

HASSOCKS PARISH WILDLIFE ASSET IDENTIFICATION

The National planning Policy Framework, 2012

Relevant policies are reproduced in Appendix 1.

References

The key reference document for this report is the *Desktop Biodiversity Report, Land at Hassocks Parish, ES/14/700*, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, 5th December 2014. The full report is available on the Hassocks Parish Council; Neighbourhood Plan website. This has been combined with the authors' wealth of local knowledge and lifetime interest in the natural history of the area.

National Park Status

A significant part of the parish lies within the South Downs National Park.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

The part of Clayton to Offham Escarpment that falls within Hassocks Parish.

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNICIs)

Lag Wood and Butcher's Wood - site ref M47, Desktop Biodiversity Report.
Keymer Meadow – site ref M50, Desktop Biodiversity Report.

Ancient Woodlands – ref Ordnance Survey Mapping MSDC 100021794.2014

Copse west of Coldharbour Farm to parish boundary
Ockenden's Shaw
Ham Shaw
Ockenden's Wood
Bonny's Wood
Lag Wood
Butcher's Wood (Woodland Trust)
Woodland on the escarpment above Holt Valley
2 Strips of woodland on the stream running north from Whitelands Reservoir
Parklands Copse
Triangular woodland bordering Queens's Drive, Grand Avenue and Clayton Mills
Woodland north west of Belmont Close
Woodland west of Mill Nursery
2 woodlands west of A273 at Clayton Priory
Ockley Wood

Summary of existing and potential habitats in the parish

Wildlife Corridors

Banks, hedges and ditches
Streams and ponds
Railways embankments
Footpaths and bridleways
Roadside verges
Green open spaces within urban developments
Gardens

Local Character Area – Village

Ancient Woodland - Triangular woodland bordering Queens's Drive, Grand Avenue and Clayton Mills

A strip of woodland along the eastern side of the railway line, north of Woodland Road and west of Clayton Mills

Adastra Park and Memorial Garden

Mature trees

Hedges

Stream bank

Raised beds, Keymer Road (Autumn Ladies Tresses *Spiranthes spiralis*)

Hassocks Burial Ground

Keymer Churchyard

Green open spaces within existing developments

Gardens

A Network of streams throughout the village

Pond within the woodland strip, north of Woodland Road

Pond within the garden of "Gurrs Croft", Ockley Lane

Individual mature trees including pines and beech

Street trees – there has been and is a programme of street tree planting

Mature tree groups:

Keymer Road/Wilmington Close junction

The Green near to Pauline Thaw Centre, Dale Avenue

The Green Island bordered by Grand Avenue, Kings Drive and The Close

Chancellors Park, next to Infant School

Keymer Road from Stonepound to village centre – both sides of the road

London Road, south of junction with Shepherds Walk

Stone Wall embankment of the railway line along the Cinder Path (Wall-rue *Asplenium ruta-muraria*)

Rookery at the eastern edge of the urban development on Keymer Road.

Local Character Area A – Oldlands Greensand

Within the National Park

Keymer Meadow SSCI Site Ref M50 Desktop Biodiversity Report; Unimproved
Neutral Grassland
Land under agricultural management
Streams and ditches
Hedgerows and mature trees

Local Character Area B – Lodge Farm Footslopes

Within the National Park

Whitelands Reservoir, overflow pond and one small pond surrounded by grazing land, trees and hedges: bats present in this area & great crested newt recorded 2006
2 strips of ancient woodland on the chalk stream running north from the reservoir.

Parklands Copse, a small area of wet woodland with a stream running through. Wild Garlic *Allium ursinum* abundant and Golden Saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* present.

Spring Lane Lake, Herring Stream, a chalk stream, the overflow from Spring Lane Lake

Clayton Church – bats present in the church

Clayton Churchyard

Along the Cinder Path towards Clayton is a cluster of Spindle *Euonymus europaeus*

Land under agricultural management

Field under management specifically for birds, east of the allotments and Parklands Copse. (community project)

Hedgerows

Mature trees

School playing fields

Local Character Area C – Clayton Scarp

National Park

SSSI

Ancient Woodland above Holt Valley – Buzzards regularly seen in the area

Mixed woodland

Local Character Area D – Clayton Downs

In National Park

Chalk grassland, rich with orchids. Round headed rampions *Phyteuma orbiculare*) known locally as The Pride of Sussex, also present.

Land under agricultural management

Sparse Hedgerows

Gorse bushes border part of the South Downs Way

Local Character Area E – West Wooded Footslopes

Within the National Park

Ancient Woodlands:

The Copse west of Coldharbour Farm to parish boundary

Ockenden's Shaw
Ham Shaw
Ockenden's Wood
Bonny's Wood
Lag Wood – SSCI Site Ref M47

Butcher's Wood – SSCI Site Ref M47 Desktop Biodiversity Report, Woodland Trust owned and managed.

Wood anemones *Anemone nemerosa* and bluebells *hyacinthoides non-scripta* are abundant in spring.

Chalk Stream

Marsh Marigold *Caltha palustris* grows in the chalk stream between Lag Wood and Woodbine Cottage.

The pond at Woodbine Cottage

Pheasant Field, north of Lag Wood, under management as a wildflower meadow with blackthorn boundary hedge managed for butterflies (there are records of brown hairstreak butterflies in this area).

Railway embankment and cutting (nightingales regularly present in this area)

Clayton Wood Natural Burial Ground – recent ongoing tree planting, ditch and pond
Land under agricultural management

Local Character Area F – Ham Fields Greensand Ridge

Ancient Woodland north west of Belmont Close

Mature hedgerows linking with the ancient woodland

Grazing land

Hedgerows

Mature trees

Banked hedgerow with large deadwood stumps

Stream and ditches

Ponds (great crested newt recorded 2013)

London Road Recreation Ground

Talbot Field open space, woodland, hedgerow and trees

Local Character Area G – Clayton Priory Weald

Ancient Woodland west of Mill Nursery

2 woodlands west of A273 at Clayton Priory

Herring Stream. Mature Alder Trees present and regular sightings of kingfishers.

Body of water at Hammonds Mill

Hog Pudding Lane, ancient drovers' track bordered by hedges with damp grassland and ditches. Lady's smock *cardamine pratensis* found in this area

Mixed woodland at Mill Nursery

The Golf course has retained some mature trees and hedges. There has also been more recent planting of trees and the creation of several ponds.

Land under agricultural management
Hedgerows
Ditches

Mature trees – “Friars Oak” a mature oak tree thought by locals to represent the “Friars Oak” of our time. One such Friars Oak in this general location being mentioned in the Domesday Book.

Green Crescent mixed woodland at parish boundary with Burgess Hill
Clayton Priory Parkland

Local Character Area H – Friars Oak Weald

Railway embankment with wet woodland strip
Woodland pond at footpath over the railway line
Herring Stream bordered by mature Alder and Willow trees
Stream fed lake at New Close Farm
Wet grassland
Hedgerows
Mature oak trees

Local Character Area I – Ockley Weald

Ancient Woodland Ockley Wood
Spring rising in land north of Mackie Avenue creating a wetland continuing on as a stream.

Wide Hedgerows
Mature Horse Chestnut trees at Woodside Grange
Railway embankment
Mixed woodland along railway line
Land under agricultural management, some with headlands left unploughed

Local Character Area J – Broadlands Weald

The eastern sector lies within the National Park
Land under agricultural management
Mixed woodland
Banked bridleway along parish boundary

Potential habitats

Balancing pond for flood relief in the field east of allotments and Parklands Copse

Clayton Wood Natural Burial Ground is a woodland burial ground which with appropriate management to exclude the planting of non-native species, will become a mixed woodland habitat.

Appendix 1 – NPPF Policies on biodiversity.

11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

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

117. To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:

- plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
- identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;
- promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
- aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and
- where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.

118. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site's notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
- opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
- planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss