

Name	Location	Reference: Chaldon Village Council Reference CH003
<b>Hilltop Lane to Birchwood Lane</b>	<b>Chaldon Parish</b>	map refs for the boundary line: South of TQ311546, 315546, 316546. North of TQ312543, 314543, 314544, 317544
<b>Description</b>		
<p>Approx. 12.84 ha of rough pasture and scrub and some ancient woodland, divided into three main sections across the public footpath by simple timber and wire fencing and stiles, and a further overgrown field (not marked on any viewed plans) divided off by a similar timber and wire fence running along the southerly side of the public footpath close to the Hilltop Lane access point. The proposed LGS site is traversed by a public footpath ref: FP13 from Hilltop Lane to meet Birchwood Lane length 660 metres, of which the 544 metres is the length of the footpath within the proposed LGS area. Small grazing paddocks, animal stabling and a few houses with gardens form the western boundary and separate this Green space from Hilltop Lane. To the south of this Green Space, separating it from Pilgrims Lane, are a few substantial detached houses fronting Pilgrims Lane and, proceeding east, a WT station, fenced grazing land and Roverdene Scouts Camp. The site adjoins Ridgebushes Wood (approx. 8 acres off the south-eastern corner), which is separated from it by a mainly fallen, light barbed wire fence and a bank of clearly ancient origin. Footpath 6 running north/south between Rook Lane &amp; Pilgrims Lane forms the eastern boundary, with a narrow (28 metres) strip of ancient woodland included in this LGS site. The northern boundary is formed by a fenced track leading from Hilltop Lane to a strip of land with the remains of agricultural buildings, known as Downesland Farm, and Willey Broom Wood/House in the Wood, which are accessed from Willey Broom Lane and Footpath 112.</p>	 <p>116 OS 100049913. Use of this data is subject to terms and conditions (see terms of use)</p>	

<b>Biodiversity-Chaldon Wildlife (Green) Corridor</b>	
<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 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>	
<b>Landowner</b>	
<b>Planning Permission?</b>	No
<b>Can all community benefit from LGS?</b>	Yes.

	<p>It is easily accessible from and provides a quiet, safe, traffic free open space for walkers between the rural west of Chaldon and the urban area around Chaldon Common Road. It also links into the full network of Chaldon footpaths &amp; bridleways, routes to Caterham on the Hill, Caterham station, Merstham, Bletchingley, Happy Valley &amp; Coulsdon, and the North Downs Way long distance path. Dog-walkers, families, foragers and wildlife-watchers all enjoy this site. Access to the eastern portion from Birchwood Lane is possible for those with impaired mobility, but there is no vehicular access.</p> <p>It enhances the rural scene in Hilltop Lane, providing open views east towards the ancient woodland of Ridgebushes Wood and Willey Broom Wood. (Ancient Woodland Description: Land that has had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600AD) Data Owner: Natural England)</p>
<p><b>Does the land already benefit from protection?</b></p>	<p>It is within the Green Belt. The southern portion of the site is within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, providing some protection. The northern part is designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value but this category may be abolished in a forthcoming Natural England review, and thus does not afford the site assured protection. However, the recreational, historical and ecological importance of this site warrants additional designation as a LGS.</p>
<p><b>Is the green space in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?</b></p>	<p>The site is immediately accessible from Hilltop Lane and Birchwood Lane, therefore linking the west and east of Chaldon south of Rook Lane.</p>
<p><b>Is the green space local in character and is not an extensive tract of land?</b></p>	<p>“Fiveways” at the north eastern corner of the site is a major hub of the Chaldon footpath network. The Definitive Statement under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (Part IV), Countryside Act 1967 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Part III) describes the Five Ways as Chaldon, Chaldon Church, Pilgrims Way, Caterham and Hilltop Lane.</p> <p>The size of the site is adequate for use by people, grazing horses and wildlife without conflict. It has</p>

	clear, identifiable boundaries.
<b>It is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance because:</b>	
<b>Beauty</b>	Partly in the Surrey Hills Area of Great Landscape Value, and partly in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
<b>Historic</b>	<p>The low bank (lynchet) forming the boundary with Ridgebushes Wood is probably part of an Iron or late Bronze Age, “Celtic” field system running west along the ridge and escarpment of the North Downs from War Coppice/White Hill in Caterham parish to Alderstead/Merstham.</p> <p>The 1868 Ordnance Survey map shows one of Chaldon’s 25 ponds, essential to the local water supply pre the introduction of a piped supply, located within the site adjacent to the boundary with Ridgebushes Wood.</p> <p>The footpath across the site from the original Hilltop Farm buildings on Hilltop Lane to the current Birchwood Lane and the open ground and woodland being considered for LGS designation are clearly shown on maps over a long period. The Tithe Map of 1837 shows the public footpath across the site, as does the Ordnance Survey 1914 map.</p> <p>The fields (Broom Field, Purley Field, Hilltop and Eleven Acres) making up the site are clearly identifiable, albeit with some minor boundary changes, following the major sale of land in 1924. In 1924 the Hill Top Estate with its 107 acres, including this site as lot 3, was put up for sale. The sale particulars described the Estate as consisting “of arable, wood pasture and a mangold field.” Lot 3 was essentially the current proposed LGS site, excluding a strip of land subsequently developed on the southern boundary with Pilgrims Lane, paddocks on the Hilltop Lane boundary and a subsequently developed strip (nos. 47 &amp; 49 Hilltop Lane &amp; Downesland Farm) separating the site</p>

	<p>from Six Brothers Field to the north. Lot 3 was sold prior to the public sale and is not described further, but the sale particulars show the current track marked F.P. running between Hilltop Farm and its attendant cottages to what is now known as Fiveways at Birchwood Lane.</p> <p>In 1953 a development of 151 properties was proposed between Hilltop Lane, Birchwood Lane and Pilgrims Way but did not succeed. It would have created new roads connecting Hilltop Lane to Birchwood Lane and Pilgrims Lane, and allotments adjacent to Ridgebushes Wood, which would have been spared. The footpath across the site is clearly shown on the 1953 plan, but would have disappeared under houses and gardens.</p> <p>The southern part of the site is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), designated in 1958.</p>
<b>Recreational Value</b>	<p>It is part of the zealously guarded footpath network in Chaldon. Allows for a variety of routes of differing lengths, suitable for varying activity levels, through changing countryside. A good site for foraging for sloes and blackberries in season. Subject to there being no grazing animals, dogs can be safely let off the lead and children can run about.</p> <p>In addition to the marked footpath, there are other well-used routes around the field perimeters and into Ridgebushes Wood.</p>
<b>Tranquillity</b>	<p>The site is very tranquil, is inaccessible to motor vehicles and heavily wooded around much of its margins. It has the feel of unspoiled countryside.</p>
<b>Richness of Wildlife</b>	<p>Classified under Surrey County Council Landscape Character Areas 2015 as Chaldon Chalk Down with Woodland. This is an internationally important and threatened habitat, which is attractive to a</p>

	<p>wide range of wildlife.</p> <p>It is a crossroads site, providing a north/south and west/east wildlife corridor linking the North Downs chalk ridge and escarpment (SSSI), managed through conservation grazing, with the National Trust owned Six Brothers Field off Hilltop Lane, where the margins are managed for wildlife, and ancient woodland at Willey Broom Wood and Ridgebushes Wood. The ecology provides food, shelter and open space for foxes, roe deer, grey squirrels, rabbits, buzzards, green woodpeckers, tawny owls, bats and insects. Bullfinches (a UK Biodiversity Plan Priority Species), barn swallows and, occasionally, cormorants and kestrels have been seen. Much of the site has rough grassland with a good tussocky structure. This is excellent habitat for short-tailed field voles and their runs are found, providing clear evidence of their presence. As prey for a number of local predators from foxes to birds of prey and owls to snakes, the voles are a very important part of the ecosystem.</p> <p>There is a wide range of fungi species present. Several parrot waxcaps <i>Gliophorus psittacinus</i>, which are an ancient grassland indicator species, have been found. Also recorded are snowy waxcap <i>Hygrocybe virginea</i>, the deceiver <i>Laccaria laccata</i>, egg-yolk fungus <i>Bolbitius titubans</i> and various species of <i>Russula</i>, <i>Panaeolus</i>, <i>Mycena</i> and earthballs. There are likely to be many more to be discovered by an experienced mycologist.</p>
<b>Does it have public access?</b>	Yes
<b>Does it have a public right of way?</b>	Yes.
<b>Is it located in a new development?</b>	

	No
<b>Is it in public ownership?</b>	No
<b>How will LGS be managed?</b>	The management will remain the responsibility of the current owners. Apart from horses grazing in the western section, it is not actively managed and there is a risk of the eastern part's scrub reverting to woodland. There is a strong case for listing it on the register of assets of value to the community (see below).
<b>Should it be registered as an Asset of Community Value?</b>	Consideration should be given to listing this important space as an Asset of Community Value. Although in private ownership, the field is currently well used by the local community.
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Tithe Map 1837 Surrey History Centre Surrey County Council Interactive map The Bourne Society – Village Histories 7 Chaldon & Hilltop Estate sale particulars Mrs E. Bonsall - Historical material Miss A Brand - Ecology Mr K Robbins - photos & videos, site visit, research & review material Mrs C Lawless – site visit, research and documentation