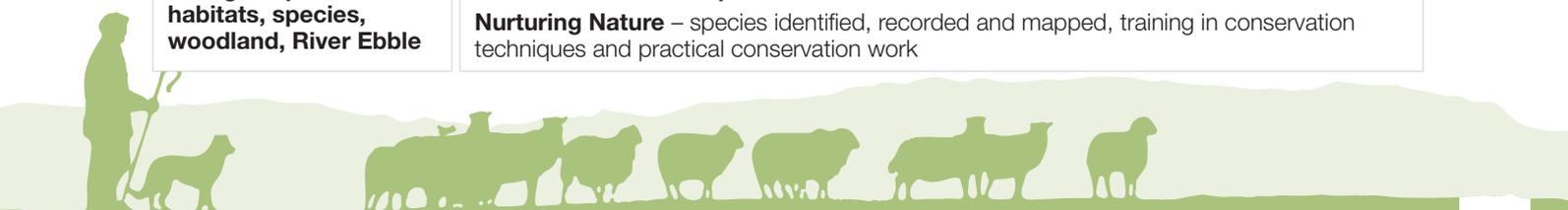


▲ Stock erosion Fontmell cross-ridge dyke - Martin Papworth, National Trust



Figure 2 - Summary of the threats to the area and scheme projects which will address these

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| Risk and Threat 1 | |
| Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) under threat | Champions for the Past – identification, surveys, conservation work, grants and arrangements for better management |
| Risk and Threat 1 | |
| Ancient woodland under threat | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work Champions for the Past – survey, research, conservation work, LiDAR interpretation, secure future management arrangements, interpretation where appropriate |
| Risk and Threat 1 | |
| Fragmented and isolated grassland, woodland or riparian habitat | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work to reconnect |
| Threat | |
| Woodland without management in place | Wonderful Woodlands – Training, advice/guidance to woodland owners on potential, multiple benefits of managed woodland, volunteer skills trained and practical woodland management work undertaken |
| Threat | |
| Wildlife species decline | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work Greater Grazing – transforming the quality of the chalk grassland at Martin Down NNR Community Grants Programme – Community inspired and led projects |
| Threat | |
| Lack of records of farm wildlife by farmers | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work |
| Threat | |
| Lack of knowledge/ experience of conservation techniques by landowners | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work |
| Threat | |
| Alien species (plant/ animal) invasion or encroachment | Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work Crystal Clear Ebble – practical conservation action Community Grants Programme – Community inspired and led projects |
| Threat | |
| Sediment and nutrient excess in River Ebble | Crystal Clear Ebble – practical conservation action, advisory service, grant scheme, educational film made by and for children/Ebble communities Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work Community Grants Programme – Community inspired and led projects |
| Threat | |
| Undesireable climate change impacts on habitats, species, woodland, River Ebble | Crystal Clear Ebble – practical conservation action, advisory service, grant scheme, educational film made by and for children/Ebble communities Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work |



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| <p>Threat</p> <p>Unrecorded (buried) archaeological sites, particularly in woodland</p> | <p>Champions for the Past – interpretation of LIDAR, further survey, recording, conservation work, grant scheme</p> |
| <p>Threat</p> <p>Low knowledge and appreciation of historic environment</p> | <p>Champions for the Past – learn new skills, training, surveys</p> <p>Heritage Schools Cluster – 10 schools trained to embed local heritage in curriculum for children and associated community</p> <p>Bringing the Landscape to Life – interpretation and discovery opportunities</p> <p>Characters of the Chase – actors bringing to life key players in the history of CCCV LP area eg Pitt-Rivers</p> <p>Cursus Ceremony – reflecting the ceremonial heritage of the Dorset Cursus through music, performance and art</p> <p>Roman March – a community ‘march’ event, experiencing the Roman road along with the many key historic features that still exist today</p> <p>End of Scheme Celebration – a multitude of project staff, volunteers and participants coming together to celebrate and share experiences with others</p> |
| <p>Threat</p> <p>Lack of knowledge/appreciation/understanding of natural/historic/cultural heritage</p> | <p>Bringing the Landscape to Life – interpretation and discovery opportunities</p> <p>Characters of the Chase – actors bringing to life key players in the history of CCCV LP area eg Pitt-Rivers</p> <p>Memories Captured – recordings of stories from real individuals from the area, inspiring appreciation and valuing the richness of rural work, activities, life</p> <p>Voices in the Landscape – expressions of community perceptions and response to their environment through music</p> <p>Words in the Landscape – Outreach work using the power of voice/words to capture new perceptions/interpretations of life in CCCV LP area</p> <p>Silk Flags & Walking Festival – artist led creation of silk flags to embody the spirit / elements of CCCV heritage, encouraging exploration of the walks/cycle routes of the CCCV LP area</p> <p>Artists Residencies – increase understanding of and engagement with CCCV LP heritage through art based activities</p> <p>Cursus Ceremony – reflecting the ceremonial heritage of the Dorset Cursus through music, performance and art</p> <p>Roman March – a community ‘march’ event, experiencing the roman road along with the many key historic features that still exist today</p> <p>Community Grants Programme – Community inspired and led projects</p> <p>End of Scheme Celebration – a multitude of project staff, volunteers and participants coming together to celebrate and share experiences with others</p> |
| <p>Opportunity</p> <p>Rural Isolation, Physical and Mental Health</p> | <p>Walking and countryside recreation swap shop</p> <p>Volunteer based opportunities to build relationships, connections and skills locally</p> <p>Opportunities to connect with the landscape where you live</p> |
| <p>Threat</p> <p>Light pollution that threatens dark night skies</p> | <p>Starry, Starry Nights – increasing awareness of issues of light pollution, training of Dark Sky Champions to lead stargazing/reduce village light pollution, school and uniformed group workshops, tourism training workshops</p> |



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| <p>Threat</p> <p>Access routes poorly linked, maintained or signed</p> | <p>Ancient Ways – improve Rights of Way and opportunities for people (particularly family groups) to explore, discover and enjoy the riches the CCCV LP area has to offer through new walks, rides and tramper routes</p> <p>Silk Flags and Walking Festival – artist led creation of silk flags to embody the spirit / elements of CCCV heritage, encouraging exploration of the walks/cycle routes of the CCCV LP area</p> <p>Community Grants Programme – Community inspired and led projects</p> |
| <p>Threat</p> <p>Lack of knowledge/ appreciation/ a disconnect from the area and within communities</p> | <p>Bringing the Landscape to Life – interpretation and discovery opportunities</p> <p>Characters of the Chase – actors bringing to life key players in the history of CCCV LP area eg Pitt-Rivers</p> <p>Memories Captured – recordings of stories from real individuals from the area, inspiring appreciation and valuing the richness of rural work, activities, life</p> <p>Voices in the Landscape – expressions of community perceptions and response to their environment</p> <p>Words in the Landscape – Outreach work using the power of voice/words to capture new perceptions/interpretations of life in CCCV area</p> <p>Silk Flags & Walking Festival – artist led creation of silk flags to embody the spirit / elements of CCCV LP heritage, encouraging exploration of the walks/cycle routes of the CCCV LP area</p> <p>Artists Residencies – increase understanding of and engagement with CCCV LP heritage through art based activities</p> <p>Starry, Starry Nights – increasing awareness of issues of light pollution, training of Dark Sky Champions to lead stargazing/reduce village light pollution, school and uniformed group workshops, tourism training workshops</p> <p>Crystal Clear Ebble – practical conservation action, advisory service, educational film made by and for children/Ebble communities</p> <p>Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work</p> <p>Champions for the Past – interpretation of LIDAR, further survey, recording, conservation work, grant scheme</p> <p>Wonderful Woodlands – Training, advice/guidance to woodland owners on potential, multiple benefits of managed woodland, volunteer skills trained and practical woodland management work</p> <p>Ancient Ways – improve Rights of Way and opportunities for people (particularly family groups) to explore, discover and enjoy the riches the CCCV LP area has to offer through new walks, rides and tramper routes, buddy system developed for walking, strengthening communities</p> <p>Greater Grazing – transforming the quality of the chalk grassland at Martin Down NNR</p> <p>Cursus Ceremony – reflecting the ceremonial heritage of the Dorset Cursus through music, performance and art</p> <p>Community Grants Programme - Community inspired and led projects</p> <p>Roman March – a community ‘marching’ event, experiencing the Roman road along with the many key historic features that still exist today</p> <p>End of Scheme Celebration – a multitude of project staff, volunteers and participants coming together to celebrate and share experiences with others</p> |



| Opportunity | |
|--|--|
| <p>Ensuring ongoing successful relationships and collaboration amongst organisations, farmers, land/woodland owners and communities</p> | <p>Nurturing Nature – species identified, recorded and mapped, training in conservation techniques and practical conservation work</p> <p>Wonderful Woodlands – Training, advice/guidance to woodland owners on potential, multiple benefits of managed woodland, volunteer skills trained and practical woodland management work</p> <p>Ancient Ways – improve Rights of Way and opportunities for people (particularly family groups) to explore, discover and enjoy the riches the CCCV LP area has to offer through new walks, rides and tramper routes, buddy system developed for walking, strengthening communities</p> <p>Crystal Clear Ebble – practical conservation action, advisory service, educational film made by and for children/Ebble communities</p> <p>Champions for the Past – interpretation of LIDAR, further survey, recording, conservation work, grant scheme</p> <p>Bringing the Landscape to Life – interpretation and discovery opportunities</p> <p>Characters of the Chase – actors bringing to life key players in the history of CCCV LP area eg Pitt-Rivers</p> <p>Memories Captured – recordings of stories from real individuals from the area, inspiring appreciation and valuing the richness of rural work, activities, life</p> <p>Voices in the Landscape – expressions of community perceptions and response to their environment</p> <p>Community Grants Programme – Community inspired & led projects</p> <p>Words in the Landscape – Outreach work using the power of voice/words to capture new perceptions/interpretations of life in CCCV LP area</p> <p>Silk Flags & Walking Festival – artist led creation of silk flags to embody the spirit / elements of CCCV heritage, encouraging exploration of the walks/cycle routes of the CCCV LP area</p> <p>Artists Residencies – increase understanding of and engagement with CCCV LP heritage through art based activities</p> <p>Starry, Starry Nights – increasing awareness of issues of light pollution, training of Dark Sky Champions to lead stargazing/reduce village light pollution, school and uniformed group workshops, tourism training workshops</p> <p>Greater Grazing – transform the quality of the chalk grassland at Martin Down NNR</p> <p>Cursus Ceremony – reflecting the ceremonial heritage of the Dorset Cursus through music, performance and art</p> <p>Roman March – a community ‘marching’ event, experiencing the Roman road along with the many key historic features that still exist today</p> <p>End of Scheme Celebration – a multitude of project staff, volunteers and participants coming together to celebrate and share experiences with others</p> |

