

South Oxfordshire Parishes of Binfield Heath, Eye & Dunsden,  
Harpsden, Kidmore End, Mapledurham, Shiplake and Sonning  
Common Landscape Value Study

Stage 5 - Landscape Value Report

February 2024 : FINAL



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Project reference: 2427

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20.02.24	P04	NT	AG	Updated with comments from the parishes - FINAL

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Who commissioned the study

- 1.1.1. Following the Glover Report and Natural England's decision to review the boundary of the Chilterns AONB, this study was commissioned in November 2022 by a joint group of parishes on the southern borders of the Chilterns AONB, comprising the parishes of Mapledurham, Kidmore End, Sonning Common, Eye & Dunsden, Binfield Heath, Shiplake and Harpsden. On 22 November 2023 the AONBs were renamed National Landscapes which was followed up on 29 November 2023 with the Government's ambitious new nature package, with measures to improve access to green space and connect the public with the natural world.
- 1.1.2. Each of the above parishes are already covered in part by the National Landscape and it would be logical and appreciated to see the remaining open rural land within these parishes included within the proposed Chilterns National Landscape extension. The parishes of Mapledurham, Eye & Dunsden, Shiplake and Harpsden are further bounded by the River Thames; the parishes of Kidmore End and Eye & Dunsden by the well-defined edge of Reading; and Harpsden by the town of Henley-on-Thames.
- 1.1.3. Some of parishes first came together much earlier in 2013 when Shiplake Parish Council invited the neighbouring parishes of Harpsden, Binfield Heath and Eye and Dunsden to join them in requesting a review (later joined by Kidmore End). Proposals with a request for a review were submitted to Natural England on 4 September 2014. The current extended group was formed in April 2022 following the announcement by the Government in June 2021 of the proposed review by Natural England of the boundary.
- 1.1.4. Regular meetings have been held by the group from April 2022 to 2024 in order to commission the study; appoint landscape consultants, The terra firma Consultancy; review the approach and methodology; comment on findings and approve the final report. The final report is fully supported by the seven parishes.

### 1.2. Purpose of the study

- 1.2.1. The seven parishes have long held the view that land within the parishes, outside of the current National Landscape boundary, either reflected the special qualities of the National Landscape, as set out in the Chilterns Conservation Management Plan 2019-2024, or the natural beauty of the River Thames landscape. The results of the study clearly demonstrate that the study area covers two main landscape types: the Chiltern dipslopes and the river Thames valley. However, these areas are closely interrelated both visually and physically and form a cohesive whole.
- 1.2.2. This needed to be tested against the well-established principles set out by Natural England in 2011 'Guidance for assessing landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England'. It is not the role of this study to recommend areas for inclusion in the extension of the boundary of the National Landscape, as that duty lies with Natural England, but to identify the landscape value of these areas, the presence of the special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape within the parishes study areas 1 to 9 (Figure 1 - Map of Parishes, Chilterns National Landscape, Study Areas and PLCAs, Appendix 1); and the natural beauty qualities required for the designation as a National Landscape.
- 1.2.3. This report is to be submitted to Natural England and its landscape advisors to help inform their proposals on the extension of the National Landscape and to support any consultation responses from the parishes when the consultation draft for proposed Candidate Areas is published in the first half of 2024. The main body of this report is supported by detailed summaries for each parish landscape character area within the parish study areas (see Methodology below), and maps.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Methodology

- 2.1.1. This report completes Stage 5 of the South Oxfordshire parishes of Binfield Heath, Eye & Dunsden, Harpsden, Kidmore End, Mapledurham, Shiplake and Sonning Common Landscape Value Study. The study encompasses the areas of these parishes that lie outside of the Chilterns National Landscape, which are divided into parish Study Areas 1 to 9. In some cases these Study Areas are further divided into Parish Landscape Character Areas (PLCAs), see Figure 1 - Map of Parishes, Chiltern National Landscape, Study Areas and PLCAs. PLCAs have been defined in existing landscape studies of the parishes, where these have been completed, or have been mapped as part of the Stage 2 and 3 Landscape Character and Value Assessment for those parishes with no existing study. PLCA boundaries mapped as part of this study are based on the boundaries of the wider South Oxfordshire district landscape study, and further refined by desktop study and fieldwork.
- 2.1.2. The methodology used for this study is based on the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations, and the Natural England: Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Updated June 2021.
- 2.1.3. Previously completed Stages 1 to 4 of the brief provided by the parishes are summarised below:
- Stage 1 - a review the existing landscape studies of the parishes; identifying any gaps in the geographical coverage of these studies. Methodologies used were tested for compliance with current best practice (particularly L.I. Technical Guidance Note 02/21);
  - Stages 2 and 3 - Landscape Character and Value Assessment for those parishes with no existing study (to include the area of the parish outside of the Chilterns National Landscape only), (Sonning Common, Harpsden and Mapledurham). All parishes were appraised to the same level of detail, using comparable and current landscape character assessment methodologies. Appraisals of Binfield Heath, Eye & Dunsden, Kidmore End, and Shiplake drew on existing landscape evidence in the form of published landscape character and value assessments.
- 2.1.4. Stages 2 and 3 involved desktop research, followed by fieldwork verification, mainly covering the parts of Sonning Common, Harpsden and Mapledurham outside of the current Chilterns National Landscape boundary, but also re-visiting Kidmore End, Shiplake, and Eye & Dunsden for familiarisation and to verify that the previous studies remained valid. Documentation produced included: mapping of the area showing Parish, Chilterns National Landscape, Study Area and Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) boundaries (Appendix 1); as well as summary sheets (Appendix 2). Summary sheets were prepared for all study areas and PLCAs, drawing on both Landscape Character and Value Assessments produced as part of Stages 2 and 3, and existing landscape studies of the parishes. Summary sheets set out information based on the following categories:
- Contribution to the setting of the Chilterns National Landscape;
  - Extracts from the South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Assessment;
  - PLCA / Study Area key characteristics; and
  - Landscape Value factors including: Landscape condition; Natural heritage; Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity and scenic); Cultural heritage; Associations; Distinctiveness; Recreational and Functional.
- 2.1.5. Stage 4 involved an assessment of the wider landscape context of each parish, the continuity of landscape with the Chilterns National Landscape and between each parish, the continuity between the dipslopes and river valley landscapes, and the contribution that each landscape makes to each neighbouring parish. This was presented under the category 'Continuity' on the summary sheets prepared for Stages 2 and 3.

- 2.1.6. This report draws on the 'evidence base' of the parish-level studies, (Stages 1 to 4), to form an objective report commenting on the value of these pan-parish landscapes. For the purpose of the Stage 5 report, the landscape of the whole study area has been divided into two separate areas, across parish, study area and PLCA boundaries. These two areas, encompassing Chiltern dipslope and river valley landscapes are shown on Figure 2, at Appendix 1. No Study Areas or PLCAs have been split in two by the formation of the Chiltern dipslope and river valley landscape areas.
- 2.1.7. The report takes into account the continuity of these two areas, Chiltern dipslope and river valley landscapes, with both the Chilterns National Landscape, and surrounding valued landscapes. It also considers the degree to which these landscapes demonstrate qualities of value and natural beauty, as well as the National Landscape's special qualities.
- 2.1.8. Input was obtained from the parish members and their advisors at all stages of this process.

## 2.2. Source material

### **Binfield Heath**

- Binfield Heath Parish Landscape Character Assessment, March 2022, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy;
- Binfield Heath Parish Landscape Value Assessment, January 2023, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy;

### **Chilterns National Landscape**

- Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024.

### **Eye & Dunsden**

- Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape, April 2022, prepared by Liz Allen CMLI (Environmental Planning Landscape Architecture)

### **Henley & Harpsden**

- Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan, 2020-2035, Referendum Version September 2022;

### **Kidmore End**

- Kidmore End Parish Landscape Sensitivity Study, September 2018, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy;
- Kidmore End Local Valued Landscape Assessment August 2020, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy;
- Kidmore End Neighbourhood Development Plan, Referendum Version, July 2022;

### **Landscape Institute**

- Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations;

### **Natural England**

- Natural England: Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England, Updated June 2021;

### **Oxfordshire**

- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS);

### **Shiplake**

- Shiplake Villages Neighbourhood Plan - Referendum Version - May 2022;
- Shiplake Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Contribution of the Open Land to the Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross, April 2021, prepared by Kirkham Landscape Planning Ltd and The terra firma Consultancy;

### **Sonning Common**

- Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan, Submission Version 2021 to 2035;
- Landscape Capacity Assessment for Potential Sites around Sonning Common, September 2019, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy;

#### South Oxfordshire District Council

- South Oxfordshire District Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Local Plan 2033, November 2017;
- South Oxfordshire District Council Rural Areas Local Plan, 1984;
- South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2035, and Policies Map;

#### Oxfordshire

- Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS).

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. The findings of the South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Value Study are set out in section 3, under a number of headings. These include: a summary of the special qualities and an analysis of the continuum across the whole study area; a summary and consensus of the landscape value and special qualities reflected in both the Chiltern dipslope and river valley landscapes; as well as a consideration of the rarity and representativeness of these landscapes.

### 3.2. Summary of special qualities across the whole area

- 3.2.1. A number of special qualities are displayed in the landscapes across the whole study area, many shared with the adjoining Chilterns National Landscape. Special qualities of the Chilterns National Landscape, noted as being present in the study area include:
- panoramic views from the dipslope towards the Thames valley, as well as intimate views within the numerous dry valleys and across rolling fields;
  - dipslope topography typical of the National Landscape, which describes how: 'the folds of the landscape hide many small dry valleys' and 'provide hidden 'secret' landscapes and unspoilt countryside';
  - significant woodlands, including significant ancient hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees within farmland on the rolling landscapes of the dipslopes;
  - Relative tranquillity and peace, with secret corners and a surprising sense of remoteness found within the area including woodlands, and enclosed dry valleys;
  - historical associations and a rich cultural heritage, including attractive villages, sunken lanes, historic drove routes, and numerous listed, distinctive and notable buildings made from local materials;
  - a major recreational and well-being resource with a dense network of rights of way including The Chiltern Way and Thames Path National Trail which cross the area, along with a network of narrow lanes, cycle routes, and recreational facilities serving both the local rural and neighbouring urban populations;
  - network of ancient drove roads, sunken and quiet narrow lanes crossing the dipslopes;
  - few settlements, mainly hamlets, across the Study Areas which remain largely contained within their historic boundaries.

### 3.3. Analysis of continuum across the area

- 3.3.1. The separate parish study areas and PLCAs together form part of a wider Chiltern dipslope and river valley landscape which lies between the Chilterns National Landscape and the River Thames, extending from Henley-on-Thames in the north to Mapledurham (west of Caversham), (see Figure 2 - Map of the Chiltern dipslope and River valley landscapes, at Appendix 1). Although initially assessed as separate areas, they form a continuum across the

parishes, with many special qualities and distinctive landscape features present throughout the area.

- 3.3.2. The southeast facing dipslope landscape within the study area is part of a continuous belt of open landscape between the Chilterns National Landscape plateau, to the west, and the floodplain landscapes of the River Thames Valley on its southeastern margins. It forms an important transitional landscape linking the Chiltern plateau landscapes with the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor.
- 3.3.3. Many areas of the study area are noted as being indistinguishable from the landscape of the Chilterns, and share many landscape characteristics with the National Landscape, including undulating landform and dry valleys, the pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands, and the pattern of small settlements within open countryside. These areas represent a continuation of the landscapes of the Chilterns National Landscape, especially where they share a boundary in the northern and western parts of the study area.
- 3.3.4. The Chiltern Way long distance path crosses the study area, at Mapledurham, Kidmore End and Sonning Common parishes, as part of the 177 mile loop of the long distance route as it crosses the Chilterns. The Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' crosses the study area at Harpsden parish, linking the Chiltern Way with the Thames Path National Trail.
- 3.3.5. To the south and east the River Thames forms a linear feature linking parishes along the length of the southeastern margin of the area. There are both landscape and visual links across the river within Harpsden and Shiplake parishes, where the wooded river cliffs and historic landscapes of Park Place and Temple Combe, a Grade II\* listed Park and Garden, are located to the east of the river. The river and Thames Path National Trail are incorporated within the Chiltern National Landscape to the north of Henley-on-Thames, and northwest of Mapledurham. The river landscape located within the study area makes an important contribution to the setting of the historic buildings and conservation areas at Mapledurham and Sonning Eye villages.
- 3.3.6. Historical links between the riverside settlements and parishes of Shiplake and Eye & Dunsden and the former common land / heathland of the parishes to the west, such as Binfield Heath and Sonning Common, are evident in historic routes and public rights of way crossing the dipslope.

## 3.4. Landscape value

- 3.4.1. The landscape value of the river valley and dipslope landscapes of the separate study areas and PLCAs have been assessed under a number of criteria taken from the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance Note 02/21 Assessing landscape value outside national designations. The Natural England: Guidance for Assessing Landscapes for designation as National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England has also been taken into account. Criteria for assessing landscape value are detailed in the summary sheets at Appendix 2, and summarised below:

### Chiltern dipslope landscape

- Condition - key characteristics shared with wider landscape include distinctive dry valley, hedgerow network, settlement pattern, winding narrow sunken lanes and mosaic of woodland, enclosed pasture and arable fields;
- Natural heritage - numerous woodlands, including ancient woodland, with parts of the area located within Oxfordshire's Conservation Target Area: Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau CTA;
- Perceptual (scenic) - the dipslope landscape forms a visual setting for the National Landscape with long views to the Chiltern horizons, and although sometimes limited by the undulating landform and layers of woodland and mature field and road hedgerows, there is still a visual continuity with the surrounding open land particularly to the National Landscape to the north; long views across the river landscapes to the southeast.
- Perceptual (wildness) - A strongly rural character and generally tranquil landscape, with few detractors, a sense of remoteness in enclosed dry valley landscapes and associated with characteristic woodland and sunken lanes;
- Cultural - a strong sense of history with sunken lanes, historic drove routes, and many listed and historic buildings; historic links with brick and tile making industry in the 16th century; historic links between common edge settlements and former common land / heath;



- Association - many literary associations with historic and listed buildings;
- Recreation - a network of PRoW, including the Chiltern Way crossing a number of parishes within the study area, many of which provide access into the Chilterns National Landscape;
- Functional - forms an important setting for the Chilterns, and a transitional landscape to the Thames Valley to the southeast.

#### River valley landscape

- Condition - the river valley has a strong floodplain identity, characteristic of landscapes of the River Thames corridor;
- Natural heritage - the river valley has areas of floodplain grazing marsh and deciduous woodlands, often on steep valley sides;
- Perceptual (scenic) - typical views include: occasional views across the floodplain to the dipslopes of the study area and Chilterns National Landscape beyond; views along the river corridor to wooded islands, across open water, and to typical river features including boats, pontoons and locks; views across the floodplain and river to wooded river cliffs, historic landscapes and Remenham Hill to the northeast; development within Reading to the south is largely well screened by mature vegetation both lining, and to the south of the river;
- Perceptual (wildness) - limited vehicular access to the river valley, with pedestrian access often confined to PRoW, including the Thames Path National Trail; adjoining development is generally well screened and river landscapes are often enclosed by steep valley sides and woodland giving a feeling of seclusion and / or remoteness;
- Cultural - many historic and listed buildings are associated with the river location, including Shiplake College, Sonning Bridge, Sonning Mill, and adjoining Mapledurham House and Mill along with the conservation areas of Sonning Eye and adjoining Mapledurham.
- Association - there are a number of literary and sporting / social associations with the river;
- Recreation - a valuable resource providing recreational opportunities for the surrounding population including the Thames Path National Trail, waterside access and water based activities;
- Functional - the river valley and River Thames provides a strong boundary between the open landscapes of the Chilterns and dipslopes to the west, and development within Reading to the south and east.

### 3.5. Special qualities reflected in the Chiltern dipslope and River valley landscape areas

#### Chiltern dipslope landscape

- 3.5.1. Many of the separate study areas and PLCAs forming the dipslope landscape are noted as being indistinguishable from the adjoining Chilterns National Landscape landscapes. Special qualities displayed across the whole of the dipslope landscape of the study area include the panoramic views from the dipslope towards the Thames Valley to the southeast, as well as intimate views from within the numerous dry valleys and across rolling fields. The dipslope topography of the area is typical of the undulating topography of the Chilterns. Substantial areas of woodland, as well as significant ancient hedgerows, hedgerow and field trees within farmland on the rolling landscapes of the dipslopes are seen in both the Chiltern dipslope landscape of the study area as well as the Chilterns National Landscape.
- 3.5.2. The dipslope landscape of the study area has a strongly rural character, a generally tranquil landscape with few detractors. A sense of remoteness is found in the enclosed dry valleys, woodland and network of narrow and sunken lanes crossing the dipslope. Many distinctive and historic buildings made from local building materials are found in the dipslope landscapes, as are a number of attractive villages and scattered common edge settlements. A network of rights of way including The Chiltern Way long distance path crosses the area, along with a network of narrow lanes crossing the dipslopes, including a number of tree-lined sunken lanes.

### River valley landscape

- 3.5.3. The River Thames valley and floodplain landscapes form a distinctive and attractive landscape noted as being valuable in its own right. Although the special qualities of the River Valley landscapes differ from those of the dipslopes of the Chilterns, they are considered to be equally important.
- 3.5.4. Special qualities displayed across the whole of the River Valley landscape include distant views to the Chilterns to the west; linear views along the river to wooded islands, river cliffs and vegetated banks; views across floodplain meadows and to river features including locks, pontoons and boatyards. The meandering river provides a contrast of seclusion and a series of screened and intimate locations, with adjoining open floodplain landscapes.
- 3.5.5. Significant woodlands are often associated with river cliffs and steep valley sides, with mature riparian vegetation lining the River Thames, and there is a surprising sense of remoteness within the often enclosed river landscapes. Limited access results in a relatively high level of tranquillity despite the proximity of the urban area of Reading. Development in Reading is largely screened from view by intervening mature vegetation and there is a perception of the town being detached / distant from the river valley landscape.
- 3.5.6. The river valley landscape has many historical associations and a rich cultural heritage associated with the River Thames. There are numerous listed buildings at Sonning Eye, Sonning Bridge and Shiplake College, and historical links between the riverside parishes of Shiplake, Sonning Eye and Mapledurham, and the former commons / heathland on the upper dipslopes at Binfield Heath and Sonning Common. Rights of Way crossing the area include the Thames Path National Trail, along with a number of narrow, rural lanes providing access from the dipslope into the river valley.
- 3.5.7. Although not all areas of the river valley landscape may meet the natural beauty criteria to the same degree, the area as a whole performs an important function. The River Thames, and adjoining Thames Path running along the southeastern fringe provides continuity through the area, and a strong boundary between the Chilterns National Landscape and dipslope landscape to the west, and the built up area of Reading to the south and east. The river valley forms a distinctive and attractive landscape with high levels of natural beauty and tranquillity, and important historical links between the River Thames and the dipslope and Chiltern landscape to the west.

## 3.6. Consensus on the value of the Chiltern dipslopes and River valley landscape areas

- 3.6.1. The value of the two landscapes across the parishes has already been recognised in various documents as described below. It is notable that little has materially changed across the parishes since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century and, despite some small-scale development and new gravel workings, the landscape is notable for its quiet rural agricultural quality and its lack of urbanising or detracting elements.

### District

- 3.6.2. The study area has long been recognised as being of high landscape value. In 1984 SODC Rural Areas Local Plan showed the majority of the area as an Area of Great Landscape Value. The only part to be omitted was the area of gravel pits west of Sonning Eye. Since 1984 the gravel pits have been restored and returned to lakes and nature conservation habitats whilst the remainder of the area very largely remains unchanged. South Oxfordshire Council moved away from the AGLV at the end of the 1990s when advised by the then Countryside Commission to move into a landscape character and the 'all landscapes' matter approach.
- 3.6.3. In addition to stating that the highest level of protection will be given to the landscape and scenic beauty of the Chilterns', the current South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 recognises the special spatial value of the landscapes, waterscapes, cultural heritage and user enjoyment of the River Thames, its tributaries and flood plains (Policy ENV1. 2 iii). ENV1.2 also states that development will only be permitted where it protects and, where possible enhances, features that contribute to the nature and quality of South Oxfordshire's landscapes. Very many of those features listed under ENV1.2 are to be found within this study area.

### Neighbourhood Development Plans

- 3.6.4. Two of the parishes at Kidmore End and Shiplake have strongly supported designated areas of landscape value within their NDPs (Study Areas 3 and 8) which have been approved by Examination and are now made, both adopted by SODC on September 8th 2022. Binfield Heath NDP has been submitted for examination and includes valued landscapes. Eye & Dunsden has undertaken landscape studies and proposes to designate areas of landscape value in their emerging NDPs (Study Area 6). Formal landscape character and evaluation studies were not undertaken for Sonning Common and Harpsden with Henley NDPs but appeal decisions have supported the value of the landscape (Study Areas 4, 5 and 9). Mapledurham is not undertaking an NDP

### Other

- 3.6.5. Parts of study areas 1, 2 and 3 are within Oxfordshire County Council's Conservation Target Areas.

### Local support:

- 3.6.6. Supporting letters and emails have been received from the Chilterns Conservation Board and local councillors.

## 3.7. Rarity or representativeness of the Chiltern dipslope and River valley landscape areas

### Chiltern dipslope landscape

- 3.7.1. The Chiltern dipslope landscape represents an area similar in landscape and visual character and quality as the current National Landscape often within very close reach of the urban settlement of Reading. Where the dipslope landscapes of the study area adjoin the built up area of Caversham, the town edge is strongly defined by the distinctive dry valleys at Toker's Green / Chalkhouse Green in Kidmore End parish and Playhatch in Eye and Dunsden parish. Development is contained by woodland and tree lines, with limited encroachment onto the valley sides. A distinctive dry valley following Harpsden Bottom at the northern edge of the study area defines the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames, where development is similarly contained by woodland and mature trees. This quality of unspoilt landscape is rarely found immediately adjoining a major urban area.

### River valley landscape

- 3.7.2. The river valley landscape has a strong sense of identity influenced by the linear river, woodland, river cliffs, and wooded river islands. The distinctive historic parkland at Mapledurham House and Shiplake House, historic buildings and structures, including Shiplake College and Shiplake Lock, as well as the historic landscape of Park Place and Temple Combe, a Grade II\* listed Park and Garden to the east of the river, provide a strong sense of place. Much of the River Thames passing through the study area is enclosed by largely undeveloped river valley sides and associated undeveloped floodplain. Where the urban edge of Reading adjoins the River Thames on the southwestern boundary of the study area, it is largely screened by intervening mature vegetation. The river valley landscape retains a strong rural character in close proximity to urban areas.

## 3.8. Conclusion

- 3.8.1. Although this report is not intended to suggest new boundaries for the Chilterns National Landscape, however, it seems evident that both the Chiltern dipslope and river Thames landscapes satisfy much of the criteria for inclusion within an extension of the National Landscape. Natural England state that 'not all areas may meet natural beauty criteria to the same degree' but may still be included within the boundary change area. Any localised sites which might not meet the Natural Beauty criteria are very small in scale and have very little influence on the surrounding landscape, being well contained or well-integrated.
- 3.8.2. In conclusion the seven parishes submit that the Study Areas display the attributes of landscapes of the highest value, reflecting the special qualities of the existing Chiltern National Landscape and/or the attributes of Natural Beauty. Both landscapes retain a strong rural character in close proximity to urban areas, offering a welcoming and easily accessible landscape where people can get out into and enjoy nature. The Study Area demonstrates a strong contrast between the nearby urban and our rural landscapes. The inclusion of the Study Area would ensure conservation and enhancement of this valued local environment in accordance with Government policy.

## Appendix 1: Maps of the study area

Figure 1 - Map of Parishes, Chilterns National Landscape, Study Areas and PLCAs

Figure 2 - Map of Chiltern dip slope and River valley landscape areas

Figure 1 - Map of Parishes, Chilterns National Landscape, Study Areas and PLCAs

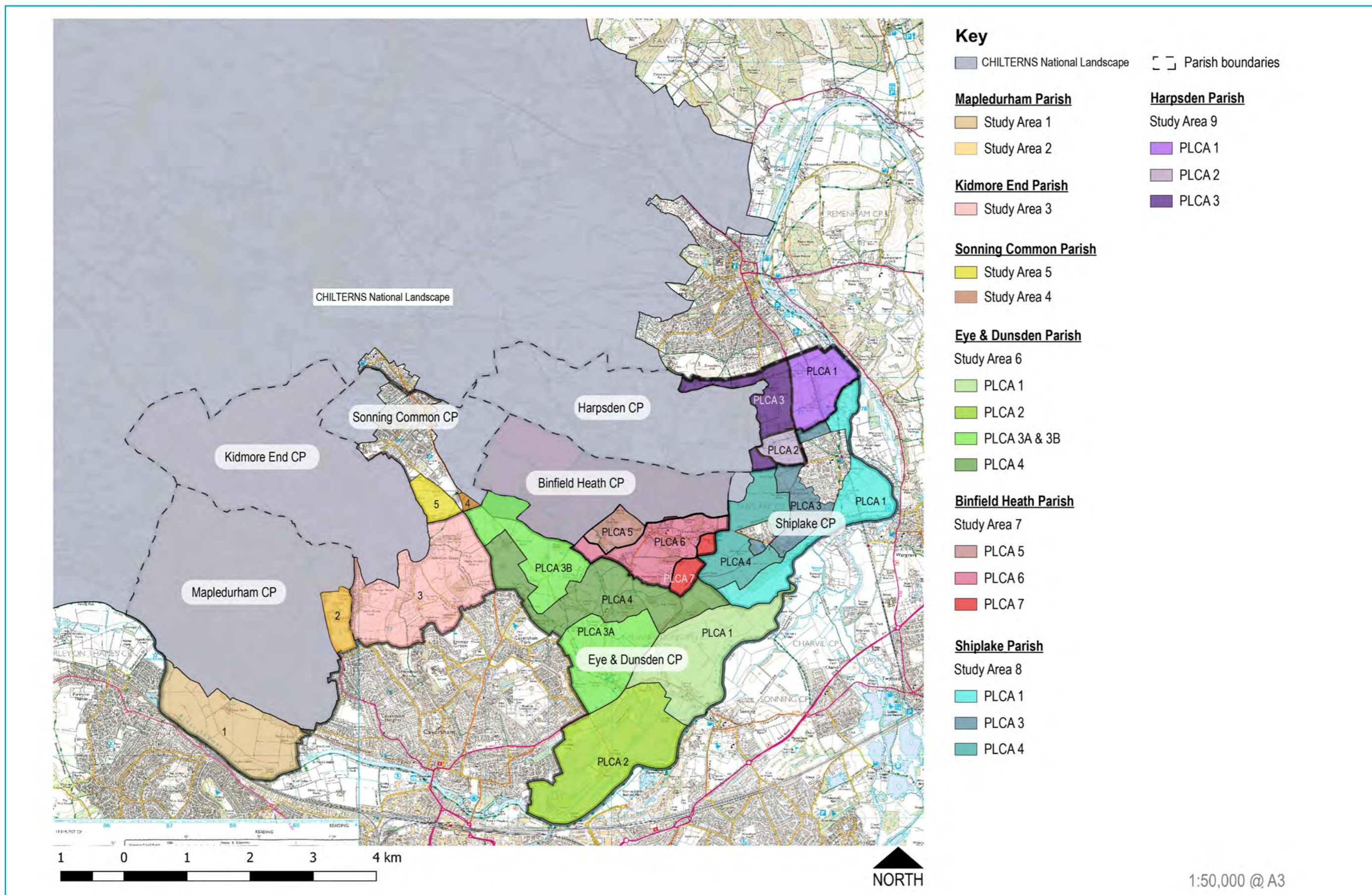
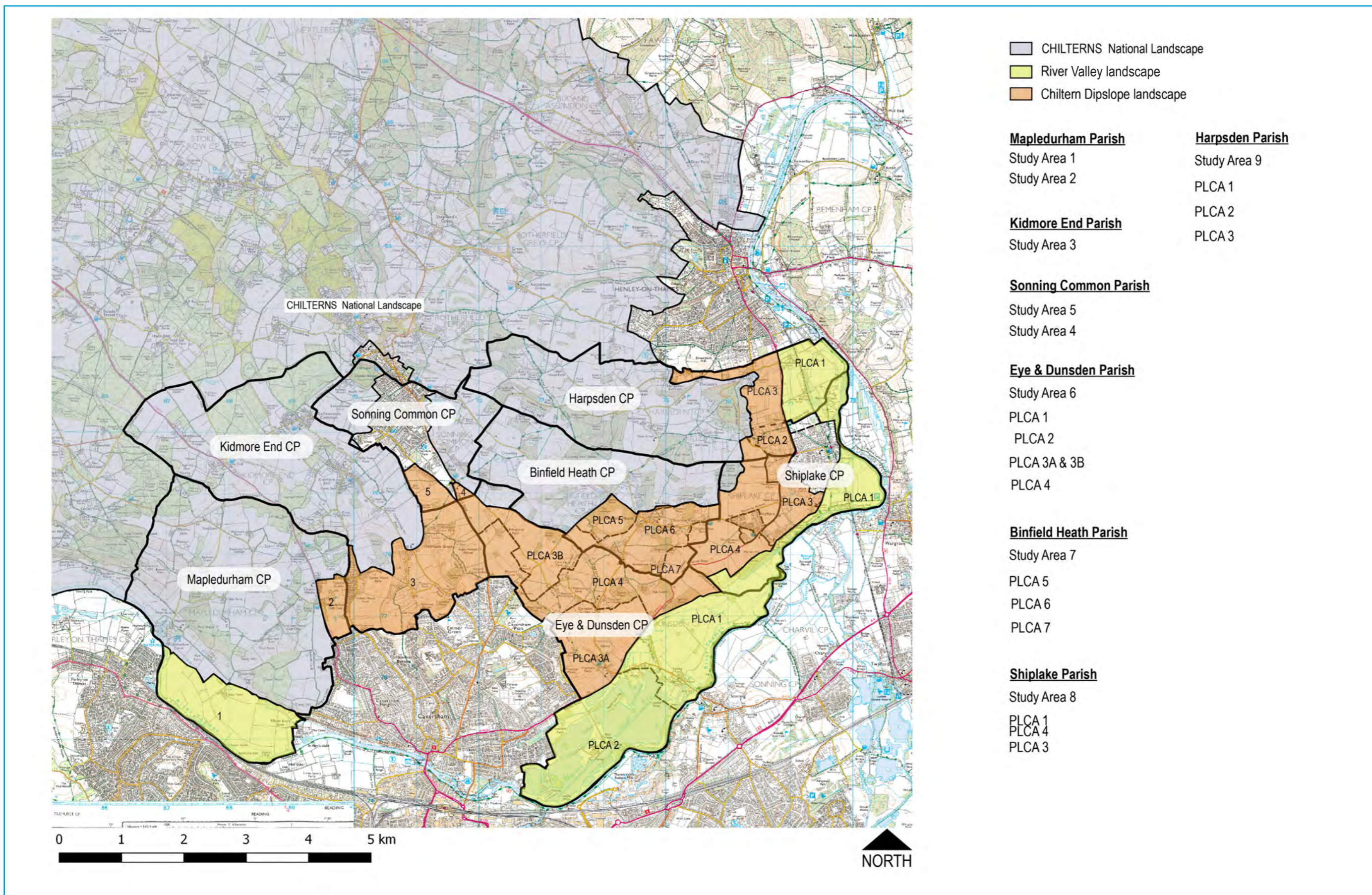


Figure 2 - Map of the Chiltern dipslope and River valley landscapes



## Appendix 2: Summary tables of Study areas and PLCA

Summary Sheets for Mapledurham Parish (Study Area 1)

Summary Sheets for Mapledurham Parish (Study Area 2)

Summary Sheets for Kidmore End Parish (Study Area 3)

Summary Sheets for Sonning Common Parish (Study Area 4)

Summary Sheets for Sonning Common Parish (Study Area 5)

Summary Sheets for Eye & Dunsden Parish (Study Area 6): PLCA1

Summary Sheets for Eye & Dunsden Parish (Study Area 6): PLCA2

Summary Sheets for Eye & Dunsden Parish (Study Area 6): PLCA3A & 3B

Summary Sheets for Eye & Dunsden Parish (Study Area 6): PLCA4

Summary Sheets for Binfield Heath Parish (Study Area 7): PLCA5

Summary Sheets for Binfield Heath Parish (Study Area 7): PLCA6

Summary Sheets for Binfield Heath Parish (Study Area 7): PLCA7

Summary Sheets for Shiplake Parish (Study Area 8): PLCA1

Summary Sheets for Shiplake Parish (Study Area 8): PLCA3

Summary Sheets for Shiplake Parish (Study Area 8): PLCA4

Summary Sheets for Harpsden Parish (Study Area 9): PLCA1

Summary Sheets for Harpsden Parish (Study Area 9): PLCA2

Summary Sheets for Harpsden Parish (Study Area 9): PLCA3

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Mapledurham

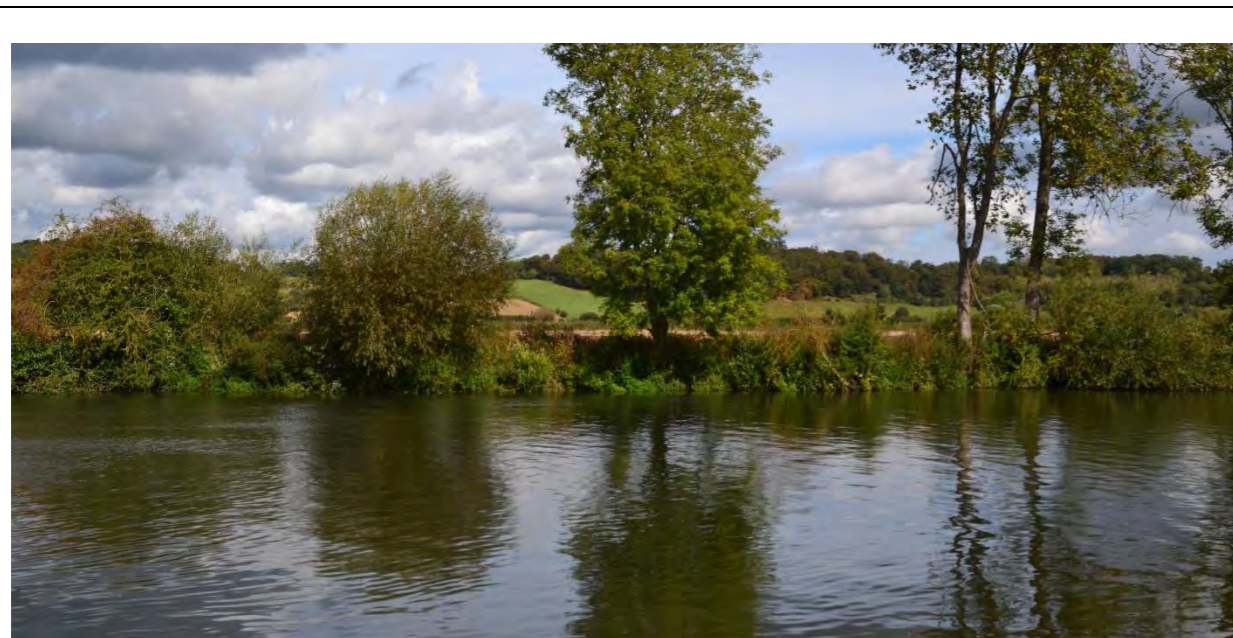
Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 22.09.23 NT

Study area: Area 1

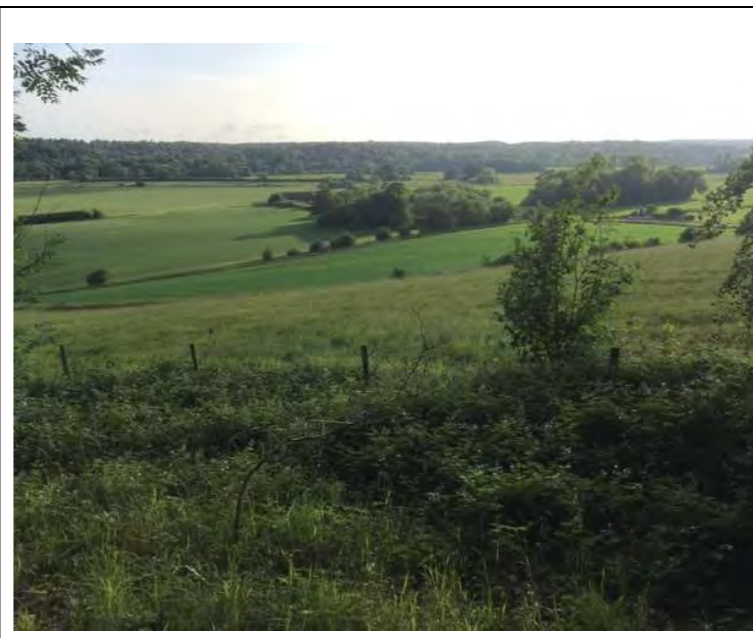
Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area forms part of the immediate setting of the AONB, which adjoins its northern boundary. Chazey Wood and Park Wood (within the AONB) form the horizon on the steep slopes immediately to the north. The study area forms an important foreground setting for the AONB when viewed from the Thames Path to the south;</li> <li>The floodplain and pasture of the study area forms part of the setting of Mapledurham village. Situated to the southeast of Mapledurham House, there are views across floodplain pasture in the study area to Mapledurham House from bridleway 232/13/30;</li> <li>Similarly, the study area forms part of the setting of Mapledurham Conservation Area, and a number of listed buildings in Mapledurham village, including Grade I Mapledurham House and Grade II* Mapledurham Mill;</li> <li>Floodplain pasture within the study area forms an important part of the setting of the River Thames on the southern boundary of the study area.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western main line Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 5 Flat floodplain pasture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively 'wet', riparian character;</li> <li>Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;</li> <li>Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside;</li> <li>Intimate, pastoral, tranquil and quite remote character with some 'arcadian' qualities along the Thames close to settlements and riverside parklands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flatter than countryside to the northeast, which is more undulating; and to the southwest where land rises steeply beyond the railway line;</li> <li>River Thames forms the southwestern boundary of the study area;</li> <li>Northwestern edge of built up area of Reading (Tilehurst) adjoins the southwestern boundary of the study area (beyond the railway and the River Thames, and largely screened by intervening mature vegetation, with a wooded horizon)</li> <li>Medium to large scale pastoral fields adjoining the river;</li> <li>Forms part of the River Thames floodplain, which extends southeast towards Reading and Caversham, and northwest towards Pangbourne;</li> <li>Largely inaccessible, with public access restricted to the Thames Path on the southern bank of the river, and bridleway number 232/13/30 to the northeast;</li> <li>Mapledurham village, containing many listed buildings, including Mapledurham House and Mill adjoin the study area to the northwest;</li> <li>Views across the floodplain to Mapledurham House from bridleway 232/13/30 on the northern boundary of the study area;</li> <li>Distinctive riparian species, including willow, line the banks of the river;</li> <li>Largely open landscape, with limited field boundary vegetation / hedgerows, and a number of small blocks of woodland on the northern boundary of the study area, identified as 'Deciduous Woodland' in the Priority Habitats Inventory;;</li> <li>A number of ponds in the northern part of the PLCA, many surrounded by vegetation;</li> <li>Limited development within the PLCA, confined to buildings at New Farm;</li> <li>A number of vegetated islands within this stretch of the River Thames;</li> <li>A small area of 'Woodpasture and Parkland' (identified in the Priority Habitats Inventory), associated with Mapledurham House extends into the northwestern part of the study area.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area is strongly related to the River Thames, with a strong floodplain identity, characteristic of the adjoining riverside landscapes of the River Thames corridor;</li> <li>Mature / well established riparian vegetation follows the River Thames, vegetation surrounds water features in the northeastern part of the study area, with a number of small woodland blocks providing additional structure within the flat floodplain landscape;</li> <li>Buildings at New Farm are well enclosed by surrounding vegetation;</li> <li>Areas of well preserved parkland landscape associated with Mapledurham House extend into the northwestern part of the study area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views to the north contained by rising ground and woodland, including Park Wood and Chazey Wood within the AONB;</li> <li>Occasional elevated views south across the floodplain from bridleway 292/13/30 in the northeastern corner of the study area;</li> <li>Open views from bridleway 292/13/30 across the floodplain within the study area to mature vegetation lining the River Thames and on the north facing slopes on the edge of Reading;</li> <li>Open views to Mapledurham House from bridleway 292/13/30 on the northern boundary of the study area;</li> <li>Open views across the study area from the Thames Path within Purley on Thames to the west;</li> <li>Filtered views (occasionally open) from the Thames Path to the south and southeast.</li> </ul>	<p>Study area 1 is characteristic of the River Thames corridor and floodplain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain landscape adjoining the river has a strong sense of identity influenced by the linear river, distinctive historic parkland associated with Mapledurham House to the northwest, and wooded slopes of the AONB to the north, and northern edge of Reading to the south.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discrete areas of woodland on the northern boundary of study area 1, associated with New Farm, Chazey Wood and The Warren, have been identified as 'Deciduous Woodland' priority habitat, as set out on the Priority Habitat Inventory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many buildings in Mapledurham village (to the northwest of the study area) are listed including Grade I Mapledurham House and Grade II* Mapledurham Mill.</li> <li>Mapledurham Conservation Area (adjoining the northwestern corner of the study area) covers the village and listed buildings, including Mapledurham House and immediate parkland, and land extending westwards along the river from Mapledurham Mill.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The centre of the study area is publicly inaccessible. Public bridleway 292/13/30 runs along the northeastern boundary; the Thames Path runs along the southern boundary between the southern bank of the River Thames and the railway (although the path is not shown as being within Oxfordshire at this point); and a short stretch of footpath (number 292/25/10) on the northern bank of the River Thames which is not connected to the PRow or public road network;</li> <li>Mapledurham Mill and Mapledurham House are located outside of the study area within Mapledurham village to the northwest.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enclosed by woodland on steep slopes to the north of the study area;</li> <li>Limited vehicular or public access to the area;</li> <li>Development within Reading, including the railway line is located immediately to the south of the river / study area. However, development is well screened by mature vegetation lining the river and the railway line;</li> <li>Although the railway and noise from surrounding development is audible, it seems distant / detached from locations on the bridleway on the northern boundary of the study area..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain grassland / surface water percolation;</li> <li>Pasture / grazing land;</li> <li>Forms part of the immediate setting of the Chiltern AONB; Mapledurham village and listed buildings (Grade I Mapledurham House and Grade II* Mapledurham Mill); and the River Thames.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View south across study area 1 towards the River Thames and northern edge of Reading from bridleway 292/13/20	View southwest from bridleway 292/13/20 east of New Farm towards the River Thames and Reading beyond	View northwest from bridleway 292/13/20 at New Farm towards Mapledurham House



View northeast from the Thames Path, near to Tilehurst Station, looking across study area 1 to Park Wood and Chazey wood within the AONB on the horizon



View southwest across study area 1 from Kings Hill, within the AONB to the north



View northwest from the Thames Path at the northern end of Scours Lane

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- Characteristic of the Thames floodplain landscape, and to the northwest largely indistinct from the parkland landscapes surrounding Mapledurham village, within the AONB;
- Considered alongside the River Thames floodplain landscape to the west of Mapledurham, the study area provides continuity of the AONB landscapes of both the Chiltern and Wessex Downs, linking the River Thames, floodplain field patterns, woodlands, and network of ponds and linear water features;
- Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Thames Path being incorporated within the AONB, as it is to the west;
- Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes.
- Important part of the setting of Mapledurham village, conservation area and a number of listed buildings, including Mapledurham House, and separation between Caversham, north of the River Thames, and Reading / Purley to the south;
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Chiltern AONB – visual continuity between the River Thames floodplain landscape, including the Thames Path, and the steep wooded valley slopes within the AONB, dry valley extends southwest from Chazey Heath into the floodplain landscape of the PLCA.




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Mapledurham

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 22.09.23 NT

Study area: Area 2

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area forms part of the immediate setting of the AONB, which adjoins its northern and western boundaries;</li> <li>The open landscape of the study area provides separation between development on the northern edge of Reading / Caversham and the AONB boundary, and Tokers Green.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 2 Amenity landscape:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typical golf course landscapes of greens, fairways, roughs and bunkers, with associated buildings and car parking;</li> <li>Intensively managed and somewhat sub urban character;</li> <li>Use of exotic tree species out of character with locality;</li> <li>Rural, often well-wooded setting with moderate to low intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area forms part of the Chilterns plateau;</li> <li>The topography of the study area is gently sloping from Tokers Green southwards towards the built up edge of Caversham;</li> <li>Almost entirely comprises Mapledurham Golf Club, with Chazey Heath Playground / Rokeby Recreation Ground indented into the northeastern corner, and the Pack Saddle PH on the western boundary;</li> <li>Open approach to the built up area of Caversham Heights, and provides open separation between Reading / Caversham and Tokers Green;</li> <li>The southeastern boundary of Mapledurham parish runs along the edge of Reading's built up area crossing Mapledurham Golf Club (study area 2) and Caversham Heath Golf Club;</li> <li>Only public road access to the study area via the lane to the Pack Saddle PH (a short stretch of narrow, tree lined sunken lane, shown on the 1877 OS map);</li> <li>Public access to the Pack Saddle PH and Chazey Heath Playground / Rokeby Recreation Ground and 'community orchard';</li> <li>Limited views across the area, which is surrounded by mature vegetation and / or built form;</li> <li>A number of small areas of woodland on the eastern / northeastern boundaries identified as 'Deciduous Woodland' on the Priority Habitat Inventory;</li> <li>Longcross Shaw, a small copse adjoining Mapledurham Golf Course Clubhouse is identified as Ancient Woodland.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong framework of mature trees surrounding the area;</li> <li>Landscape dominated by recreational land including golf course;</li> <li>Ancient woodland, Longcross Shaw, and a number of small areas of woodland are retained within the structure of the golf course;</li> <li>A short stretch of historic lane associated with the Pack Saddle PH.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited views as area is largely enclosed by mature vegetation and / or residential development;</li> <li>Occasional glimpses across the golf course from Rokeby Drive and the entrance to the golf course and Pack Saddle PH off the A4074.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area is representative of LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys, and LCT 2: Amenity landscape;</li> <li>The golf course landscape is similar in landscape and visual character and quality as the current AONB immediately to the west and north of the study area, where Mapledurham Golf Course extends to the north of Rokeby Drive, and Caversham Heath Golf Course occupies land to the west of the A4074.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small areas of woodland within the northern and eastern parts of study area 2, including Longcross Shaw, have been identified as 'Deciduous Woodland' priority habitat, as set out on the Priority Habitat Inventory;</li> <li>Longcross Shaw is identified as Ancient Woodland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed buildings located on the A4074 and Rokeby Drive at Chazey Heath to the northwest (outside of the study area), include Grade II Yew Tree, Thatch Cottage and Cherry Tree Cottage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private Mapledurham Golf Club not publicly accessible;</li> <li>Chazey Heath Playground and the Community Orchard are accessed from Rokeby Drive in the northeastern corner;</li> <li>No public rights of way cross the study area;</li> <li>The Chiltern Way runs along Rokeby Drive on the northern boundary of the study area.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely enclosed by mature vegetation;</li> <li>Surrounding residential development at Tokers Green and Caversham;</li> <li>A4074 to the west;</li> <li>Amenity landscape – golf course;</li> <li>Public access limited to Chazey Heath Playground / Rokeby Recreation Ground.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None known</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amenity grassland and woodland / surface water percolation;</li> <li>The study area forms an open approach to the development edge of Caversham Heights to the south, and provides open separation between Reading / Caversham and Tokers Green.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View north towards the Pack Saddle PH	View south across Mapledurham Golf Course from its entrance off the A4074	View south across Mapledurham Golf Course from Rokeby Drive



View southeast across Rokeby Recreation Ground / Chazey Heath Playground



View southeast across Rokeby Recreation Ground 'Community Orchard'

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- Largely indistinct from the adjoining landscape (open land within Mapledurham and Caversham Heath golf courses) to the north and southwest which lie within the AONB;
- Important part of the rural setting of and approach to Chazey Heath and Tokers Green and separation from Caversham to the south;
- Important for the rural setting of the Chiltern Way which runs along Rokeby Drive on the northern boundary, and inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Chiltern Way being incorporated within the AONB;
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Kidmore End Study Area 3 – undulating landscape of the lower dipslopes; Chiltern AONB – recreational landuse as golf course extends into the AONB to the north and west.




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Kidmore End

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 27.02.23 AG / NT Study area: Area 3

(Data drawn from 'Kidmore End parish Landscape Sensitivity Study, September 2018 and Kidmore End Local Valued landscape Assessment, August 2020, prepared by The terra firma Consultancy)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Study Area key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area forms part of the immediate setting of the existing AONB, which adjoins its northern boundary.</li> <li>The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of the landscape setting of the Chilterns AONB nearby to the north, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB. The area shares many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB as well as physical and visual links.</li> <li>The Chiltern Way long distance route forms the northern boundary of the area.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 2 Amenity landscape:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typical golf course landscapes of greens, fairways, roughs and bunkers, with associated buildings and car parking;</li> <li>Intensively managed and somewhat suburban character;</li> <li>Use of exotic tree species out of character with locality;</li> <li>Rural, often well-wooded setting with moderate to low intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area forms part of the Chilterns plateau dissected by a distinctive small scale dry valley with visually prominent landform forming an irregular U shape within the area and continuing north-west into the Chilterns AONB and south into the built up area of Emmer Green;</li> <li>The topography ranges from flat, gently undulating to steeply sloping (particularly at the southern end of the dry valley);</li> <li>Predominantly pasture, arable fields and woodland, with some sports facilities (golf and rugby), and some horse paddocks;</li> <li>Contains the 2 small hamlets of Tokers Green and Chalkhouse Green, which have a linear and scattered settlement pattern;</li> <li>Open approach to the built up area of Emmer Green / Reading and providing open separation between Reading and Sonning / Kidmore End</li> <li>The southern boundary of the parish runs along the edge of Reading's built up area crossing Reading Golf Course and open fields south of Gravel Hill lane;</li> <li>Tokers Green and Chalkhouse Green accessed by narrow winding lanes with a strong rural character, often sunken and enclosed by hedgerows with frequent mature oak and beech hedgerow trees;</li> <li>An area of Reading Golf Course and a rugby ground in the south and southeast of the area;</li> <li>The area is crossed by a number of public rights of way including the Chiltern Way recreational route along its northern edge;</li> <li>Two small disused chalk pits lie within the area, now heavily colonised by vegetation;</li> <li>The area is characterised by mature hedgerows, trees and woodland blocks with irregular and linear boundaries;</li> <li>Views across undulating pasture and arable fields to wooded horizons;</li> <li>North-western edge of Emmer Green openly visible in places.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key characteristics shared with the wider landscape are the distinctive dry valley, hedgerow network, settlement pattern, winding narrow sunken lanes and mosaic of woodland, enclosed pasture and arable fields.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Study Area forms a clear part of the visual setting of the current AONB with long views to the AONB horizons;</li> <li>Intervisibility is somewhat limited by the undulating landform and layers of woodland and mature field and road hedgerows but there is still a visual continuity with the surrounding open land particularly to the AONB to the north;</li> <li>The views across and down the dry valley and to the wooded hillsides, which can be appreciated from the surrounding roads and public rights of way, create a highly attractive visual quality;</li> <li>The area has an overriding strong rural character of good scenic value with a general absence of visually intrusive elements and with localized open edge of Emmer Green;</li> <li>The historic sunken lanes and green and pond at Tokers Green are particularly distinctive landmark features of the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Study Area is largely representative of LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau and Valleys;</li> <li>The Study Area represents an area similar in landscape and visual character and quality as the current AONB within very close reach of the urban settlement of Reading. The town edge is strongly defined by the distinctive dry valley and is well contained by woodland and tree lines, with limited encroachment onto the valley sides. [this quality of unspoilt landscape is rarely found immediately adjoining a major urban area.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dry valley and slopes fall within Oxfordshire's Conservation Target Area: Chilterns Dipslope and Plateau CTA – Chalk grassland, woodland and arable land (for arable wildflowers and farmland birds) are noted as important for biodiversity;</li> <li>Two Local Wildlife Sites and BAP Priority Habitat sites at Reading Golf Course and along Tokers Green Lane and Kidmore End Road fall within the Study Area, along with 3 other BAP Priority Habitats;</li> <li>Cucumber Wood and Chambers Copse are 2 Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands in the south-east of the Study Area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of cultural heritage and built form, there is a strong sense of history with historic sunken lanes, historic drove road (Chalkhouse Green Lane); a significant area of remaining Ancient Enclosure and a number of listed buildings set within surrounding farmland including The Well House at Tokers Wood Farm and a cluster at Chalkhouse Green set within small scale pasture fields including Chalk House (Grade II*).</li> <li>Pattern of roads and woodland largely unchanged since late 1800s, with some field sub-division in last century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Study Area contains a number of recreation facilities: Reading Golf Course in the south, Rugby and Football Ground in the east and Rosehill/Palmers Riding Stables in the south-east. These are largely undeveloped and under pasture or grassland;</li> <li>There is a good network of public footpaths, including the Chiltern Way regional recreational route, which provide opportunities for quiet recreation and enjoyment of a landscape with a strong rural character for a large number of people in close proximity in the built up area of Reading, the hamlets within the Study Area and the nearby villages of Kidmore End and Sonning Common.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Study Area has a generally strong, complex and irregular landscape pattern of pasture, arable fields, woodland and hedgerows (reflecting the AONB landscape);</li> <li>A strongly rural character and generally tranquil landscape, with few detractors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No known associations;</li> <li>Noted in the Kidmore End Local Valued Landscape Assessment, 2010 that there is 'evidence of long term historic occupation of the land at Chalkhouse Green Farm in the east of the area'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Study Area forms a clear part of the visual setting of the current AONB;</li> <li>The area provides an attractive setting to the nearby settlements, with woodland and tree lines providing containment to the urban edge of Reading; open approach to Emmer Green / Reading and separation with Sonning Common and Kidmore End</li> <li>Dry valley and water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land and arable farmland;</li> <li>Recreational usage.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View across wooded dry valley towards Emmer Green from Kidmore End Road looking south-east to Chambers Copse with the water tower and Clayfield Copse on the skyline	View looking north along the rural Kidmore End Road, enclosed by vegetation.	View from Tokers Green Lane, looking north-east across the dry valley towards the Chilterns AONB.

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Sonning Common

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 27.02.23 AG

Parish landscape character area: Area 4

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area forms part of the immediate setting of the existing AONB, which adjoins its eastern boundary.</li> <li>Physical links with the AONB, through the Chiltern Way which passes adjacent to the northern boundary and Row Lane forming the eastern boundary of the area is a quiet, rural lane providing links to the wider AONB footpath network.</li> <li>Visual links with the AONB to the east.</li> <li>Important part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common and separation with Reading / Caversham.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undulating landscape</li> <li>Extensive areas of Ancient Woodland</li> <li>The village of Sonning Common comprises the largest settlement</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedges</li> <li>Chiltern Way crosses the area</li> </ul> <p>And <b>LCT 11 Open Dip Slope</b> landscape type, of which there are a few isolated pockets of open farmland with a weak landscape structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large scale field pattern</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from power lines</li> <li>Large-scale open landscape with high intervisibility in immediate area; long distance views contained by neighbouring woodland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flatter than countryside to the east and south-west, which is more undulating</li> <li>Ancient woodland to north of area.</li> <li>Lack of trees; some conifers in gardens of adjacent houses to north-west</li> <li>Managed field hedgerows to boundaries – intensely managed and rather ‘top-heavy’ with gappy bases. Southern edge is open to the wider field</li> <li>The southern edge of Sonning Common abuts the northern tip and lies west of Peppard Road which forms the north-western boundary. The village edge is generally rural in character and well treed.</li> <li>Area 4 is part of a large arable field which extends to the south-east</li> <li>Roads on 2 sides form the main approaches into Sonning Common from the south. Peppard Road to the west is the busier road of the 2 but is still rural in character. Row Lane to the east is quieter and narrower but has power lines running along it. Both are unlit. Both have been mapped since the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the same alignment.</li> <li>No public rights of way within area 4 but Chiltern Way passes adjacent to the northern edge and the quiet, rural Row Lane forming the eastern edge of the area provides a link to the wider footpath network to the east and south-east.</li> <li>Large scale field, but locally contained, as is typical for the LCT.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area 4 is characteristic of the wider landscape, largely indistinct from the AONB to the east</li> <li>Managed field hedgerows to boundaries, except southern edge which is open to the wider field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some views of the undulating landscape of the AONB to the east.</li> <li>Some views south to the edge of Emmer Green and large buildings at Bishopsland Farm</li> <li>Large scale field, but locally contained, as is typical for the LCT</li> </ul>	Area 4 is characteristic of the wider landscape, largely indistinct from the AONB to the east
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
Intensely managed field boundaries to the east and west – would benefit from interplanting and less rigorous management regime to improve biodiversity	Bird in Hand pub to north Grade II Listed Bishopsland Farm Cottages and farm buildings to the south-east are between 0.5-1km and area 4 is unlikely to be important to their setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No public access or recreational use within area 4 but Chiltern Way passes adjacent to the northern edge and the quiet, rural Row Lane provides a link to the wider footpath network to the east and south-east and opportunities for quiet recreation and enjoyment of a landscape with a strong rural character for a large number of people in close proximity in the built up area of Reading, and the nearby villages of Kidmore End and Sonning Common.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquility)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sense of rurality and separation from the village to the north</li> <li>Roads on 2 sides form the main approaches into Sonning Common from the south. Peppard Road to the west is the busier road of the 2 but is still rural in character. Row Lane to the east is quieter and narrower but has power lines running along it. Both are unlit. Both have been mapped since the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the same alignment.</li> </ul>	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arable farming</li> <li>Surface water percolation</li> <li>Open land separating Sonning Common from the northern edge of Reading / Caversham</li> <li>Important part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View south-east along Row Lane with area 4 hedged boundary on right	View south from northern tip of area 4. Buildings at edge of Emmer Green and large buildings at Bishopsland Farm (some of which are Grade II Listed structures) visible	View north-west across area 4. Buildings at the southern edge of Sonning Common are visible among trees
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristic of the wider landscape, largely indistinct from the AONB to the east. The area sits on a plateau linking the more undulating landscape to the east and south-west.</li> <li>Considered alongside the adjacent landscape to the south and west, area 4 provides a continuity of the AONB landscape linking characteristic undulating landform and pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands</li> <li>Important part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common and separation with Reading / Caversham</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Eye and Dunsden PLCA3B – the open dipslope landscape is indistinguishable between Sonning Common Study Area 4 and this PLCA; Sonning Common Study Area 5 and Kidmore End Study Area 3 – the dipslope landscape is continuous between these study areas and Sonning Common Study Area 4; Chiltern AONB – the open dipslope landscape of this study area is largely indistinct from the AONB to the east. The Chiltern Way runs along the northern edge of the study area linking Kidmore End Study Area 3, Sonning Common Study Area 4 and the AONB.</li> <li>The Chiltern Way runs along the northern edge of the area linking with Mapledurham Study Area 2 to the west, Sonning Common study areas and the AONB.</li> </ul>		

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of, the landscape setting of the Chilterns AONB which lies immediately to the north, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, and sharing many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB
- The topography of the area strongly relates to the topography of the AONB and is typical of the AONB special quality which describes how 'the folds of the landscape hide many small dry valleys' and 'provide hidden 'secret' landscapes and unspoilt countryside'
- The area shares the wooded characteristics of the AONB; also noted as a special quality.
- Considered alongside the adjacent landscape to the north, east and west, the area provides a continuity of the AONB landscape linking characteristic undulating landform / dry valley, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands and the pattern of small settlements within open countryside
- The 'special route' of the Chiltern Way runs along the area's northern boundary and inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Chiltern Way being incorporated within the AONB

As noted above this PLCA has links with: Sonning Common Study Area 5 - the characteristic undulating landform / dry valley of the study area is continuous with the dipslope landscape of Sonning Common Study Area 5 to the north; Sonning Common Study Area 4, Eye and Dunsden PLCAs 3 and 4 and Mapledurham Study Area 2 – the area provides a continuity of the dipslope landscape to the east and west; Chiltern AONB – landscape within the study area is characteristic of the Chiltern AONB and much of it is indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB immediately to the north.



## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Sonning Common

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 27.02.23 AG

Parish landscape character area: Area 5

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study area forms part of the immediate setting of the existing AONB, which adjoins its western boundary.</li> <li>Physical links with the AONB, through the Chiltern Way and local footpath which pass through the area providing links to the wider AONB footpath network.</li> <li>Part of dry valley which extends to the south</li> <li>Visual links with the AONB to the west and south.</li> <li>Important part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common and separation with Kidmore End to west and Reading / Caversham to south and therefore important in creating the pattern of small settlements within open countryside.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT :</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undulating plateau landscape dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys</li> <li>Heavily wooded landscape</li> <li>Extensive areas of Ancient Woodland</li> <li>The village of Sonning Common comprises the largest settlement</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture</li> <li>Chiltern Way crosses the area</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16: Semi-enclosed Dip Slope;</b> a loose mosaic of farmland and woodland characteristic of the more level plateau, particularly south of Sonning Common:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level or gently sloping ground</li> <li>Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees which provides visual containment and moderate to low intervisibility</li> <li>Dominance of arable cultivation</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt with some suburbanizing influences along main roads and with localised intrusion of built development and power lines (e.g around Sonning Common)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At edge of plateau on which Sonning Common sits, therefore less undulating than landscape to south</li> <li>Bur Wood ancient woodland encloses the northern part of area 5.</li> <li>Tree belts along Kennylands Road, western boundary and internal boundaries.</li> <li>Cucumber Plantation deciduous woodland block lies along southern edge which is otherwise open, and part of a larger field extending southwards.</li> <li>Managed and, in places gappy, hedgerow to south-eastern boundary.</li> <li>Linear settlement pattern along Kennylands Road includes recent housing infilling former gap in housing.</li> <li>The village edge is generally rural in character and well treed.</li> <li>A 'rawness' to a short section of the countryside edge created by recent housing will improve with new planting as specified in planning conditions.</li> <li>Despite recent development to north-east, the area is rural in character and feels generally tranquil and remote, with strong character, visual and physical links to wider AONB to west and south.</li> <li>South-eastern edge of area 5 is formed by Kennylands Road which is one of the main approaches to the village centre though is unlit and has a rural character, with views to AONB. The road has been mapped since the 18<sup>th</sup> century on the same alignment.</li> <li>Public right of way crosses the northern part of the area, linking Kennylands Road to the wider footpath network to the west; Chiltern Way passes through the south-east corner of the area.</li> <li>Southern part of area is large in scale, part of a large field extending to the south.</li> <li>Triangular area behind houses on Kennylands Road is small in scale, enclosed by trees and sub-divided with fencing into horse paddocks.</li> <li>Field east of Bur Wood is enclosed by tree belts and medium in scale.</li> <li>Dry valley through southern area extends south beyond the area and is typical of the LCT.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Area 5 is characteristic of the wider landscape, largely indistinct from the AONB to the west and south</li> <li>Tree belts, woodland and field hedgerows to boundaries, except southern edge which is open to the wider field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some views of the undulating landscape of the AONB to the west and south.</li> <li>Some views south to the edge of Emmer Green and large buildings at Bishopsland Farm</li> <li>Large scale field in south, in combination conjoined field to the south; typical for the LCT</li> </ul>	Area 5 is characteristic of the wider landscape with its sweeping landform, arable farmland, tree belts and woodland, and is largely indistinct from the AONB to the west and south
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bur Wood ancient woodland runs along western edge creating strong linear habitat linking with other field boundaries to north, west and south.</li> <li>Bur Wood and Cucumber Plantation are characteristic of the wider AONB landscape.</li> <li>Intensely managed field boundary to part of eastern edge would benefit from interplanting and less rigorous management regime to improve biodiversity</li> </ul>	The pattern of roads, footpaths, woodland and field boundaries is largely the same as mapped in the late 1800s, except the removal of a north / south field boundary extending from Cucumber Plantation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chiltern Way crosses south-east part of area providing links between this regional footpath and the village.</li> <li>Local footpath 350/14/10 crossing north part of area links village and Millenium Green to Bur Wood and the AONB / Kidmore End beyond.</li> <li>These paths provide opportunities for quiet recreation and enjoyment of a landscape with a strong rural character for a large number of people in close proximity in the built up area of Reading, and the nearby villages of Kidmore End and Sonning Common.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquility)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sense of rurality and general separation from the village to the north-east</li> <li>Kennylands Road is rural in character and is unlit, well-treed, with views across countryside including AONB.</li> <li>Strong sense of tranquillity and beauty, particularly with the sweeping dry valley landform and wooded horizons</li> </ul>	None known	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arable farming</li> <li>Surface water percolation</li> <li>Open land separating Sonning Common from Kidmore End</li> <li>Part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common and important contribution to pattern of small settlements within open countryside</li> <li>Recreational links</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View west from footpath crossing north part of the area to Bur Wood ancient woodland which forms the western edge of area 5 (north part).	View north from the Chiltern Way crossing south-eastern corner of the area with the edge of Cucumber Plantation and dry valley to the left and heavily treed Kennylands Road with occasional houses right of picture. Views extend westwards across AONB.	

		
<p>View north from public footpath through sub-divided paddocks behind houses and gardens south-west of Kennylands Road.</p>	<p>View south from footpath crossing north part of the area. Tree line bisecting area encloses this field.</p>	<p>View north from public footpath towards recently built housing subject to tree planting as part of planning conditions.</p>

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- Characteristic of the wider landscape, largely indistinct from the AONB to the west. The area sits on a plateau linking the more undulating landscape to the east and south-west.
- Considered alongside the adjacent landscape to the south and east, area 5 provides a continuity of the AONB landscape linking characteristic undulating landform / dry valley, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands and the pattern of small settlements within open countryside
- Important part of rural setting of and approach to Sonning Common and separation with Kidmore End to west and Reading / Caversham to south
- Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Chiltern Way being incorporated within the AONB
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Kidmore End Study Area 3 – the dipslope landscape of the study area is continuous with the undulating landform / dry valley of Kidmore End Study Area 3 to the south; Sonning Common Study Area 4 and Eye and Dunsden PLCA3B - the dipslope landscape is continuous between these areas and Sonning Common Study Area 4; Chiltern AONB – Characteristic of the wider landscape, Sonning Common Study Area 5 is largely indistinct from the AONB to the west.
- The Chiltern Way crosses the study area linking Kidmore End Study Area 3, Sonning Common Study Areas 4 and 5 and the AONB.




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Eye and Dunsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 6: PLCA1 (River Thames and Meadows)

(Data drawn from "Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape", April 2022)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views towards the dipslope of the Chiltern plateau, with the AONB beyond, from the Thames Path within the PLCA;</li> <li>Dry / semi-dry valleys on the river valley side have created an undulating wooded skyline, seen in views from the floodplain;</li> <li>A distinctive floodplain landscape adjoining the River Thames with a strong sense of identity and natural beauty influenced by the linear river, Sonning Eye Conservation Area and Listed buildings, undeveloped nature of the floodplain, and associated strong rural character in close proximity to urban areas;</li> <li>A largely undeveloped landscape providing an important floodplain setting to the River Thames, and Sonning Eye Conservation Area.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 5 Flat floodplain pasture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively 'wet', riparian character;</li> <li>Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;</li> <li>Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside;</li> <li>Intimate, pastoral, tranquil and quite remote character with some 'arcadian' qualities along the Thames close to settlements and riverside parklands.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meandering river on floodplain;</li> <li>Irregular river banks with intermittent groups of trees and riverside riparian vegetation;</li> <li>A mix of intermittent and robust hedgerows and wider tree belts marking field boundaries, with linear fields of pasture adjacent to the river, and larger arable fields towards the valley side;</li> <li>Small woodlands on floodplain;</li> <li>Tributaries of the River Thames including Berry Brook and the watercourse coming down from Hampstead Bottom, with a water spring at the base of the valley side;</li> <li>Floodplain area prone to flooding with manmade drainage channels straight or slightly curved on floodplain;</li> <li>Sonning Eye village is partly covered with a Conservation Area designation, and displays a lack of urbanising features, including pavements;</li> <li>properties on the southern edge of Sonning Eye have large gardens which extend down to the river bank often containing mature trees and vegetation;</li> <li>French Horn building complex forms a gateway building for travellers from the east, with isolated dwellings including pub on the lower valley side adjacent A4155;</li> <li>Thames Path long distance route follows the northwestern bank of River Thames, northeast of Sonning Eye;</li> <li>Alignment of river demarcated within the landscape by riverside vegetation, often hidden;</li> <li>A4155 runs along the southwestern boundary of the PLCA; similarly B478 runs through the southern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Gravel extraction is an ongoing land use within the area, where after extraction, land is then partly restored back to farmland, or flooded to create lakes.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames and its largely development free associated floodplain both enclosed by the undeveloped river valley side to the north west;</li> <li>The patchwork of fields, woodlands and robust hedgerows;</li> <li>Sonning Eye Conservation Area and Listed buildings further enhance this character area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature trees on the periphery of Sonning Eye screens the settlement from surrounding landscape;</li> <li>Views south from the A4155 are limited due to the wooded character on the edge of the floodplain;</li> <li>Views of the wooded islands and wooded northern river bank as seen from the B478 and locations within the Conservation Area;</li> <li>Views of Sonning Bridge from the Thames Path;</li> <li>Views towards the River Thames floodplain and PLCA1 from the slopes to the northwest within PLCAs 3 and 4, often framed by woodland / river screened by woodland;</li> <li>Elevated views across the Thames River Valley from the A4155 to the north;</li> <li>Dry / semi-dry valleys on the river valley side have created an undulating wooded skyline, seen in views from the floodplain;</li> <li>Views to The Warren (woodland within neighbouring Shiplake Parish) and open arable fields;</li> <li>Shiplake Row visible as intermittent row of redbrick buildings set against mature trees on horizon.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA1 is characteristic of the River Thames corridor and floodplain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames and associated undeveloped floodplain, enclosed by undeveloped river valley side. An undeveloped length of the River Thames with a strong rural character in close proximity to urban areas;</li> <li>Sonning Eye as an early river crossing retaining its compact nucleated settlement form.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh – extensive areas located in the northeastern and western part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland adjacent to Spring Lane; Berry Brook; and on the southern boundary of PLCA1 on the waters edge and surrounding Sonning Eye; on the river bank north of Sonning Bridge; and in the floodplain on the northern boundary of the PLCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sonning Eye is partly covered by a Conservation Area designation and includes 13 Listed Buildings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thames Path – National Trail provides complete access to the River Thames along the edge of the river bank;</li> <li>Access to River Thames by boat slipway;</li> <li>The French Horn Public House and restaurant;</li> <li>'The Mill at Sonning' Theatre (former flour mill with wheel).</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meandering river provides seclusion and a series of screened and intimate locations;</li> <li>Good tranquillity adjacent the River Thames, despite present gravel workings;</li> <li>The River Thames valley forms part of a wider view from viewpoints to the north of the parish, while on the floodplain there is strong sense of enclosure and remoteness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames – extensive within history, art and literature. An extract from the book 'Three Men in a Boat' by Jerome K. 1889 describes a section of the River Thames between Shiplake and Sonning Eye</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain in the eastern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land;</li> <li>Recreational usage.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
<i>'The Thames Path allows views across open pasture fields on the floodplain out to the enclosing wooded river valley side'</i>	<i>'Limited built form adjacent the river bank of Sonning Eye protects the rural character of the River Thames'</i>	<i>'Mature woodland and periphery vegetation screens the built development of Sonning Eye from the adjacent landscape, enhancing the sense of seclusion and tranquillity of the River Thames Path (National Trail)'</i>
(Photographs extracted from PLCA1: River Thames and Meadows 'Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape, April 2022, prepared by Liz Allen)		
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristic of the Thames floodplain landscape, with character and physical links to the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes within Shiplake parish to the north and Eye and Dunsden PLCA2 to the south;</li> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes;</li> <li>Important part of the setting of the River Thames and the Sonning Eye Conservation Area and associated listed buildings;</li> <li>The Thames Path follows the northern bank of the river, linking with Eye and Dunsden PLCA2 at Sonning Bridge to the south and Shiplake PLCA1 to the north;</li> <li>Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Thames Path being incorporated within the AONB;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Shiplake PLCA1 - continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, including the Thames Path northwards towards Shiplake College; Eye and Dunsden PLCA4 and PLCA3A – sloping valley sides extending southwest from Span Hill towards Playhatch on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as dry valleys, including Hampstead Bottom, form an important link between the River and the diplope landscape to the west; Eye and Dunsden PLCA2 - continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, southwest from Sonning Eye towards Caversham.</li> </ul>		

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Eye and Dunsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 6: PLCA2 (River Thames, Meadows and Lakes)

(Data drawn from "Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape", April 2022)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views out of the area are limited due to the well wooded character of PLCA2: with views available to the undeveloped skyline of the dip slope of the Chiltern plateau to the north of the A4155;</li> <li>Similarly, views to the wooded landscape of PLCA2 from the dip slope of the Chiltern plateau provide a contrast with the urban form of Reading beyond;</li> <li>A distinctive floodplain landscape encompassing the River Thames, water bodies and lakes with maturing riparian vegetation on adjacent land, with views out to the adjacent undeveloped river valley side, all in close proximity to an urban area ;</li> <li>The wooded riparian character of this LCA provides a setting for Sonning Eye Conservation Area, and separation of Sonning Eye from Reading and Caversham.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 5 Flat floodplain pasture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively 'wet', riparian character;</li> <li>Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;</li> <li>Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside;</li> <li>Intimate, pastoral, tranquil and quite remote character with some 'arcadian' qualities along the Thames close to settlements and riverside parklands.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 8 Floodplain wetland:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complex of freshwater lagoons formed from flooded gravel pits;</li> <li>Artificial form and character but colonising vegetation helps to create a more semi natural character and developing wildlife value in some areas;</li> <li>Comparatively inaccessible, remote character but active gravel workings, recreational use and proximity to roads, railways and built development intrude on rural qualities of the area;</li> <li>Semi-enclosed character with moderate to low intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meandering river on the southern edge of the floodplain with the wooded character of PLCA2 providing a riparian setting;</li> <li>Lake edges, islands and sections of dryland supporting riparian vegetation, with a few small areas of open grassland;</li> <li>Patchwork of small fields of rough grassland, woodland and overgrown hedgerows around Lowfield Farm;</li> <li>Occasional mature oak tree as a surviving relic from the previous unquarried landscape;</li> <li>Berry Brook as a local tributary running into the River Thames;</li> <li>Includes Henley Road Gravel Pit (an existing Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site, including an extension to the north);</li> <li>A4155 runs along the northern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>A landscape associated with recreation use with a variety of water-based sports;</li> <li>An area of permissive paths around the lakes just south of the A4155;</li> <li>Strong sense of enclosure due to maturity of riparian vegetation;</li> <li>Low intervisibility with PLCA1 River Thames and Meadows to the north;</li> <li>Views out to the development free skyline and enclosing river valley side to the north enhances rural character;</li> <li>PLCA2 is an area in advanced transition from a quarried landscape to a more settled area of lakes and nature reserves supporting a range of water-based leisure activities.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extensive covering of rejuvenating riparian vegetation has allowed some previous poor-quality landscape elements to become screened and less significant within this evolving landscape;</li> <li>This PLCA contains a number of quality landscape elements which fit together forming a distinctive character area. These include the River Thames, water bodies and lakes with the maturing riparian vegetation on adjacent land, and views out to the adjacent undeveloped river valley side.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open areas of water adjacent to an access road, devoid of development;</li> <li>Mature oak trees provide points of interest within this relatively new landscape</li> <li>Views from the Thames Path on the southern bank of the river to a well-wooded riparian riverbank;</li> <li>Views from the southeastern edge of Caversham, with PLCA2 providing a contrasting backdrop to the urban edge;</li> <li>Views to the well wooded landscape of PLCA2 from the slopes within PLCA3, provides a contrast with urban form of Reading;</li> <li>Views out of the area are limited due to the well wooded character of PLCA2, with important key views to the undeveloped skyline of the dip slope north of the A4155’;</li> <li>The mature woodland south of the A4155 provides a distinctive rural view looking west from Playhatch close to the urban environment of Caversham and Reading beyond.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA2 is characteristic of the River Thames corridor and floodplain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames and an extensive area of lakes in close proximity to an urban area</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancient woodland – small area on island within lake;</li> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland – numerous areas on islands within and surrounding lakes;</li> <li>Includes the 53.7 hectares Henley Road Gravel Pit (an existing Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Except for Lowfield Farm, buildings are relatively new / simple in architectural character; no buildings / structures are listed within this Landscape Character Area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The River Thames forms the southern edge to PLCA2, with no formal public access to its northern river bank. There is informal access from Sonning Eye to the Sailing club;</li> <li>Permissive paths and access to Local Wildlife Sites from permissive paths;</li> <li>Limited vehicle access within PLCA2 with only access roads leading off the A4155;</li> <li>A mix of water-based leisure uses and activities exist around the lakes, including the following: fishing, water-skiing, rowing on the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake, boat storage, sailing and the sailing club and the Thames and Kennet Marina.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be quiet with bird song heard above the background faint urban noise of traffic and overhead aeroplanes;</li> <li>A4155 follows short stretch of the northern boundary;</li> <li>A high level of tranquillity and the sense of remoteness due to the well wooded character of the riparian vegetation;</li> <li>Wildlife reserve with seasonal change in bird species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames – extensive, including literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain and waterbodies / Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>The wooded riparian character of this LCA provides a setting and separation of Sonning Eye from Reading and Caversham;</li> <li>The mature wooded roadside character south of the A4155 provides an important contribution to the setting and separation of Playhatch from Caversham.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
<i>‘Limited views from internal access road of lakes, where found provide long views. This area also includes a network of permissive paths’</i>	<i>‘A view from the south and the Thames Valley Park, where the vegetation and development free skyline provides a rural backdrop to this park and a rural setting for the river’</i>	<i>‘A mature oak tree from the previous unquarried landscape of lowland farmland contrast with the more recent areas of regenerating woodland’</i>
(Photographs extracted from PLCA2: River Thames, Meadows and Lakes ‘Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape, April 2022, prepared by Liz Allen)		
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristic of the Thames floodplain landscape, with character and physical links to the Thames Valley floodplain landscape within Eye and Dunsden PLCA1 to the north;</li> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes;</li> <li>Important part of the setting of the River Thames and the Sonning Eye Conservation Area and associated listed buildings;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Eye and Dunsden PLCA3A – sloping valley sides at Playhatch on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as a dry valley, form an important link between the River and the dipslope landscape to the west; Eye and Dunsden PLCA1 - continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, northwards to Sonning Eye and beyond.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Eye and Dunsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 6: PLCA3 (Dunsden Open Dipslopes and Thames River Valley Side)

(Data drawn from "Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape", April 2022)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Boundary with the Chiltern AONB along the northeastern boundary of PLCA3B;</li> <li>Long views to the west and east from PLCA3B into the Chilterns AONB, and from the northern parish boundary views further into the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>The northern part (PLCA3B) clearly forms part of the setting of the AONB, with the woodlands along the southern edge of the AONB forming visually prominent landscape features;</li> <li>The unspoilt rural character of PLCA3A and PLCA3B is rare in such close proximity to a large urban area as Caversham and Reading, and the open landscape of the PLCA provides separation between the AONB and Caversham, as well as making an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>To the south, there are wide and framed views across the Thames River Valley to far horizons, with few landscape elements detracting from these outstanding views. The PLCA provides an important contribution to the rural setting of the Thames Valley and River Thames.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p>(PLCA3A)  <b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> </ul> <p>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</p> <p>(PLCA3B)  <b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character but with some limited intrusion from power lines (e.g. on both sides of Caversham);</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with high intervisibility in immediate area but long distance views contained by neighbouring woodland.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 23 Wooded dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distinctive landform of plateaux dissected by a network of shallow, dry valleys;</li> <li>Strong structure of woodland and complex landform creates an intimate and enclosed character with a particular feeling of secrecy in some valleys;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character with only localised suburbanising influences within villages, along road corridors or around the fringes of the main settlements;</li> <li>Low intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA3B has a gently rounded elevated landform which allows far reaching views; PLCA3A is also an open elevated landscape with sculptural sinuous dry and semi dry valleys;</li> <li>Playhatch is contained within a semi-dry valley, with adjacent valley spurs open and development free providing it with an open rural setting;</li> <li>Trees/hedgerow/woodland are located along the western periphery of PLCA3A, forming a woodland buffer to the urban edge of Caversham (along with Milestone Wood beyond the parish boundary);</li> <li>Robust hedgerows, often as field boundaries, aligning Public Right of Way, lanes and highways. Foxhill Lane is enclosed by robust native hedgerows, as is the unnamed road running through Playhatch which aligns a dry valley;</li> <li>Redundant old chalk pits now overgrown with trees create woodland copse features within the open fields;</li> <li>Sinuus woodland within base of semi- dry valley north of Playhatch, mature trees within roadside and field hedgerows;</li> <li>Very limited areas of development beyond Playhatch, with Foxhill Farm and the southern end of Dunsden Green included within this PLCA;</li> <li>Playhatch, a compact settlement at the junction with Foxhill Lane and the unnamed road running through Playhatch, contains 5 Grade II Listed Buildings;</li> <li>Rear gardens/paddocks give Playhatch a soft edge to the adjacent surrounding open landscape. Flint garden boundary walls are a feature;</li> <li>Old routeways including Foxhill Lane and Sandpit Lane. Foxhill Lane is an historic routeway leading down the Thames River valley side, along with PRoW to the east;</li> <li>Narrow roads, often semi sunken limiting views out to surrounding landscape;</li> <li>Open elevated landscape, with long framed views from Fox Hill across the Thames Valley to the wooded horizons to the south;</li> <li>Long open views across to the north west and beyond to wooded horizons and the east, both into the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>Good PRoW access, with multiple PRoW leading further into the Chilterns AONB and down into the Thames Valley.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<p>PLCA3A and PLCA3B contains many landscape features of value in their own right:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valley side topography with dry and semi dry valleys and valley spurs;</li> <li>Robust hedgerows, hedgerow trees, small woodlands and discreet roads;</li> <li>Panoramic views;</li> <li>PRoW and lanes providing good accessibility and quiet recreation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little inter-visibility with Caversham, enhancing the rural character of the area and Parish;</li> <li>Views to and from the southern edge of Dunsden Green, across large-scale open landscape within the PLCA, including Dunsden Green Church;</li> <li>PRoW provide long views to the west and east further into the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>From the northern parish boundary there are views further into the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>Views to the west from the unnamed road running through Playhatch, and PRoW to the west, across the semi-dry valley and associated sinuous woodland, and across open fields extending to Milestone Wood;</li> <li>The Grade II Listed 'Thatched Cottage' lies low and is barely visible from the surrounding landscape. The adjacent red brick dwelling with its ornate chimney stacks forms a focal feature of an isolated rural dwelling;</li> <li>To the south, the PRoW and lanes provide wide and framed views across the Thames River Valley to far horizons, few landscape elements detract from these outstanding views.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA3A and PLCA3B unspoilt rural character is rare in such close proximity to a large urban area as Caversham and Reading.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancient and semi natural woodland – small areas to the north in PLCA3B</li> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland – a number of small blocks of woodland to the north, and the linear woodland in the dry valley at Playhatch.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Playhatch contains 5 Listed buildings. The isolated: 'The Thatched Cottage' is also listed and provides an example of a 17C rural dwelling set in an agricultural landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good PRoW access:</li> <li>PRoW within the PLCA and leading further into the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>PRoW leading down the valley side, down onto the Thames Valley floodplain.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High levels of tranquillity and sense of semi-remoteness, with PRoW and lanes i.e. Foxhill Lane with its semi enclosed character providing areas of semi-remoteness and separation from urban area (Caversham) to the west;</li> <li>Elevated character with few visual detractors and well concealed urban edge enhances rural experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low lying vernacular dwellings, often listed for example 'The Old Thatched Cottage' originally C16, which was also mentioned by the WWI Poet: Wilfred Owen;</li> <li>Contains part of the Wilfred Owen Trail a WW1 celebrated poet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open landscape contributes to the southern rural setting and separate identity of Dunsden Green from Playhatch;</li> <li>PLCA3A and PLCA3B provides an important contribution to the rural setting of the Thames Valley and River Thames;</li> <li>PLCA3A and PLCA3B undeveloped and robust rural landscape character makes an important contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>The northern part (PLCA3B) clearly forms part of the setting of the AONB, with the woodlands along the southern edge of the AONB forming visually prominent landscape features.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
<p>3B 'Mature oak trees create focal points within this elevated landscape, often marking old chalk quarries, as seen to the right. Long views to wooded horizons to the NW and NE within the Chilterns AONB. An isolated dwelling sits low in the landscape, barely conspicuous.'</p>	<p>3A 'The start of the smooth sculptural semi-dry valley leading down to the seemingly wooded Thames Valley floodplain, with wooded horizons beyond.'</p>	<p>3A 'A view along Foxhill Lane, a quiet lane traditionally surfaced with flint, enclosed by native hedgerows.'</p>
<p>(Photographs extracted from PLCA3: Dunsden Open Dipslopes and Thames River Valley Side 'Eye &amp; Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape, April 2022, prepared by Liz Allen)</p>		
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes of the AONB;</li> <li>The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of, the landscape setting of the Chiltern AONB, which lies immediately to the north, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, and sharing many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB;</li> <li>The area provides a continuity of the AONB landscape within Binfield Heath parish to the northeast linking characteristic undulating landform, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands and the pattern of small settlements within open countryside;</li> <li>PRoW providing links between the AONB, across the PLCA to the Thames Valley at Playhatch;</li> <li>The topography of the area strongly relates to the topography of the AONB and is typical of the AONB special quality which describes how 'the folds of the landscape hide many small dry valleys' and 'provide hidden 'secret' landscapes and unspoilt countryside'</li> <li>Long views to both the AONB to the north and Thames valley to the southeast;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Eye and Dunsden PLCA1 and PLCA2 – sloping valley sides extending southwest from Span Hill to Playhatch on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as dry valleys, form an important link between the dipslope landscape and the river to the east; Eye and Dunsden PLCA4 – the dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA, with a number of landscape features, including its undulating landform, providing continuity; Kidmore End Study Area 3; Sonning Common Study Area 4; Binfield Heath PLCA6 – As noted for Eye and Dunsden PLCA4, the lower dipslope landscape is continuous through all these PLCA linking characteristic undulating landscape; Chiltern AONB - similarly the dipslope of this PLCA continues into the dipslopes of the AONB to the north within Binfield Heath.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Eye and Dunsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 6: PLCA4 (Dunsden Semi-enclosed Dipslopes and Thames River Valley Side)

(Data drawn from "Eye & Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape", April 2022)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although no boundary with the Chiltern AONB, less than 200 metres from the nearest AONB boundary;</li> <li>Transitional landscape between the higher Chilterns dipslopes down to the River Thames floodplain;</li> <li>PLCA4 contains many landscape features of value, including Ancient Woodlands, Ancient enclosures, rural hamlets and farmsteads, listed buildings, narrow lanes, a high density of PRoW, mature trees and hedgerows.</li> <li>An intact area of countryside in close proximity to the urban area of Caversham, PLCA4 provides separation between the Chiltern AONB and Caversham as well as an important landscape and visual setting for the AONB.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character but with some limited intrusion from power lines (e.g. on both sides of Caversham);</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with high intervisibility in immediate area but long distance views contained by neighbouring woodland.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower Chilterns dipslope topography with undulations, local shallow valleys and spurs;</li> <li>Tagg Lane within a small shallow valley with a spring leading to a series of ditches (often dry) and ponds. Other small ponds are a feature of PLCA4 which are also often dry;</li> <li>Mainly small-scale fields of grass (surrounding dwellings with some medium sized fields under arable cultivation and farmsteads beyond);</li> <li>A strong structure of hedgerows provides field boundaries, as well as mature tree belts as found towards the northern parish boundary south of Gravel Lane</li> <li>Woodlands are a feature of this area with: Blackhouse Wood, Round Wood, The firs, Ash Copse and Spanhill Copse;</li> <li>Mature oak trees in hedgerows on Dunsden Way, demarcating previous field boundaries, and on the peripheries of woodlands;</li> <li>Small woodland copses mark sites of old chalk pits;</li> <li>Small tree groups and copses associated with large private gardens, providing screening;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows provide enclosure;</li> <li>The Green at Dunsden which also contains the community orchard continues to the north as open farmland;</li> <li>Farmsteads are a feature of this PLCA4, as isolated clusters of buildings often with Listed buildings/structures i.e. Corks Farm, Bishoplands Farm, Chapmans Farm, Dunsden Farm, Bint's Farm;</li> <li>Numerous tracks/minor roads crisscross this LCA i.e. Foxhill Lane, Row Lane, Tagg Lane and Sandpit Lane, all providing good access across the parish linking to adjacent areas including the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>A high density of PRoW provides an easily accessible area of countryside;</li> <li>Narrow slightly sunken roads enclosed by robust hedgerows and mature trees;</li> <li>Very limited street lighting adds to preserving dark skies;</li> <li>Strong rural character contrasting with the adjacent urban form of Caversham and Reading.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<p>PLCA4 contains many landscape features of value in their own right, collectively contributing to the condition of the landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient Woodlands, mature trees, mature tree lined roads, mature tree belts and a pattern of fields of grassland and arable enclosed by robust hedgerows;</li> <li>• Topography which contributes to an intimate semi-remote landscape.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRoW south of Dunsden Way provides views south across the Thames Valley floodplain to southern wooded horizons;</li> <li>• Views to the east across the parish boundary to Hampstead Farm and then beyond to the wooded horizon of Bowsey Hill;</li> <li>• Views southwest to Milestone Wood on the edge of Caversham and out to the south across the open arable fields to the wooded Thames Valley below;</li> <li>• Views of Dunsden Church and its distinctive three bell-gable;</li> <li>• Views from Foxhill Lane into the adjacent woodland: Blackhouse Wood and the small paddocks on the edge Caversham</li> <li>• PRoW south of Dunsden Way provides views across to Round Wood, The Firs and Ash Copse and back to Bint's Farm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ancient woodlands, Ancient enclosures, rural hamlets and farmsteads. An intact area of countryside in close proximity to the urban area of Caversham;</li> <li>• This LCA is largely representative of LCA10 Chilterns Plateau and Valleys semi-enclosed dipslope and much of this PLCA is indistinguishable from the landscape of the Chilterns AONB.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site: Blackhouse Wood including a new proposed adjacent extension into Clayfield Copse. Spanhill Chalk Pit is also proposed as an Oxfordshire Local Wildlife Site;</li> <li>• Ancient and semi natural woodland – High number of Ancient Woodlands and semi natural woodland;</li> <li>• Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland – a number of blocks of woodland inclusion Ash Copse, Spanhill Copse, Round Wood and Blackhouse Wood;</li> <li>• Priority Habitat Inventory – Traditional Orchard – a number of small areas of orchard, including The Green at Dunsden.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunsden Green and the cluster of dwellings at Littlestead Green have hardly changed in size/form since the 1800's, where dispersed dwellings/buildings along the converging roads, with farmsteads located towards the periphery provide them both with an intact rural character;</li> <li>• High number of Listed Buildings;</li> <li>• Areas of Ancient enclosure and similarly to the Chilterns AONB, PLCA4 contains a mosaic of field types.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An extensive network of PRoW and lanes linking to the Chilterns AONB and down to the River Thames Valley;</li> <li>• Provides easy access to a tranquil and rural environment from the adjoining high density urban environment of Caversham and Emmer Green.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet, intimate landscape, with areas with a strong sense of enclosure contrasting with the long panoramic views across the Thames River Valley and beyond including towards Bowsey Hill;</li> <li>• A quiet landscape with low levels of traffic and noise. Very limited street lighting;</li> <li>• Prominent mature trees visible on horizon, provide sense of time depth;</li> <li>• The landform and mature tree cover provide a strong sense of enclosure contributing to a settled intimate landscape;</li> <li>• Strong rural character contrasting with the adjacent urban form of Caversham and Reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong association with Wilfred Owen (celebrated WW1 poet) who lived here as an 18-year-old. An information board is located on Dunsden Green illustrating a self-guiding tour which includes a number of sites throughout the parish. Owen studied Botany at Reading University, where a description of the trees within the parish are included within a letter written to his mother in November 1911.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitional landscape between the higher Chilterns dipslopes down to the River Thames floodplain;</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
<p><i>'View on the edge of the western boundary of the parish, where small paddocks contribute to the rural character, in the foreground of long views to southern wooded horizons'</i></p>	<p><i>'Occasional long view out beyond the parish boundary, framed by woodlands towards Bowsey Hill.'</i></p>	<p><i>'Tagg Lane an old byway enclosed with mature oak trees aligns a shallow 'v' shaped valley, connecting the Chilterns AONB to Dunsden Green.'</i></p>
<p>(Photographs extracted from PLCA4: Dunsden Semi-enclosed Dipslopes and Thames River Valley Side 'Eye &amp; Dunsden Parish Landscape Character Assessment and Proposal for a Local Valued Landscape, April 2022, prepared by Liz Allen)</p>		
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes of the AONB;</li> <li>• The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of, the landscape setting of the Chiltern AONB, which lies beyond Eye and Dunsden PLCA3 to the north, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, and sharing many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB;</li> <li>• The area provides a continuity of dipslope landscapes, from the adjoining undulating landscape and dry valleys of Kidmore End to the west, across PLCA4 to the wooded slopes of Binfield Heath, and the slopes of the Thames valley sides at Shiplake to the southeast;</li> <li>• PRoW providing links across PLCA4 between the AONB to the north, and the Thames valley to the southeast;</li> <li>• Long views to the Thames valley and beyond to the southeast;</li> <li>• As noted above this PLCA has links with: Eye and Dunsden PLCA1 – sloping valley sides at Span Hill on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as a dry valley at Hampstead Bottom, form an important link between the dipslope landscape and the river to the east; Eye and Dunsden PLCA3 – the dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA, with a number of landscape features, including its undulating landform, providing continuity; Kidmore End Study Area 3; Binfield Heath PLCA6 and PLCA7; Shiplake PLCA4 and PLCA1 - continuation of the open lower dipslope landscape, including dry valley at Hampstead Bottom.</li> </ul>		




**South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment**

Parish name: Binfield Heath

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 08.02.22 KB / NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 7: PLCA5 (Binfield Heath wooded dipslope south)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA5 forms an immediate setting for the adjoining AONB to the north of Emmer Green and Sonning Common Roads;</li> <li>Although intervisibility with the AONB is largely restricted by woodland within PLCA5, the wooded nature of the former common land provides a rural character to the adjoining roads and a backdrop to farmland, including the estate landscape forming part of the extensive Phillimore Estate, within the AONB to the north;</li> <li>Extensive vegetation within PLCA5 provides a wooded setting for the AONB when viewed from roads and public rights of way to the south of the PLCA.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 23 Wooded dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavily wooded character, including extensive stands of ancient, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, mature beechwoods and more recent plantations;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character with only localised suburbanising influences within villages, along road corridors or around the fringes of the main settlements;</li> <li>Low intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-wooded character with mixed species woodland showing evidence of plantation and ornamental tree planting;</li> <li>Large area of grassland to centre of PLCA5 used for polo;</li> <li>Avenue of trees leads to centre of PLCA5;</li> <li>Drainage ditch to southern boundary;</li> <li>Forms part of the extensive Phillimore Estate;</li> <li>Previously common land for grazing and bracken-gathering;</li> <li>Areas of historic Common-edge settlement;</li> <li>Generally quiet with little traffic and the distinctive cry of kites overhead;</li> <li>Enclosed with limited public access and wooded boundaries which limits views into the PLCA5;</li> <li>Presence of invasive non-native species such as Rhododendron ponticum.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA5 is noted as having elements characteristic of an estate landscape, forming part of the extensive Phillimore Estate. It has a well wooded character with mixed species woodland showing evidence of plantation and ornamental tree planting; previous common land used for grazing and bracken-gathering; as well as areas of historic common-edge settlement;</li> <li>The wooded area of former common land in PLCA5 at Binfield Heath is in need of regeneration / management, with areas dominated by invasive ornamental species.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA5 contains the former wooded heath of Binfield Heath, providing an attractive wooded quality which can be appreciated when travelling along the Emmer Green and Sonning Common Roads. Pasture surrounded by woodland and managed grassland within PLCA5 can be viewed from Gravel Road, with views across open arable land outside of the Chilterns AONB to the south;</li> <li>Intervisibility with the AONB is restricted by the dense wooded nature of the Emmer Green and Sonning Common Roads, characteristic of both PLCA5 and the AONB;</li> <li>A mosaic of pasture, plantation and deciduous woodland, plus managed estate landscapes visibly continues across Sonning Common and Emmer Green Roads, with no distinct visual boundary between the AONB and PLCA5;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In many aspects PLCA5 is representative of LCA 10: Chilterns Plateau with Valleys, and LCT 23: Wooded dipslope, having: a heavily wooded character; a generally rural and unspoilt character with only localised suburbanising influences around the fringes of settlements; and low intervisibility;</li> <li>The enclosed wooded nature of the former old heath provides an attractive and distinctive backdrop to the settlements of Binfield Heath and has much in common with the wooded landscapes of the AONB immediately to the north and west of PLCA5.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Much of the woodland in PLCA5 has been identified as 'Deciduous Woodland' priority habitat, as set out on the Priority Habitat Inventory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong sense of history in relation to PLCA5 which is the former common land of the old heath. The heath is thought to have been the meeting place of the Binfield hundred one of the Saxon administrative divisions of the Oxfordshire. Two historically important roads, following Emmer Green Road and Sonning Common Road crossing near to Coppid Hall, at the northern corner of the PLCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An open grassed area at the centre of PLCA 5 forms part of Binfield Heath Polo Club;</li> <li>PLCA5 is largely publicly inaccessible, surrounded by rural roads and only crossed in the western corner by a public bridleway following Thanksgiving Lane.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA5 has a strong landscape pattern of wooded former heath, pasture and recreational landscapes which reflect the AONB landscape immediately to the north of the PLCA. It has a rural, tranquil character, with few detractors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to local folklore there have been various sightings (including by a woman cycling home from BBC Caversham) of a ghost of a woman in Emmer Green Road, between former Coach and Horses (now Highfield House) and Thanksgiving Lane.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woodland / surface water percolation;</li> <li>Pasture / grazing land;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Forms a part of the immediate setting of the AONB, adjoining its boundary along Emmer Green Road and Sonning Common Road to the northwest and northeast, respectively.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View northwest from Dunsden Way across open field towards PLCA5 to mature pine trees.	View SE along Thanksgiving Lane / bridleway number 421/8/10	View south-west from Sonning Common Road into PLCA5.
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of, the landscape setting of the Chilterns AONB which lies immediately to the north, with much of the area indistinguishable from the adjoining landscape of the AONB; and sharing the wooded characteristics of the AONB, also noted as a special quality;</li> <li>The PLCA provides a continuation of the AONB landscape to the north, comprising woodland and fields, and parkland within the Phillimore Estate;</li> <li>The PLCA comprises an area of former common land which extends into the AONB to the northeast, and is surrounded by the common edge settlements of Binfield Heath located within adjoining PLCA, (some within the AONB);</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Binfield Heath PLC6 – the former common of PLCA5 has had a strong influence on the pattern of common edge landscape and scattered settlement of PLCA6; Chiltern AONB – the influence of the former common of PLCA5 continues to the north, relating to the parkland landscape of Coppid Hall / Phillimore Estate, and settlement and land surrounding Bottle and Glass.</li> </ul>		

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Binfield Heath

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 08.02.22 KB / NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 7: PLCA6 (Holmwood semi-enclosed dipslope)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA6, situated on the slopes of the Chilterns Plateau, forms an important part of the landscape setting of the Chiltern AONB which adjoins the PLCA to the northeast and at the western corner;</li> <li>The eastern part of PLCA6 lies on southeast facing slopes with selected views towards the Thames Valley. There are views from surrounding roads and public rights of way towards the wooded slopes of PLCA6 which form a visually attractive setting to the AONB.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;</li> <li>Dominance of arable cultivation;</li> <li>Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural village development set within a framework of well wooded roads and sunken lanes surrounding Binfield Heath;</li> <li>Blocks of ancient woodland contain the development to the south and east;</li> <li>Numerous streams, ponds, springs and wells shown on OS maps. Streams / drainage ditches shown on the northwestern boundary of PLCA6, 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;</li> <li>Includes the C18th Holmwood House and grounds;</li> <li>Pattern of development resulted from historic settlement on the margins of the heath;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>Farmland to the south and east generally quiet with the distinctive cry of kites overhead. Some traffic noise approaching the A4155 on the south-east boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Enclosure provided by areas of woodland, especially Shiplake Copse, with public footpath running through;</li> <li>Keeps Lane is a well-vegetated sunken lane.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA6 is noted as being a gently sloping landscape of open, arable fields, within a strong structure of woods and hedgerows, which provides visual containment. The character area has a largely rural and unspoilt character, with many historic buildings, and a few suburbanising influences within rural settlements and along roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The area has a strong rural character despite containing the main settlement areas within Binfield Heath parish, and provides an attractive setting to settlements at the junction of Dunsden Way and Shiplake Row, the eastern end of Shiplake Row, and on Gravel Road. A general absence of visually intrusive elements, with some abrupt edges between development and surrounding arable farmland, most noticeable at New Road, and Dunsden Way;</li> <li>The eastern part of PLCA6 lies on southeast facing slopes with selected views towards the Thames Valley. There are views from surrounding roads and PRow towards the wooded slopes of PLCA6 which form a visually attractive setting to the AONB. Development within Binfield Heath, at Gravel Road and Dunsden Way is largely contained in views from the east by blocks of woodland on the east facing slopes. Views to the historic property 'Holmwood' on Shiplake Row from locations to the east of the PLCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many historic and listed buildings form distinctive features within PLCA6, located in scattered rural 'common edge' settlements within Binfield Heath;</li> <li>PLCA6 is largely representative of LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau and Valleys, LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope and shares many characteristics: heavily wooded character; a distinctive pattern of winding rural roads and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside'; a generally rural and unspoilt character with only localised suburbanising influences around the fringes of settlements; and low intervisibility;</li> <li>The east facing slopes in the eastern part of PLCA6 are similar in visual character to the landscape of the AONB to the north of Kiln Lane. These undulating, well wooded slopes are crossed by numerous field boundary hedgerows, and are distinct from the expansive, low lying fields of the Thames Valley, beyond the parish to the east.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority Habitats located within PLCA6 include: 'Deciduous Woodland' at Shiplake and Radbrook's Copse, Hampstead Farm and the eastern end of Shiplake Row; an area of 'Good quality semi-improved grassland' to the east of Shiplake Copse; a small area noted as 'Traditional Orchard' to the south of Keeps Well on Shiplake Row and within the grounds of Holmwood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a strong sense of history with many listed and historic buildings on Dunsden Way, Shiplake Row and Gravel Road, set within surrounding farmland, including Keeps Well, and Holmwood, an early C18th Country House.</li> <li>Historic links with the brick and tile making industry established in the 16th century. A brick-making operation at the eastern end of Kiln Lane, established in 1869, closed early in the 20th century.</li> <li>Numerous 'wells', 'springs', 'drains' and 'ponds' noted on maps. Keeps Well, the brick-built domed construction at Shiplake Rise next to Green Pond dates from 1724.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Binfield Heath recreation ground, to the rear of the village shop, is accessed from Arch Hill, and via a footpath from Dunsden Way. Keeps Well and Green Pond are located on a small green on Shiplake Row;</li> <li>A good network of PRow crosses PLCA6, including: a public byway following Kiln Lane on the northern boundary; as well as footpaths crossing the recreation area and between housing on Heathfield Avenue and Kiln Lane. A number of well-walked footpaths provide access to woodland and undulating slopes in the south of PLCA6 linking with PLCA7;</li> <li>Keeps Lane, a narrow sunken lane with overhanging trees and a byway open to all traffic runs from Shiplake Row south towards PLCA7, then onwards to the A4155.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA6 has a strong landscape pattern of woodland, arable land and rural settlements which reflects the AONB landscape to the north of the area. It has a rural, and in places, tranquil character with limited detractors, (mostly related to the abrupt settlement edges adjoining arable land to the east of New Road and Dunsden Way).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Association of Alfred Lord Tennyson with Holmwood and Shiplake Rise Farm on Shiplake Row. The poet Swinburne is also associated with Holmwood. He visited the property, which was owned by his father, to rest and write.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woodland / Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Arable land;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Forms an important part of the landscape setting of the Chilterns AONB which adjoins the PLCA to the northeast and at the western corner;</li> <li>PLCA6 shares many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB, including its: wooded landscape; industrial heritage evident at Kiln Lane; listed buildings and attractive villages; narrow sunken lanes, including Keeps lane and Shiplake Row.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
Thatched Cottage, Dunsden Way.	View south-east near old well from footpath number 421/13/10	The Clockhouse, Holmwood, on Shiplake Row.
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA6 has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of the setting of the AONB which adjoins the area to the northeast and northwest, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, and sharing many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB;</li> <li>The topography of the area strongly relates to the topography of the AONB, providing a continuity with the AONB landscape to the north, linking characteristic undulating landform, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands as well as the pattern of small settlements within open countryside;</li> <li>The scattered common edge settlements of Binfield Heath, located within PLCA6, surround former common land within PLCA5. Settlements within Binfield Heath PLCA6 have a strong relationship with both the former common land and further common edge settlements within the AONB;</li> <li>Shiplake Row and Keeps Lane, both sunken lanes, as well as Kiln Lane provide links between the Chiltern plateau, across the dipslope towards the Thames valley to the southeast;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Binfield Heath PLCA7 - the lower dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA; Binfield Heath PLCA5 – the pattern of common edge landscape and scattered settlement of PLCA6 is strongly related to the former common of PLCA5; Eye and Dunsden PLCA4 and 3B – the lower dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA, including dry valley at Hampstead Farm; Chiltern AONB – the lower dipslope landscape of PLCA6 continues to the north of Kiln Lane, linking with the increasingly wooded dipslope of the AONB extending to the north.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Binfield Heath

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 08.02.22 KB / NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 7: PLCA7 (Hampstead and Shiplake Rise open dipslope)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The slopes of PLCA7 contribute to the setting of the AONB to the northwest, and act as a transition between the River Thames floodplain and the wooded dipslopes of the Chiltern AONB;</li> <li>There are views from roads and PRoW, including the A4155, towards the slopes of PLCA 7 (and adjoining PLCA6 to the west), which form a visually attractive setting to the AONB;</li> <li>The east facing slopes of PLCA7, along with the eastern slopes of PLCA6, are visible from the low lying Thames valley to the east, providing a setting and transition to the AONB beyond.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western main line Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dramatic sloping topography;</li> <li>Very good quality agricultural land (Grade 2);</li> <li>Adjacent to Ancient and Semi Natural Woodlands;</li> <li>Small cluster of trees;</li> <li>Keeps Lane is well-vegetated sunken lane;</li> <li>Contributes to setting of listed buildings at Shiplake Rise and Hampstead Farm;</li> <li>Large-scale open landscape with long-range panoramic views eastwards over the Thames Valley;</li> <li>Forms a skyline when viewed from the east;</li> <li>High Wall House beyond the north-western boundary of the PLCA is a prominent feature in an elevated position;</li> <li>A4155, Henley Road is busy.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA7 shares many landscape characteristics with the adjoining eastern slopes of PLCA6, open farmland within a complex pattern of woodland and landform, including the undulating topography and open fields (arable), flanked by woodlands in the wider landscape, which form a largely rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences of adjoining main roads (short stretch of A4155);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are views from roads and PRoW, including the A4155, towards the slopes of PLCA 7 (and adjoining PLCA6 to the west), which form a visually attractive setting to the AONB beyond;</li> <li>The area has a rural character despite the busy A4155 running along a short stretch of the boundary to the southeast. There is limited development, including historic properties at Shiplake Row and adjoining Hampstead Farm.</li> <li>Some views across open farmland to an abrupt edge between development and surrounding arable farmland, at Shiplake.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The east facing slopes of PLCA7 are similar in visual character to the adjoining landscape of the eastern slopes of PLCA6. These slopes are distinct when viewed from the low lying Thames valley to the east, providing a setting and transition to the AONB to the northwest;</li> <li>PLCA7 is largely representative of LCA 11 Thames Valley and Fringes, LCT 11: Open dipslope, and shares many characteristics with the eastern slopes of PLCA6.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority Habitats located within PLCA7 include: the eastern edge of Shiplake Copse, an area of 'Deciduous Woodland';</li> <li>Shiplake Copse is also identified as an area of ancient woodland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contributing to the setting of the listed buildings at Shiplake Rise Farm and Hampstead Farm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A good network of PRoW cross / surround PLCA7, including: public footpaths linking Shiplake Row, Dunsden Way and the A4155;</li> <li>A number of footpaths link with PLCA6 providing access to woodland and undulating slopes in the south of PLCA6;</li> <li>Keeps Lane, a narrow sunken lane with overhanging trees and a byway open to all traffic runs through PLCA7 linking PLCA6 to the north with the A4155 to the south.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA7 has a rural character with detractors being abrupt settlement edges adjoining arable land at Shiplake to the northeast, and the busy A4155 road to the south.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps Lane is said to be haunted.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woodland;</li> <li>Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Arable land;</li> <li>This PLCA provides a setting to the rural settlement at Shiplake Row;</li> <li>The slopes of PLCA7 contribute to the setting of the AONB to the northwest, and act as a transition between the River Thames floodplain and the wooded dipslopes of the Chiltern AONB.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View south-east from PRoW 341/11/10 east of Orwell's across Thames Valley.	View north from Henley Road towards Shiplake Row with High Wall House on the skyline	View south-west from junction of Keep's Lane and PRoW 421/20/10 towards Hampstead Farm and Henley Road.
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The dipslope landscape of PLCA7 provides a continuity of the landscape to the north of Shiplake Row / Kiln Lane, and west towards Dunsden Way, within Binfield Heath, linking characteristic undulating landform / dry valley, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodland, which extends into the AONB;</li> <li>A similar continuity of dipslope landscape is provided to the southwest, where topography typical of the AONB, including undulating landform / dry valleys, extends into Eye and Dunsden and Shiplake parishes;</li> <li>With visual links with both the AONB on the horizon to the north, and the low lying Thames valley to the east, the lower slopes of PLCA provide a visual and physical transition between the upper dipslope and AONB to the north and Thames valley landscapes within Shiplake and Eye and Dunsden parishes to the southeast;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Binfield Heath PLCA6; Shiplake PLCA4; and Eye and Dunsden PLCA4 - the lower dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Shiplake

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 8: PLCA1 (River Thames Meadow and Terraces)

(Additional data drawn from 'The Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross' April 2021)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views to the west largely contained by the wooded river cliffs and terraces, with occasional distant views towards the AONB from the Thames Path to the south and north of the PLCA;</li> <li>A distinctive floodplain landscape adjoining the River Thames in close proximity to the Chiltern AONB, with a strong sense of identity and natural beauty influenced by the linear river, distinctive historic parkland associated with Shiplake House, woodland, river cliffs, wooded river islands, and distinctive historic buildings and structures including Shiplake College and Shiplake Lock;</li> <li>An undeveloped landscape providing an important floodplain setting to the River Thames.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 5 Flat floodplain pasture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively 'wet', riparian character;</li> <li>Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;</li> <li>Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside;</li> <li>Intimate, pastoral, tranquil and quite remote character with some 'arcadian' qualities along the Thames close to settlements and riverside parklands.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 15 Parkland and estate farmland:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although much of the landscape of the floodplain and valley sides has been managed as part of large estates and parks, only three areas were identified as having a specific parkland character, including Shiplake House;</li> <li>Well-managed parkland character with formal features such as avenues and free standing mature trees in pasture, clumps and blocks of woodland;</li> <li>Unspoilt character;</li> <li>Generally enclosed character with strong landform, woodland and tree cover, with low intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sloping ground and minor valley at foot of Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor around Lower Shiplake;</li> <li>Mixture of medium-scale fields west of the A4155 and smaller scale field pattern around the settlement edges;</li> <li>Strong structure of hedgerows, trees and small blocks of woodland, generally provides visual containment and results in moderate intervisibility;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character, especially to the west of the A4155, but some localised influence from roads, ribbon development on minor roads and built-up areas immediately around settlement edges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meandering river with wooded islands with no development;</li> <li>Irregular river banks with intermittent groups of trees and riverside riparian vegetation;</li> <li>Open undeveloped flat flood plain of pasture and intermittent hedgerows, with linear fields of pasture, parkland and woodlands on higher ground of the river cliffs and terraces (inc. The Warren);</li> <li>Large expanse of grass sports pitches to the south of Shiplake College;</li> <li>River cliff and terraces further characterized with dry valleys cutting through;</li> <li>Natural meandering tributaries i.e., Lash Brook and the watercourse coming down from Hampstead Bottom;</li> <li>Flood plain area prone to flooding with manmade drainage channels, and evidence of seasonally wet areas;</li> <li>Continuous robust woodland belt on eastern edge of Lower Shiplake, including linear woodlands on the eastern side of Mill Road;</li> <li>Mature trees remnants of designed landscapes associated with larger properties i.e. Shiplake House and Bolney Court;</li> <li>Contained clusters of riverside development with properties set back from river with long rear gardens off Mill Lane;</li> <li>Large river side residences (Bolney Court) set within designed gardens and parkland, characterized by mature trees and large open grass expanses down to River Thames;</li> <li>Lack of intrusive urbanising detracting features (inc. lighting and footways);</li> <li>Limited vehicle access to PCLA1 with the narrow Mill Lane terminating at the railway line;</li> <li>Great Western main line railway crosses the PLCA north – south, contained by wooded embankment and cuttings;</li> <li>Tow Path along western river bank – except at northern end where there is no public access to the River Thames from Bolney Court down to Lash Brook;</li> <li>Presence of Shiplake Lock and associated wiers.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The eastern edge of PLCA1 is strongly related to the River Thames and floodplain and characteristic of the adjoining riverside landscapes of the River Thames corridor;</li> <li>Mature / well established woodland to the southeast of Shiplake, on the river cliffs (inc. The Warren), and following the railway line provides structure;</li> <li>Well preserved parkland associated with Shiplake College and grounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views to the west contained by the river cliffs and terraces;</li> <li>Long views down the River Thames;</li> <li>Views across the open flood plain to the river cliffs and terraces on the western side including the woodland 'The Warren' the arable landscape at Hampstead Bottom and the pasture fields east of Shiplake House;</li> <li>Views from the Public Rights of Way and Tow Path across the open flood plain and Shiplake College sports fields;</li> <li>Views to Shiplake College buildings and grounds;</li> <li>Views to Wargrave / Wargrave Manor and the properties on the eastern bank of the River Thames.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA2 is characteristic of the River Thames corridor and floodplain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain landscape adjoining the river has a strong sense of identity influenced by the linear river, distinctive historic parkland associated with Shiplake House, woodland, river cliffs, wooded river islands, and distinctive historic buildings and structures including Shiplake College and Shiplake Lock.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh located on the floodplain between the Warren and River Thames;</li> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland at The Warren; on the slopes between Shiplake College and River Thames.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed buildings and their settings including Shiplake College and the White House at Bolney Court;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shiplake College playing fields located between the river and the wooded slopes of The Warren;</li> <li>Thames Path following the river and crossing the floodplain; towing path on the western bank of the river; and byway following Mill Lane.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meandering river provides seclusion and a series of screened and intimate locations;</li> <li>South of Shiplake College, a lack of development on the western side of the River Thames results in increased tranquillity with limited traffic noise or visual detractors;</li> <li>Contrasting open river landscape character compared to adjacent semi enclosed landscape character of Lower Shiplake;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This section of the river featured in 'Three men in a boat' by Jerome K. Jerome 1889. Location for Wargrave and Shiplake Regatta every year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain in the eastern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land;</li> <li>Recreational usage.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View southwest across Shiplake College playing fields towards the river from the Thames Path	View north towards Shiplake College and grounds on the western bank of the river from the Thames Path	View southwest along the River Thames from Shiplake Lock
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characteristic of the Thames floodplain landscape, with character and physical links to the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes within Harpsden parish to the north, and Eye and Dunsden parish to the south;</li> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes;</li> <li>The Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' runs along a short stretch of the northern boundary of the PLCA with Harpsden parish, where it joins with the Thames Path;</li> <li>The Thames Path runs through the PLCA and Lower Shiplake, continuing into Harpsden parish to the north and Eye and Dunsden parish to the south;</li> <li>Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in the route of the Thames Path being incorporated within the AONB;</li> <li>Important part of the setting of the River Thames and the listed building of Shiplake College, as well as the adjoining historic landscape of Park Place and Temple Combe, a Grade II* listed Park and Garden to the east of the river;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Harpsden PLCA1– continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, including the Thames Path; Shiplake PLCA3 – wooded river cliffs and historic buildings within the grounds of Shiplake College span the boundary between these PLCA and form an important link between the River and the open landscape surrounding Shiplake to the west; Shiplake PLCA4 - wooded river cliffs at The Warren / Warren Hill on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as dry valleys including Hampstead Bottom, form an important link between the River and the dip slope landscape to the west; Eye and Dunsden PLCA1 - continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, including the Thames Path southwards towards Sonning Eye.</li> <li>Visual continuity with the historic parkland and River Thames landscape immediately to the east of the river.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Shiplake

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 8: PLCA3 (Shiplake Semi-enclosed Dipslopes)

(Additional data drawn from 'The Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross' April 2021)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA3 forms part of the lower Chilterns dipslope with local shallow dry valleys and higher spurs forming a transition between the higher Chilterns dipslopes and the valley floor;</li> <li>Views across farmland to the wooded horizon of Shiplake Woods, located within the AONB;</li> <li>PLCA3 surrounds the western edge of Shiplake, with undeveloped land, including the distinctive parkland landscape surrounding Shiplake College, providing a setting for the AONB to the west.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 15 Parkland and estate farmland:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although much of the landscape of the floodplain and valley sides has been managed as part of large estates and parks, only three areas were identified as having a specific parkland character, including Shiplake House;</li> <li>Well-managed parkland character with formal features such as avenues and free standing mature trees in pasture, clumps and</li> <li>blocks of woodland;</li> <li>Unspoilt character;</li> <li>Generally enclosed character with strong landform, woodland and tree cover, with low intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sloping ground and minor valley at foot of Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor around Lower Shiplake;</li> <li>Mixture of medium-scale fields west of the A4155 and smaller scale field pattern around the settlement edges;</li> <li>Strong structure of hedgerows, trees and small blocks of woodland, generally provides visual containment and results in moderate intervisibility;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character, especially to the west of the A4155, but some localised influence from roads, ribbon development on minor roads and built-up areas immediately around settlement edges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower Chilterns dipslope with local shallow dry valleys and higher spurs forming a transition between the higher Chilterns dipslopes and the valley floor;</li> <li>Mainly small-scale fields with some medium sized fields creating a distinctive settlement edge landscape;</li> <li>Pasture surrounding settlements, arable fields beyond, with a strong structure of hedgerows;</li> <li>Mature hedgerows and tree belts separate the field pattern from the current built up area;</li> <li>Mature native and mixed trees line the road network, copses associated with private grounds;</li> <li>A dry landscape with an absence of watercourses and other wetland features;</li> <li>Parkland features inc 'green' associated with Shiplake College frontage, avenue of trees on Bolney Lane, and mature tree covered grounds south of Haileywood;</li> <li>Parkland and estate farmland character of the land between Shiplake House and Mill Lane (as defined by the HLC and SODC LCA) including the tree and hedgerow lined former eastern approach to the Shiplake College;</li> <li>Chiltern Way runs along Bolney Lane, otherwise limited PROW inc. bridleway links Shiplake to Thames Path;</li> <li>Busy, rural character, single carriageway A4155 runs north-south through PLCA;</li> <li>Listed buildings and their settings at Shiplake College;</li> <li>Grade II listed Shiplake War Memorial a local landmark;</li> <li>Very low-density housing in large mature grounds with mature tree and hedgerow boundaries off New Road, Mill Lane, Mill Road and south of Woodlands Road.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The eastern edge of PLCA3 is strongly related to the River Thames and floodplain and characteristic of the riverside wooded terrace ridge;</li> <li>Well preserved parkland and estate farmland character landscape between Shiplake House and Mill Lane;</li> <li>Distinctive landscapes, including open tree lined green, surrounding Shiplake College;</li> <li>Mature hedgerows and tree belts line the road network, surround the current built up area, and are associated with private grounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views south-eastwards from Shiplake College over the Thames River corridor to the hillsides to the east above Wargrave;</li> <li>Views to the open meadows south of Shiplake College from the elevated terrace edge at the College;</li> <li>Views to the mixed species tree cover on the higher ground south of Haileywood from several locations;</li> <li>Views to the wooded horizon of Shiplake Woods, located within the AONB;</li> <li>Views to the wooded terrace ridge along the eastern boundary of PLCA3 from the Thames River corridor.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA3 is characteristic of the Chilterns lower dipslope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A shallow dry valley runs from west to east from Shiplake Woods through Haileywood Farm into Lower Shiplake, typical of the Chiltern plateau;</li> <li>The open tree lined green which forms the frontage to Shiplake College and the Lodge create a distinctive setting to Shiplake Cross;</li> <li>Parkland and estate farmland character of the land between Shiplake House and Mill Lane, including the tree and hedgerow lined former eastern approach to the Shiplake College; and the wooded setting to the Lodge;</li> <li>A transitional landscape between the higher Chilterns dipslopes down to the valley floor.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland surrounding Shiplake College playing fields; adjoining Mill Lane; and at Haileywood Farm on Woodlands Lane;</li> <li>Priority Habitat Inventory – Traditional Orchards at Shiplake College, Shiplake Farm and Haileywood Farm.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed buildings and their settings including Shiplake House, a number of buildings associated with Shiplake College and the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Shiplake;</li> <li>The Plough (a listed building) dating back to c1600's lies on the boundary of the PLCA, within Shiplake Cross;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shiplake College playing fields located to the north and east of the college;</li> <li>Chiltern Way along Bolney Lane, bridleway linking Shiplake to Thames Path, and 'Other route with public access' following Church Lane;</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of visual detractors: no pylons, industrial premises or urbanising buildings;</li> <li>Reduced tranquillity in the vicinity of the rural but busy A4155 road, linking Caversham/Sonning with Henley;</li> <li>Sense of enclosure between mature tree lines or hedgerows and settled intimate landscape;</li> <li>Dark skies away from settlement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>George Orwell, author of Animal Farm, childhood home (Rose Lawn) in Lower Shiplake, adjoining the PLCA;</li> <li>Isambard Kingdom Brunel visiting The Plough in 1853 for discussions with the council for development of the Henley branch line;</li> <li>Alfred Lord Tennyson (Poet Laureate) married at the church of St Peter and St Paul in 1850 and stayed periodically at the 'The Old Vicarage'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shallow dry valley and water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land and arable farmland;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View looking west towards the A4155 from the junction of Mill Road and Mill Lane	View south from Plough Lane towards Shiplakecourt Farm	St Peter's and St Paul's Church, Church Lane
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visual and landscape links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB, with Shiplake Woods (located within the AONB) visually prominent from the northern section of the PLCA;</li> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes;</li> <li>The landform of dry valleys and open slopes (typical of the AONB) continue within PLCA3; with a shallow dry valley extending from Shiplake Woods, within the AONB, through Haileywood Farm into Lower Shiplake;</li> <li>Continuation of the grounds, including the distinctive parkland landscape surrounding Shiplake College within this PLCA, providing links with the river landscapes of PLCA1 to the south;</li> <li>Links between the AONB, across PLCA3, to the River Thames landscapes to the south via narrow Mill Lane and Church Lane;</li> <li>Visual links between PLCA3 and the Thames valley, with views south-eastwards from Shiplake College over the Thames River corridor to the hillsides to the east above Wargrave;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Shiplake PLCA1 - wooded river cliffs and historic buildings within the grounds of Shiplake College span the boundary between these PLCA and form an important link between the open landscape surrounding Shiplake and The River to the east; Shiplake PLCA4 - continuation of the open landscapes surrounding Shiplake into the open dipslope to the west, including a dry valley at Haileywood Farm; Harpsden PLCA1 - boundary formed by Bolney Lane / Chiltern Way; and Harpsden PLCA2 – continuation of the large properties within woodland at Haileywood, across Woodlands Road.</li> </ul>		

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Shiplake

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT Parish landscape character area: Area 8: PLCA4 (Shiplake Open Dipslopes)

(Additional data drawn from 'The Separation of the Settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross' April 2021)

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA4 has strong visual and landscape links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB, with Shiplake Woods (located within the AONB) visually prominent throughout the northern section;</li> <li>The open landscape character provides a setting for Shiplake Woods and allows visibility from Shiplake Cross across to the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>Open land within PLCA4 provides separation between the settlements of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and the AONB to the northwest.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;</li> <li>Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>Woodlands are feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 11 Open dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently sloping ground at the foot of the Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor between Caversham and Shiplake;</li> <li>Dominance of intensive arable cultivation with large-scale field pattern, weak hedgerow structure and very little woodland cover;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character with limited intrusion from built-up areas;</li> <li>Large-scale, open landscape with views out over the Thames Valley and high intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sloping ground and minor valley at foot of Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor around Lower Shiplake;</li> <li>Mixture of medium-scale fields west of the A4155 and smaller scale field pattern around the settlement edges;</li> <li>Strong structure of hedgerows, trees and small blocks of woodland, generally provides visual containment and results in moderate intervisibility;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character, especially to the west of the A4155, but some localised influence from roads, ribbon development on minor roads and built-up areas immediately around settlement edges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gently undulating landform becoming more pronounced further to the north with a dry valley;</li> <li>Intensive arable cultivation with medium scale field pattern and straight field boundaries;</li> <li>Weak hedgerow structure, and no woodland cover;</li> <li>Mature trees and hedgerows along Plough Lane, Memorial Avenue and Kiln Lane, contrast with the surrounding open field structure;</li> <li>Built form limited to Haileywood Farm on the northern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Views to the settlement edge of Shiplake Cross (surrounded by PLCA4) filtered by tree lined boundary;</li> <li>Open, elevated landscape with long views from Warren Hill across the Thames Valley to the wooded horizons to the south and Wargrave;</li> <li>Open landscape contributes to the rural setting of Shiplake Cross;</li> <li>Good PRoW access, with additional permissive footpath network within the north around Hailey Wood;</li> <li>Forms part of the open undeveloped landscape between the villages.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA4 forms part of the open farmed plateau above the Thames valley river cliff and below the wooded Chilterns to the north-west;</li> <li>Intensive arable cultivation with medium scale field pattern, straight field boundaries, weak hedgerow structure, and no woodland cover;</li> <li>roadside vegetation along Plough Lane and Memorial Avenue creates semi enclosure with hedgerows and mature roadside trees;</li> <li>Mature tree cover and robust hedgerows along Kiln Lane (Bridleway) to Shiplake Woods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views west to Shiplake Woods within the AONB, and the woodland 'The Warren' to the south east;</li> <li>Views to the settlement edge of Shiplake Cross across the open landscape;</li> <li>Views to farmland surrounding Shiplake Row and beyond to the wooded copses leading up to Binfield Heath;</li> <li>Distant views across the Thames valley to Wargrave and Bowsey Hill on the horizon;</li> <li>Views east from Henley Road to the parkland grounds surrounding Shiplake School;</li> <li>Little inter-visibility with Lower Shiplake, enhancing the rural character;</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA3 is characteristic of the Chilterns lower dipslope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A shallow dry valley runs from west to east from Shiplake Woods through Haileywood Farm into Lower Shiplake, typical of the Chiltern plateau;</li> <li>A transitional landscape between the higher Chilterns dipslopes down to the valley floor.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Adjoining Shiplake Wood in AONB is Ancient Replanted Woodland and Priority Habitat Inventory – Deciduous Woodland).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Plough (a listed building) dating back to c1600's lies on the boundary of the PLCA, within Shiplake Cross;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good PRoW access, with additional permissive footpath network within the north around Hailey Wood;</li> <li>Public footpath connecting Binfield Heath with Shiplake Cross.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predominantly rural character with little intrusion from built up areas;</li> <li>Open elevated landscape, with long views from Warren Hill across the Thames Valley to the wooded horizons to the south and Wargrave;</li> <li>A strong rural character with limited views of the settlement edge of Shiplake Cross and limited views of the buildings within Lower Shiplake.</li> <li>Reduced tranquillity in the vicinity of the rural but busy A4155 road, linking Caversham/Sonning with Henley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isambard Kingdom Brunel visiting The Plough in 1853 for discussions with the council for development of the Henley branch line.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shallow dry valley and water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land and arable farmland;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Contribution to the settlement character of Lower Shiplake and Shiplake Cross and to the separation of these settlements;</li> <li>Contribution to the landscape and visual setting of the Chilterns AONB;</li> <li>Contribution to the landscape setting of the Thames Valley allowing views from the Study Area to the eastern hillside above the valley.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View north from New Cross on the A4155 looking towards Haileywood	View southeast from Kiln Lane towards Memorial Avenue	View southeast from Shiplake Row towards the Thames Valley and wooded horizon beyond
Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is an open landscape with strong visual and landscape links to the adjacent Chilterns AONB, with Shiplake Woods (located within the AONB) visually prominent throughout the northern section;</li> <li>The landform of dry valleys and open slopes (typical of the AONB) continue within PLCA4; with a shallow dry valley extending from Shiplake Woods, within the AONB, through Haileywood Farm into Lower Shiplake; and through Hampstead Bottom on the southern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the upper Chiltern plateau landscapes;</li> <li>Continuation of the undulating topography of the lower slopes of the plateau landscapes within Eye and Dunsden parish to the south; Binfield Heath parish to the west; and Harpsden to the north;</li> <li>As noted above this PLCA has links with: Shiplake PLCA1 - wooded river cliffs at The Warren / Warren Hill on the boundary between these PLCA, as well as dry valleys including Hampstead Bottom, form an important link between the the dipslope landscape and the River Thames to the east; Shiplake PLCA3 - continuation of the open dipslope into the open landscapes surrounding Shiplake to the east, including a dry valley at Haileywood Farm; Harpsden PLCA3 - ; Binfield Heath PLCA6 and PLCA7 – Open lower dipslope landscape is continuous between these PLCA; Eye and Dunsden PLCA4 – continuation of the open lower dipslope landscape, including dry valley at Hampstead Bottom.</li> </ul>		




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Harpsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 9: PLCA1

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harpsden PLCA1 provides a setting for the Chiltern AONB in views looking west from the Thames Valley;</li> <li>• Distant views across floodplain pasture to the wooded horizon of the Chiltern AONB to the west from the Thames Path on the eastern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>• A distinctive floodplain landscape adjoining the River Thames in close proximity to the Chiltern AONB, with a strong sense of identity and natural beauty influenced by the linear river, and chalk cliffs and distinctive historic parkland associated with Park Place to the east of the river;</li> <li>• An undeveloped landscape providing an important floodplain setting to the River Thames.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;;</li> <li>• Influenced by the River Thames and associated floodplain;</li> <li>• Arable farmland adjacent to the River Thames;</li> <li>• Transport infrastructure including A4155 / Great Western Railway</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 5 Flat floodplain pasture:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flat, low-lying farmland, typically dominated by permanent pasture with a distinctively 'wet', riparian character (although some areas of arable may be interspersed within the floodplain);</li> <li>• Prone to flooding with distinctive network of drainage ditches;</li> <li>• Comparatively strong landscape structure with willows conspicuous along the riverside;</li> <li>• Generally low intervisibility, although views along the river corridor may be possible in some more sparsely vegetated areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>• Comparatively open fields contained within a strong structure of woods, hedgerows or trees to form a loose mosaic;</li> <li>• Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>• Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>• Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flatter than countryside to the west, which is more undulating; and to the east where steep chalk cliffs follow the eastern bank of the River Thames;</li> <li>• Some areas of woodland follow lines of ditches and surround waterbodies;</li> <li>• Lines of mature trees follow boundaries, railway line, ditch lines and river edge;</li> <li>• Distinctive willow / riparian species follow western bank of the river;</li> <li>• Managed hedgerows and mown amenity grasslands associated with the 'Black Bears Polo Club' at Lower Bolney Farm;</li> <li>• Medium to large scale pastoral fields adjoining the river, (noted as being 'Good quality semi-improved grassland' in the Priority Habitats Inventory);</li> <li>• Area of waterbodies and riparian / scrub vegetation in the southeastern corner of the PLCA;</li> <li>• A number of small scale fields and recreational facilities at AFC Henley Football club located to the north of Sheephouse Farm in the northern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>• Large open area of managed amenity grassland / recreational fields of 'Black Bears Polo Club' at Lower Bolney Farm;</li> <li>• Managed / commercial landscape surrounding Bremont complex;</li> <li>• Great Western railway branch line to Henley-on-Thames crosses the PLCA north – south, largely screened by mature vegetation;</li> <li>• A4155 forms the northwestern boundary of the PLCA. A rural but narrow and busy A road linking Caversham to Henley;</li> <li>• River Thames forms the northeastern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>• Southeastern edge of built up area of Henley-on-Thames adjoins the northern boundary of PLCA, largely screened by mature vegetation on field boundaries and surrounding Henley Football Club;</li> <li>• Largely inaccessible, with public access restricted to the Thames Path and public footpath on the eastern boundary of the PLCA, and byway number 341/42/10 on the southern boundary.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The eastern edge of PLCA 1 is strongly related to the River Thames and floodplain and characteristic of the adjoining riverside landscapes of the River Thames corridor;</li> <li>Mature / well established woodland surrounding areas of wetland to the south and following the railway line provides structure;</li> <li>Commercial and recreational landscapes of the Polo grounds and Bremont works are well enclosed by surrounding woodland / lines of trees and hedgerows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distant views to the AONB to the west from the Thames Path on the eastern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Views west across farmland from the A4155, towards Harpsden Wood (within the AONB), located on the dip slope of the Chilterns;</li> <li>Views along the River Thames river corridor, and to the chalk cliffs and Park Place (Grade II* registered Park and Garden) to the east of the river, typical of the LCT;</li> <li>Occasional views across the manicured polo fields at Lower Bolney Farm.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA1 is characteristic of the River Thames corridor and floodplain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain landscape adjoining the river has a strong sense of identity influenced by the linear river and distinctive historic parkland, and associated woodland, cliffs, valleys and historic structures, including Conway Bridge, to the east.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large fields adjoining the river, noted as being 'Good quality semi-improved grassland' in the Priority Habitats Inventory;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listed buildings – Grade II listed Bolney Court Farmhouse;</li> <li>Adjoining Grade II* listed Park and garden 'Park Place and Temple Combe' to the east of the river.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFC Henley Football club on the northern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Black Bears Polo Club at Lower Bolney Farm;</li> <li>Thames Path and Chiltern Way (Berkshire Loop) follows the eastern / southeastern boundary of the PLCA.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sense of remoteness and separation from the surrounding settlements on rights of way adjoining the river;</li> <li>Relative tranquillity reduced to a degree by road noise from the A321 on high ground to the east of the river;</li> <li>Seasonal activity can reduce tranquillity;</li> <li>Occasional noise related to railway line;</li> <li>Perception of settlement of Henley-on-Thames (largely visually screened), with increased activity on the river in the northern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Large riverside residential properties visible to the southeast of the PLCA from rights of way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>River Thames – extensive within history, art and literature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Floodplain in the eastern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Open land separating Henley-on-Thames to the north from Shiplake to the south.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View southeast along Thames Path across River Thames and floodplain pasture to west	View southwest from Thames Path across floodplain pasture to Chilterns AONB on the horizon	View northeast from the Thames Path to chalk cliff and riverside properties within Park Place to the east of the river



View northeast across Black Bears Polo Club grounds towards Lower Bolney Farm from the A4155



View northwest across waterbody from byway on the southern boundary of PLCA1



View north across Black Bears Polo Club grounds towards Lower Bolney Farm from Bolney Lane

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- Characteristic of the Thames floodplain landscape, with character and physical links to the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes within Shiplake parish to the south;
- Important transitional landscape linking the distinctive and attractive Thames valley corridor landscape with the Chiltern plateau landscapes;
- The Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' crosses the PLCA, continuing into Harpsden PLCA to the west and joining with the Thames Path through PLCA1 to cross the Thames at Henley to the north;
- Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in this stretch of the Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' and Thames Path being incorporated within the AONB;
- Important part of the setting of the River Thames and the adjoining historic landscape of Park Place and Temple Combe, a Grade II\* listed Park and Garden, to the east of the river;
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Shiplake PLCA1 – continuation of the Thames Valley floodplain landscapes, including the Thames Path; Shiplake PLCA3 – boundary formed by Bolney Lane / Chiltern Way; Harpsden PLCA3 – continuation of the Chiltern Way along Bolney Way to the west towards the Chiltern AONB, open landscape continues across the A4155 onto the lower slopes of the Chiltern dip slope. Visual continuity with the historic parkland and River Thames landscape immediately to the east of the river.




## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment

Parish name: Harpsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 9: PLCA2

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The well treed northwestern edge of PLCA2 is strongly related to, and provides a wooded setting for the adjoining Harpsden Wood, located within the AONB;</li> <li>Mature trees within the PLCA provide a wooded setting for the AONB in views from the Thames Valley to the east, including the Chiltern Way;</li> <li>PLCA2 separates the built up area of Lower Shiplake from the AONB to the west.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 11 Thames Valley and fringes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flat valley floor and gentle hills and sloping fringe to the east;</li> <li>Woodlands are a feature in this landscape;</li> <li>Transport infrastructure including A4130 / A4155 / Great Western Railway.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 15 Parkland and estate farmland:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although much of the landscape of the floodplain and valley sides has been managed as part of large estates and parks, only three areas were identified as having a specific parkland character, namely the parks associated with Hardwick House, Shiplake House and Fawley Court;</li> <li>Generally enclosed character with strong landform, woodland and tree cover;</li> <li>Low intervisibility.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sloping ground and minor valley at foot of Chilterns dip slope next to the valley floor around Lower Shiplake;</li> <li>Strong structure of hedgerows, trees and small blocks of woodland, generally provides visual containment and results in moderate intervisibility;</li> <li>Predominantly rural character, especially to the west of the A4155, but some localised influence from roads, ribbon development on minor roads and built-up areas immediately around settlement edges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the dipslope, west of the flatter floodplain landscape to the east;</li> <li>Mixed use; large residential properties and grounds, small fields associated with nursery, and horse paddocks;</li> <li>Small blocks of woodland, and belts of woodland following roads and tracks giving the impression of a heavily wooded / enclosed landscape;</li> <li>Many mature trees line Woodlands Road, becoming 'avenue like' to the northwest. Some invasive rhododendron and laurel growth associated with domestic planting;</li> <li>Some intrusive suburban elements along Woodlands Road and byway running east-west through the PLCA (Chiltern Way), including close board fencing, walls / entrance pillars and gates, lighting and CCTV;</li> <li>Enclosed landscape, occasional glimpses into the interior of the PLCA from A4155, Woodlands Lane and Chiltern Way;</li> <li>A4155 forms the eastern boundary of the PLCA;</li> <li>Suburban character on the A4155 includes close board and security wire fencing on the eastern boundary of the PLCA, road upgrading associated with recent residential development 'The Beeches' to the east of the A4155;</li> <li>Policy E2: Former Wyevale Garden Centre Site which fronts the A4155, Reading Road, in the northern corner of the PLCA will be redeveloped for residential use</li> <li>Bridleway number 242/2/10 running east-west through the PLCA, follows the route of a track shown on 1883 OS map. Woodland Road appears on OS maps between 1900 and 1914;</li> <li>Built up edge of Lower Shiplake abuts the southeastern edge of the PLCA.</li> </ul>

Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The northwestern edge of PLCA2 is strongly related to the adjoining Harpsden Wood, located within the AONB.</li> <li>Mature trees provide a strong framework following roads, rights of way and field boundaries;</li> <li>Large residential properties in extensive grounds are well screened by mature trees and woodland;</li> <li>Parkland character is degraded with numerous mature / veteran trees the most obvious feature;</li> <li>Some loss of landscape structure in the eastern part of the PLCA within the former Wyevale Garden Centre site, adjoining the A4155 (areas of cleared land; ornamental hedging; metal and close board security fencing).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views across undulating farmland to wooded landscapes within the AONB to the southwest from Woodlands Road;</li> <li>Occasional glimpsed views across enclosed pasture towards the Thames Valley and rising ground to the east from Bolney Lane / Chiltern Way;</li> <li>Enclosed, wooded views along Woodlands Road and Bolney Lane.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA2 has a distinctive character derived from its former parkland associations with Shiplake House.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mature ornamental trees are visible from surrounding roads and bridleway running through the area, giving an enclosed and wooded character.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some areas of 'Deciduous Woodland' in the northwestern corner of the PLCA, as noted in the Priority Habitats Inventory;</li> <li>Small areas of 'Lowland dry acid grassland' in the northwestern corner of the PLCA, as noted in the Priority Habitats Inventory.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No listed buildings</li> <li>Historic associations with Shiplake Court / House, now Shiplake College</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Chiltern Way (Berkshire Loop) follows Bolney Lane / bridleway number 242/2/10, running east-west through the PLCA.</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sense of remoteness and separation from activity with Lower Shiplake / A4155 (within the western part of the PLCA);</li> <li>Tranquillity reduced in the eastern part of the PLCA by road noise from the A4155, and presence of development in Lower Shiplake to the southeast;</li> <li>Higher level of tranquillity on Woodlands Road, traffic noise reduced by surrounding trees, woodpeckers audible;</li> <li>Presence of large residential properties indicated by domestic fencing, ornamental hedging species (laurel), pillars and gated entrances, from roads and PROW.</li> </ul>	<p>None known</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong associations with adjoining AONB at the northwestern corner of the PLCA (similar wooded characteristics. Provides a wooded setting for the AONB / Harpsden Wood;</li> <li>Surface water percolation;</li> <li>Grazing land;</li> <li>Wooded landscape visually separating the built up area of Lower Shiplake from the AONB to the west.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View southeast from western end of Woodlands Road	View west from southeastern end of Woodlands Road	View northeast across horse pasture from Woodlands Road



View east along bridleway number 242/2/10 and the Chiltern Way from Woodlands Road



View northeast from bridleway number 242/2/10 and the Chiltern Way



View southeast along the A4155, Reading Road, on the eastern boundary of the PLCA

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- The area forms an important part of the landscape setting for Harpsden Wood, which is located within the Chilterns AONB, and adjoins the PLCA immediately to the west;
- At its northwestern extent, the PLCA is indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, sharing the wooded characteristics of the AONB; also noted as a special quality;
- The Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' follows the northern boundary of the PLCA, extending into the AONB to the west, and continuing into Harpsden PLCA1 to the east to join with the Thames Path;
- Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in this stretch of the Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' being incorporated within the AONB;
- Provides separation between the built up area of Shiplake and the AONB to the west;
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Harpsden PLCA3 - boundary formed by Bolney Lane / Chiltern Way to the north; Harpsden PLCA3 and the Chiltern AONB to the southwest and west where there is a visual and physical link / continuation of the wooded character of PLCA2 and Harpsden Wood; Shiplake PLCA3 – continuation of the large properties within woodland across Woodlands Road.

## South Oxfordshire Parishes Landscape Character and Value Assessment




Parish name: Harpsden

Date of fieldwork / name of assessor: 14.03.23 NT

Parish landscape character area: Area 9: PLCA3

Landscape character		
Contribution of Study Area / PLCA to the setting of the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) informed by background information from the Chiltern AONB	South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) Landscape Character Area (LCA) and Type (LCT) name and key characteristics (extracts from background information from the SODC LCA)	Parish Landscape Character Area (PLCA) key characteristics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The northern part of PLCA3 is strongly related to the AONB, and integral to / forms part of the dispersed village of Harpsden and its surroundings, including the listed Harpsden Court and St Margarets Church;</li> <li>PLCA3 is situated within / forms part of the dry valley which runs through Hapsden village, Harpsden Bottom and into the AONB to the southwest of the PLCA;</li> <li>The northern part of the PLCA forms an important setting to the AONB, as do the slopes of Drawback Hill, which together separate the AONB from the built up edge of Henley-on-Thames;</li> <li>PLCA3 comprises the open lower slopes of the dipslope of the Chilterns plateau, and provides an open setting for Harpsden Wood located within the AONB, when viewed from the west;</li> <li>Similarly the field in the southern part of the PLCA forms part of an area of farmland which separates Lower Shiplake from the AONB.</li> </ul>	<p>Relevant characteristics typical of the wider LCA and LCT:</p> <p><b>LCA 10 Chilterns Plateau with Valleys:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An undulating landscape ranging from c. 40m AOD to c. 210m AOD;</li> <li>The plateau is dissected by an irregular pattern of shallow, small-scale dry valleys.</li> <li>Sparsely settled with small villages and hamlets;</li> <li>Agriculture comprises the predominant land use with arable and pasture;</li> <li>Narrow lanes and tall hedgerows.</li> </ul> <p><b>LCT 16 Semi-enclosed dipslope:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Typically level or more gently sloping ground;</li> <li>Strong structure of woods and hedgerows generally provides visual containment and results in moderate to low intervisibility;</li> <li>Distinctive pattern of winding rural roads, irregular field boundaries and scattered rural settlements, typical of 'ancient countryside';</li> <li>Generally rural and unspoilt character but with some 'suburbanising' influences within rural settlements and along main roads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the lower slopes of the east facing dipslope of the Chilterns AONB, which adjoins the PLCA;</li> <li>Northern part of PLCA3 forms a small-scale dry valley, containing dispersed settlement within Harpsden, typical of the Chiltern Plateau;</li> <li>Steeper slopes to the north on the lower south facing slopes of Drawback Hill;</li> <li>Pockets of woodland, largely in the northern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Area of plantation adjoining A4155 and former nursery;</li> <li>Harpsden Wood (ancient woodland within the AONB) adjoins the western PLCA boundary;</li> <li>Mix of arable and pasture, predominantly larger-scale arable in the southern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Limited managed hedgerows include those lining the A4155; field boundaries largely formed by belts of trees / tall hedgerows; several small blocks of woodland in the northern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>A4155 forms the eastern boundary of the PLCA. A rural but narrow and busy A road linking Caversham to Henley;</li> <li>Sunken lanes, including Gillott's Lane in NW corner of PLCA;</li> <li>Glimpsed views to residential properties on the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames from the northern boundary of the PLCA (largely screened by mature vegetation);</li> <li>Bridleway 242/19/10 and footpath 242/20/10 cross the northern part of the site. Chiltern Way follows a short stretch of the boundary in the southern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Recreational spaces in the northern part of the PLCA include Harpsden Cricket Ground and playing fields;</li> <li>AONB boundary runs along road through Harpsden village, with properties to the north of the road, (within PLCA3), located outside of the AONB.</li> </ul>



Factors affecting landscape value		
Landscape condition (visual, functional and ecological intactness, state of repair of features and elements making up character)	Perceptual (scenic)	Distinctiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The northern part of PLCA3 is strongly related to the AONB and Harpsden Wood which lies to the south;</li> <li>Belts of mature trees, sunken lanes and blocks of woodland enclose small scale pasture and recreational fields in the vicinity of Harpsden village, in the northern part of the PLCA;</li> <li>Belts of mature trees / woodland are located within, and surrounding the large scale fields in the central and southern parts of the PLCA;</li> <li>The western edge of PLCA3 is strongly related to Harpsden Wood which lies within the Chilterns AONB to the west.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Views to the slopes of Drawback Hill from the public road running along the valley through Harpsden. The views between Henley Golf Club and Drawback Hill are recognised as key views in the Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan;</li> <li>Occasional views across farmland within PLCA3 towards Harpsden Wood and the Chilterns AONB from the A4155;</li> <li>Views across field within PLCA3 towards belt of trees / woodland on the AONB boundary from Woodlands Road.</li> </ul>	<p>PLCA3 is characteristic of the Chilterns AONB.</p> <p>To the north:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forms a small-scale dry valley at Harpsden Bottom, containing settlement within Harpsden, typical of the Chiltern plateau;</li> <li>Forms a setting for Drawback Hill on the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames as well as the steep wooded slopes of the AONB to the south;</li> <li>PLCA3 is integral to, and forms part of the dispersed village of Harpsden and its surroundings,</li> </ul> <p>To the centre and south:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PLCA3 comprises the open lower slopes of the dip slope of the Chilterns plateau, and provides a setting for woodland within the AONB to the west.</li> </ul>
Natural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Recreational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The northwestern corner and parts of the western boundary of PLCA3 lie within a Conservation Target Area (as shown on the South Oxfordshire Adopted policies Map – South).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No listed buildings within PLCA3;</li> <li>Harpsden Court (Grade II*), Harpsden Court Entrance Gateway and Wall (Grade II), and St Margarets Church (Grade II) lie within the AONB adjoining the southwestern boundary of PLCA3.</li> <li>Sunken lanes, including Gillott's Lane in NW corner of PLCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harpsden Cricket Club, and playing fields east of Harpsden village, are located in the northern part of PLCA3;</li> <li>Bridleway 242/19/10 and footpath 242/20/10 cross the northern part of PLCA3;</li> <li>The Chiltern Way runs along a short stretch of the boundary of PLCA3 on bridleway 242/4/50;</li> </ul>
Perceptual (wildness and tranquillity)	Associations	Functional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A sense of remoteness within the dry valley, and on the lanes (some sunken) in the northern part of PLCA3;</li> <li>Glimpses to large residential properties in the northwestern corner of the PLCA;</li> <li>Perception of settlement of Henley-on-Thames when using PRoW on N boundary of PLCA3, although largely screened by mature vegetation;</li> <li>Tranquillity reduced in the immediate vicinity of the A4155;</li> <li>A sense of enclosure and remoteness provided by mature trees / woodland surrounding the field in the south of the PLCA, partly diminished by distant views to housing within Shiplake.</li> </ul>	<p>None known</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dry valley and water percolation;</li> <li>Agricultural grazing land and arable farmland;</li> <li>Recreational usage;</li> <li>Open land separating Henley-on-Thames to the north from Harpsden to the south.</li> </ul>
Photographs		
		
View west across the lower slopes of Drawback Hill from public bridleway number 242/19	View across playing fields towards Drawback Hill from public road to the east of Harpsden	View east from the public road through Harpsden



View north on the A4155 at the Bremont access



View southwest towards Harpsden Wood, within the AONB, from the A4155 at the Bremont access



View southwest towards the woodland belt on the AONB boundary from Woodlands Road

**Continuity: between Study Area / PLCA and surrounding Study Areas / PLCA and Chiltern AONB**

- The area has strong landscape links with, and forms an important part of, the landscape setting of the Chilterns AONB which lies immediately to the west and south, with much of the area indistinguishable from the landscape of the AONB, and sharing many landscape characteristics and special qualities with the AONB;
- The topography of the area strongly relates to the topography of the AONB and is typical of the AONB special quality which describes how 'the folds of the landscape hide many small dry valleys' and 'provide hidden 'secret' landscapes and unspoilt countryside'. A dry valley extends into the PLCA from the AONB to the west at Harpsden Bottom and follows the road eastwards through Harpsden village;
- Considered alongside the adjacent landscape to the south and west, the area provides a continuity of the AONB landscape linking characteristic undulating landform / dry valley, pattern of fields, hedgerows and woodlands;
- The PLCA contributes to separation between Henley-on Thames and the AONB;
- To the north the PLCA is integral to the fabric and setting of Harpsden village, which lies partly within the AONB. Inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in Harpsden village being fully incorporated within the AONB;
- The Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' follows the boundary of the PLCA to the south, extending into the AONB to the west, and continuing into Harpsden PLCA1 to the east to join with the Thames Path;
- Along with PLCA 2, inclusion of this area within the AONB would result in this stretch of the Chiltern Way 'Berkshire Loop' being incorporated within the AONB;
- As noted above this PLCA has links with: Harpsden PLCA2 - boundary formed by Bolney Lane / Chiltern Way; Harpsden PLCA1 – open landscape continues across the A4155 on the boundary towards the Thames Floodplain; Chiltern AONB – continuity of dry valley and wooded slopes to the northwest, Harpsden village to the north; Shiplake PLCA4 – continuation of open farmland adjoining Shiplake Woods; Drawback Hill – continuation across the dry valley between PLCA and south facing slopes of Drawback Hill on the southern edge of Henley-on-Thames.