

Name	Location	Reference: Chaldon Village Council Reference CH013
Piles Wood nr Leazes Ave, Chaldon	Chaldon Parish	
Description		
Approximately 13 hectares of semi-natural ancient woodland (ASNW) located in the heart of Chaldon.		
Piles Wood crosses the boundary between Chaldon Parish and LB Croydon.		See ancient woodland map for Chaldon
Biodiversity-Chaldon Wildlife (Green) Corridor		
<p>This woodland 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>		
Landowner	Subject to land registry check.	
Planning Permission?	No	

CHALDON PROPOSED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Can all community benefit from LGS?	The wood is adjacent to a number of public footpaths and is close to Leazes Ave, Chaldon. It has permissive path through the wood and is much used by local residents.
Does the land already benefit from protection?	Ancient Woodland and within Green Belt. The additional protection of LGS will ensure that the wood remains a valuable asset to the local community.
Is the green space in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves?	Lies within the heart of the settlement of Chaldon.
Is the green space local in character and is not an extensive tract of land?	A defined tract of woodland that lies within the settlement of Chaldon and the LB of Croydon.
It is demonstrably special to the local community and holds a particular local significance because:	
<p>This attractive woodland is visual from many viewpoints around Chaldon. It is an oasis of calm and peacefulness. It forms a network of woodland and open pasture that is linked by well-used public footpaths. The Wood is an important contributor to the rural character of the settlement of Chaldon and is much loved by the local residents and others visiting the area.</p> <p>It is a vital link in the Chaldon Wildlife Corridor (see above)</p>	
History	
Richness of Wildlife	<p>Semi-natural ancient woodland (ASNW) is an irreplaceable habitat that warrants the highest level of protection. Surrey has a particular responsibility to care for its woodland because is the most forested county in Britain. Nationally, less than 12% of the United Kingdom still has forest cover - one of the lowest rates in Europe - and only 1.2% of that is classed as ancient (figures from Defra).</p> <p>ASNW denotes woodland that has existed continuously since at least the 1600s. Over hundreds - and potentially thousands - of years, very rich and complex ecological communities have evolved.</p>

CHALDON PROPOSED LOCAL GREEN SPACES

	<p>ASNW support high levels of species diversity, and often permit natural ecological processes such as predation, nutrient recycling and regeneration to continue; for example, astonishingly diverse species of fungi help break down fallen trees, while dead wood provides habitat for woodpeckers, bats and myriad insects, potentially including stag beetles <i>Lucanus cervus</i>. The forest floor is often a carpet of bluebells in the spring, and may contain shrubbery that provides breeding habitat for many birds and mammals. Ancient woodlands should be considered potential hazel dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> habitat due to connectivity with confirmed dormouse populations.</p>
Does it have public access?	The wood is adjacent to public footpaths and the current owners have agreed public use.
Does it have a public right of way?	No. However, the current owners have permitted public access using defined paths
Is it located in a new development?	No
Is it in public ownership?	No
How will LGS be managed?	The management will remain the responsibility of the current owners.
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. Although in private ownership, the field is currently well used by the local community.
Acknowledgements	Adele Brand-ecology