

CHALDON PROPOSED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Name	Location	Ref: Chaldon Village Council CH002
Land east of Stanstead Road	Chaldon Parish	
Description		
<p>Approx 16 acres of mainly ancient, ungrazed grassland and woodland know as Beech Hangar Wood. The easternmost area is primarily deciduous woodland. Centre of site: grid reference TQ32744 53975</p>		
Biodiversity-Chaldon Wildlife (Green) Corridor		
<p>This tract of land is an important part of the Chaldon wildlife corridor that runs from Happy Valley in the north through to the North Downs in the south. Happy Valley is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSNI), rich in wildlife and an important habitat for many species some endangered. The North Downs are a ridge of chalk hills that are designated as an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) and SSNI. This tract of land is part of the wildlife corridor that links these important sites.</p>		
<p>It is increasingly recognized that conserving biodiversity requires a landscape-level strategy. It is not enough to protect a few sites as 'islands' in a sea of unsympathetic land uses - in fact, this approach risks the loss of our special species, because small, isolated populations have a much higher extinction risk</p>		

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<p>than less fragmented ones. Habitat connectivity can also result in the region supporting wide-ranging species that require more area than any one reserve can provide.</p> <p>It is therefore critical for priority habitats to be connected by wildlife corridors such as the one in Chaldon. This creates a landscape that is permeable to wild animals. The NPPF acknowledges this by directing the planning system to '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 stores that connect them' (para 117). Wildlife corridors are also a central principle of Surrey Wildlife Trust's Living Landscapes campaign.</p>	
Planning Permission?	No
Can all community benefit from LGS	<p>Yes. Chaldon's rural character is of overwhelming importance to its residents, and having this grassland/ woodland area known as the "Bunny Field" allows local residents both from Chaldon and Caterham access to an area noted for its wildlife. In the summer large areas are covered in Bracken and allow Dog-walkers, families with small children, and wildlife-watchers to enjoy this area. This area is readily accessible and within walking distance of homes from Stanstead Road and Dome-Hill.</p> <p>Due to the lack of a pavement beyond Oakhyrst Grange this grassland area also gives a safe means of reaching the top of Stanstead Road where the well-known Harrow Public House is situated.</p>
Does the land already benefit from protection?	<p>Green belt classed Area of great Landscape Value (CSP20). In addition, this plot is within an area marked as a Potential Site of Nature Conservation Importance (CSP17/ D19).</p> <p>However, Areas of Great Landscape Value may be abolished as a category in a forthcoming Natural England review, and thus this does not afford the site assured protection.</p> <p>If LGS status were awarded, the recreational, historical and ecological importance of this area would be protected.</p>
Is the green space is in reasonably close	The field/woodland is only a short walk from the houses found in Caterham on the hill and Caterham Valley. It

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proximity to the community it serves?	is within a few metres of the Harrow's carpark.
Is the green space local in character and is not an extensive tract of land?	Yes. The field is a distinct region between Chaldon, Caterham-on the Hill and Caterham Valley. Situated directly next to The Harrow, which can be traced back 4 centuries as an Inn.
Is it demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance because of:	
Beauty	Included in the Surrey Hills Area of Great Landscape Value, the buffer zone of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Historic	The Land was owned by Charles Day of Day&Martin in the 19 th Century. After his death his estate passed to the Chancery. In the 1950's the grassland area was used for Horseshowes until the site became too small due to its popularity.
Recreational Value	See 'public access'
Tranquillity	Despite its close proximity to Stanstead Road it offers peace and tranquillity, due in part to the mature trees. It is possible to walk amongst grassland and trees and feel like it is the middle of the countryside.
Richness of Wildlife	<p>This site is exceptionally rich in biodiversity. Ancient, unimproved grasslands are amongst the UK's most threatened habitats, and the CR3 area is very fortunate to have a surviving example of the quality of this site.</p> <p>Much of the grass is grazed to a low level by rabbits and mixed with moss, conditions that are ideal for fungi. A professional mycological survey has not been undertaken, but at least five species of waxcap (<i>Hygrocybe</i>) and several species of clavarioid fungi are present, along with earthy powder caps <i>Cystoderma amianthinum</i>. The latter is sensitive to pollution and is thus an indicator species of good environmental quality. It is not improbable that a full survey would find sufficient fungal diversity for the site to be classed as of regional or even national importance under the CHEG(D) assessment system. It should also be noted that the UK has an international responsibility for waxcap grasslands because they are in serious decline throughout Europe.</p> <p>The site also contains areas of higher grass sward, which provide habitat for short-tailed field voles (<i>Microtus agrestis</i>), an important prey species for many carnivores. The varying habitat structures – from low grass to dense bracken – along with the abundance of 'edge' habitat, and the site's connectivity to the wider countryside,</p>

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	suggest significant potential for reptiles, although no surveys have been undertaken to date due to the time of year. However, grass snakes <i>Natrix natrix</i> and (historically) adders <i>Vipera berus</i> have been documented from nearby War Coppice Road. Both of these are UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species.
Does it have public access?	There are no formal rights of way at present. In practice, it is used by local dog walkers, ramblers and horse riders on a daily basis. The public has been regularly accessing the area for generations, and unofficial paths have developed across it. These are clearly apparent on aerial photos.
Does it have a public right of way?	See above.
Is it located in a new development?	No
Is it in public ownership?	Subject to Land registry search.
How will LGS be managed?	The management will remain the responsibility of the current owners. However, there is a strong case for listing it on the register of assets of value to the community (see below).
Should it be registered as an Asset of Community Value?	Consideration should be given to listing this important space as an Asset of Community Value. Despite private ownership, the field is currently well used by the local community.
Acknowledgements	Surrey Interactive Map Chris Windridge. Adele Brand Marie Dax