Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

Landscape Conservation Action Plan 2019-2024
Acknowledgements

Our thanks go to the organisations, their representatives, and individuals who have been involved in the development of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs from the outset – a great example of the sector working on a landscape scale to celebrate all that the Central Chilterns has to offer. In particular, we would like to thank the Advisory Group members and lead partner organisations. In addition, our thanks go to all the people who have offered their considerable expertise and time in contributing to this Landscape Conservation Action Plan.
Executive Summary

The Chilterns AONB\(^1\) is one of the UK’s finest and most distinctive landscapes, and the Central Chilterns\(^2\) area reflects all of the special characteristics that contribute to this distinctiveness.

It has a stunning backdrop of chalk hills; the ‘scarp edge’ of the hills created when glaciers came to rest and pushing meltwaters carved deep narrow valleys with clay and flint summits. These have left an intimate mosaic of woodland, chalk grassland, farmland, chalk streams, commons and parkland, with a dense network of ancient routeways, tiny winding green lanes and deep hollow-ways connecting the hills and valleys.

Its proximity to London means that the Central Chilterns has benefited from easy access to markets. In the 1700s and 1800s, fruit growing became a major livelihood, with the chalky soils being a natural host for cultivated cherries. By the turn of the 1900s, everyone in the rural communities would stop working on their other jobs to help harvest the cherries and celebrate Cherry Pie Sunday.

By the mid-19th century, the woods were busy with ‘bodgers’, the men who turned wood to make parts for chairs, to supply the furniture workshops and factories in and around High Wycombe, an industry that came to define the region.

The dynamic interplay between people and place over thousands of years is a relationship of perpetual, incremental change.

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Partnership Scheme (the Scheme) is the coming together of diverse organisations and communities in the Central Chilterns to work towards a vision of:

“A healthy, resilient, connected landscape: with its unique natural, historical, and cultural heritage cherished by present and future generations.”

Led by the Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the Scheme will provide opportunities for people to get involved and volunteer; to increase and improve wildlife spaces; and for communities to learn, create and take action.

The Scheme seeks to connect or reconnect local people to the wildlife and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns through a number of individual but interweaving projects under the following themes:

**Wildlife and Landscape**

Creating and/or restoring large-scale habitats on farm and other private land; improving and extending wildlife sites; providing groups with the skills and resources to manage their own community wild spaces; increasing the number of people able to monitor wildlife; advising and helping landowners to improve their land to benefit wildlife.

**Heritage and Landscape**

Creating opportunities for people to explore, experience and learn about their rich cultural heritage and how it relates to their experience of the landscape today; creating an enduring interpretation and record of this heritage, to inform and inspire future generations.

**People and Landscape**

Providing groups and communities with the knowledge and skills to look after their local special places and landscapes, through effective engagement with the planning system, catalysing local volunteering, and directly caring for local green space; creating activities and opportunities to help break down barriers which prevent people from experiencing and enjoying the countryside around them.

Common threads, such as volunteering, learning, digital media and providing small grants to encourage community initiatives, will run across the themes.

The programme will leave a legacy of improved conservation and land management, partnership working, skills, volunteers, and engaged and aware communities caring for the future of their heritage.

Nick Phillips
Chair of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Advisory Group
and Group Chief Executive
Community Impact Bucks – A Better Life Together

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1. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
2. For the purposes of this report, the area represented within the LCAP is called the ‘Central Chilterns’ although it is not a formal designation.
This Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) is the guiding document for the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme. It provides background to the landscape and its distinctive character, and brings together the research, consultation and planning that have taken place since 2016, under the leadership of the CCB.

The LCAP will guide five years of delivery of the Scheme and the foundation for the legacy of a long-term partnership. It has been written by a range of contributors involved with the development of the Scheme, many of whom are experts in their own fields.

The LCAP consists of three parts:

- **Part 1:** The Scheme Plan
- **Part 2:** Project plan summaries
- **Part 3:** Full project plans

Parts 1 and 2 will be made available via the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs webpages hosted by the CCB.

The development stage and the production of the LCAP have been overseen by an Advisory Group, whose members have dedicated time and advice to bringing the Scheme to fruition.

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### Location

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will take place in the Central Chilterns which lies mostly within the Chilterns AONB and National Character Area 110. The area follows the upper courses of the Rivers Wye and Misbourne, and links the towns of High Wycombe, Wendover, Amersham, Chalfont St Giles and Princes Risborough.

Within ten kilometres of the Scheme area are the larger settlements of Slough, Maidenhead, Rickmansworth, and the outskirts of west London (Northwood, Ruislip, Uxbridge), with Hemel Hempstead and Watford just beyond that range.

The Central Chilterns Landscape Partnership Scheme covers 278 km². This is a larger area than many similar schemes but was chosen for the following reasons:

- to reflect the landscape character types representative of the whole of the Chilterns
- consideration of the AONB protected landscape
- being adjacent to significant populations
- to address key threats to the area, the most significant being the construction of the HS2 railway over the next ten years.

A buffer strip along the north-west of the project area is outside the AONB but is included in the Scheme as it is both a key component of the ‘setting’ of the AONB and a host for unusual wildlife habitats created by a line of springs emerging from the chalk hills.
Section one:
The story of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs
Introduction to the Central Cholterns

Alison Doggett • Cholterns Conservation Board Member

From earliest times, the Choltern Hills were difficult to settle in, a problem to farm and a challenge to cross, because an unusual geological history created a complicated landscape. This awkwardness has contributed to a unique cultural heritage that many enjoy today.

The making of the Cholterns

The Cholterns Scarp makes a bold statement. Its scalloped edge parades a white chalk skeleton, rising abruptly above the Vale to its highest points near Wendover Woods (267m) and Coombe Hill (260m). However, it is in the subtlety of the landscape that the unique characteristics of the Cholterns are revealed. Grassy downlands and patchy woodlands share the rounded summit ridges, but as the ‘dip-slope’ (a slope of ground following a dip in the underlying rocks) slides towards the Thames, the surface becomes deeply dissected, forming a complicated and irregular patchwork.

Historical parish boundaries and commons

[Image of map showing historical parish boundaries and commons]

The imprint of the past remains clearly and spectacularly visible...

Choltern countryside’s distinguishing features are a consequence of its geological and glacial history. The scarp edge of the Cholterns marked the final boundary of the glaciers. Annual cycles of freezing and thawing allowed rushing meltwaters to carve out deep narrow valleys and deposit thick layers of heavy clay and flints on the summits. Thus, it is not typical of rolling chalk scenery with open grasslands like those of the South Downs. Instead there is much more local diversity of relief and soils, creating a small-scale character to the pattern of fields and woodlands. A dense network of ancient routeways remains, with tiny winding green lanes and deep hollow-ways emphasising the boundaries and demonstrating the connectivity between hill and vale.

The Rivers Misbourne and Wye are the two major troughs which breach the Central Cholterns. In common with many chalk streams their flow is variable and unreliable. Along the edge of the scarp, spring-line villages line up to mark the location of the emerging springs and the region is dotted with ponds and wells, some now hiding in places that were once open spaces and have subsequently been wooded over.

The cultural landscape

Scratch the surface of this region and a continuous timeline of changes is quickly unearthed with real evidence to go and see on the ground. The cultural heritage reflects an ancient historic landscape with evidence of human occupation from earliest pre-historic times. The imprint of the past remains clearly and spectacularly visible because of the unusual colonisation and evolution of settlement that occurred on the hills and in the valleys.

Neolithic flint mines, Bronze age barrows, Iron age forts, Roman villas, Anglo-Saxon boundaries and medieval wood banks are evidence of a historic landscape that has managed to maintain the secrets of its past. Woodlands and commons, fields and farms, tiny hamlets and grand manors reflect the long legacy of human influence first mentioned as belonging to the ‘Cilternsaetan’ (people of the Cholterns) in the Tribal Hidage, a 7th century document, just one of a rich documentary record that adds authenticity to the evidence on the ground.
Ancient countryside on the hilltops

The colonisation of this difficult hilly landscape with its steep slopes, stony soils and wooded hilltops was long and slow, and successive generations needed to adapt to survive. The hilltops on either side of the valley reflect the local diversity of relief and soils, generating a small-scale character to the patchwork of hedged fields, woodlands, high-sided lanes, and dispersed settlement pattern. Oliver Rackham* has called this type of landscape ‘ancient countryside’, and such areas are precious because they hold the key to our cultural heritage.

During the Anglo-Saxon period along the scarp edge the arrangement of parishes in long skinny fingers, perpendicular to the slope (known as strip parishes), reflects an equitable division of the vital resources associated with different soils and relief (figures 1 and 2).

By medieval times innovative Chiltern farmers were ploughing with horses that coped better with the smaller irregular fields and stony soils. Most wooded hilltops remained and were managed as a valuable renewable resource. Wood provided construction materials, fuel and, at certain times of year, foraging for animals.

Open fields on the flatter land

The major land re-organisations occurred on the valley bottoms and along the base of the scarp where the land was flatter and the better soils were easier to farm. The first of these was in late Anglo-Saxon and medieval times, and was associated with the joint and co-operative working of the land. It involved the creation of strip fields and nucleated villages, many of which had the manor, church and houses clustered around a village green. Rackham refers to this as planned or champion (from champagne) countryside.

However, in the Chilterns the limited amount of flat land meant the proportion that was jointly and cooperatively farmed was small, when compared to most of middle England. Fields remained generally small, irregular, hedged and individually owned.

The division between the hilly wooded land and the flatter more open countryside was clearly recorded by John Leland in the 1530s as he journeyed through England. It was most marked near Wendover as the valley opened out into Aylesbury Vale and he wrote: ‘Looke as the contereye of the vale of Aillesbyre for the moste parte is cleene baren of woode, and [is] champaine; so is all Chilterne well woodyd, and full of enclosures.’

A sense of place

It is the link to the past that provides the group of characteristics which, when taken together, create the idea of a sense of place.

In the Central Chilterns the cultural landscape does not maintain a unity of appearance throughout its length and breadth, nor do all of the defining features occur everywhere. There is more a ‘pick and mix’ of characteristics that are clearly recognisable as ‘typical’.

Some of the most enchanting are the old oddly-shaped, enclosed fields bounded by deep winding lanes with high hedges or tree tunnels. Some of these tiny single-track roads, like Arreweg Lane (also documented as Arrewig) in the hilltop village of The Lee, even maintain their Anglo-Saxon name. Others have clearly visible wooded banks, garlanded in spring and summer with wild flowers.

Woods and commons

Also typical are numerous small patches of woodland of which a significant amount is ancient woodland dating back to early medieval times. The tiny Jones’ Wood is shown on a beautiful old estate map from 1620 (figure 4) to be both the same size and tear-drop shape as it is today. The woodland margins have fluctuated, and even those recorded in the Domesday book show succession and regeneration as grazing may have temporarily declined and the natural vegetation taken hold again.

* Oliver Rackham is the acknowledged authority on the British countryside, and author of the highly acclaimed The History of the Countryside (1986).

Figure 3. Narrow high-sided lane, typical of the Chilterns

Figure 4. 1620 Map of the Wendover Borough. This rare ancient map of the Misbourne Valley clearly shows the contrast between the open strip fields on the valley floor and the irregular ‘closes’ on the hillslopes.
The Chiltern woodland has been penetrated since Neolithic times and while some areas were individually owned, others were the common property of a group or community, which had specific and limited rights. The rights were regulated and restricted by tradition, charter, and social position, and resources were balanced and managed in a variety of ways.

Many of the largest wooded regions were the wood-pasture commons that attempted to combine multiple uses; the pollarded trees provided wood for timber and fuel, and beechnuts and acorns served as ‘pannage’ (food gleaned from the forest floor) for grazing animals (figure 5).

**Daughter settlements**

On the higher summits, hilltop hamlets dating back to Anglo-Saxon times grew up, becoming the daughter settlements of spring-line villages at the base of parishes. These include The Lee, Little Kimble, and Little Hampden. The initial creation and expansion of many upland daughter settlements may have started as huts for seasonal grazing, but their major expansion took place in the 11th and 12th centuries as evidenced in historical records where the hilltop hamlets of St Leonards, Cholesbury and Hawridge first appear.

**Commons**

The distribution of commons is also directly related to the shape of the parishes, with many remaining commons still sitting on the higher points of the strip parishes and areas of the dip-slopes where the soils are poorer. A particularly interesting and widespread case of common wood use was in the Chiltern strip parishes where common rights were given on the escarpment edge and were called ‘hillwork’. An Inquisition Post Mortem of 1293 for Princes Risborough records: “…all the tenants hold a wood called Le Hellewrik in common’.

Many commons were on the least fertile soils and it is on the sands, gravels and clays of the Reading Beds and Plateau Gravels that industries such as brick making and tile and pottery kilns were located, making use of the local clays, sands and wood fuel. The vernacular Chiltern churches and cottages are typically a combination of local brick and flint, with clay-tiled roofs. They tend to be long and low, as their intrinsic strength did not favour high towers and tall buildings.

Today the many heaths, commons and downlands that remain are accessible through one of the densest networks of paths in the country.

**Parliamentary enclosure**

The process of parliamentary enclosure replaced the openfields with a new planned landscape of enclosed and hedged fields. In Wendover it took an Act of Parliament to complete the process in 1795. The long-standing contrast of ‘champion and woodland’ was softened by these changes although some open fields lingered on well into the railway age. Many of the outer field boundaries remained stubbornly intact, despite some amalgamations; the resemblance of the ancient field boundaries to those on the modern map is striking.

**Changing communications**

From the early 1700s, the turnpike roads heralded a new era of communication and with it played a fundamental role in meeting the demands of a rapidly industrialising nation. They were quickly followed by the canals. The man-made Grand Junction waterway was to have a profound side-effect in protecting the Chiltern woodlands, for the chair making industry could fill returning coal barges with furniture for the growing towns and cities. The waterway was both to save the woodlands and change the way they were managed. The beautiful Chiltern beech woods with their carpets of spring bluebells remain an enduring, if unexpected, legacy of the industrial revolution.

It was the arrival of the steam locomotive that is recognised as the main catalyst forcing the pace of change in the 19th century. The Chilterns were early on the railway scene by default, as they were in the way of the important route between London and Birmingham. The Misbourne valley was the last to have its line penetrating through the very heart of the Chilterns when the Metropolitan Railway was eventually built in the late 1880s. It was to promote a whole new attitude to the countryside when the concept of Metro-land was born and Londoners were enticed to move into new suburban estates near the railway stations.

**Cottage industries**

Even before the Victorian era a small employment revolution in the Chilterns grew to national significance. It was the wives and children of agricultural workers, eager to supplement low farm incomes, who created two cottage industries: lacemaking and straw plaiting. They eventually grew to employ tens of thousands and dominated many local communities. Lace makers started learning their craft as little children in ‘schools’, in an industry rigidly controlled by the wholesalers who supplied the threads and patterns and sold the finished lace in London markets. Buckinghamshire black lace was renowned and highly esteemed.

The straw-plaiting industry benefited from a ready supply of a thin and pliable wheat straw that grew in the poor Chiltern soils, and a growing demand for hats. There was easy access to the markets in Hitchin and Luton and it was very big business. In Edlesborough half the female population was employed in straw plaiting in the 1851 census.

It was, without doubt, the growth of the chair-making and furniture industries at the end of the 1700s that lay behind the survival and salvation of the Chiltern woodlands.
were so many that tourists would flock to see the Spring blossom. The ‘Prestwood Black’ cherry was the most popular variety and the end of the cherry harvest was celebrated on the first Sunday in August, which became known as Cherry Pie Sunday.

A changing landscape

Cultural landscapes are constantly evolving and the Chilterns has always been under pressure from all sides, especially because the area is so close to London. This is, first and foremost, a farming and forestry region, but its woodlands and downlands have been recognised as nationally valuable since the early 1900s. Changes during the interwar period created further pressure for environmental and nature conservation. The important sites were included on lists of potential nature reserves, particularly those along the scarp edge where ancient woodlands and chalk grasslands formed a rich and diverse ecology that needed to be safeguarded and conserved.

The rural economy has felt the combined effects of global competition and EU policies such as set-aside and diversification. It has meant that farmers have been dividing up their land and selling it off as they struggle to make ends meet. A significant proportion of this land is being sold as ‘amenity land’ rather than agricultural land, with a variety of consequences. Farmers represent the principal stewards of the countryside and it is unlikely that land lost to agriculture will ever be recovered as such.

Figure 7. A bodger, Silas Saunders, stacking chair legs in the beech woods

With the newly industrialising regions of the North and Midlands relying on coal, fuelwood was much less in demand and the woods might have been grubbed up. From humble beginnings wood-turning and chair making rose to a substantial industry in a few decades after 1780. The industry focused on making Windsor and cane-seated chairs. The chair legs and ‘stretchers’ were often turned in the woods by ‘bodgers’, who were outworkers paid (badly) by the gross. The chairs were then assembled in workshops outworkers paid (badly) by the gross. The chairs were then assembled in workshops and factories in and around High Wycombe. The result was to increase the demand for larger timber and far more trees were left to grow tall to become today’s iconic beech woods with their carpets of spring bluebells.

The ready access to bigger markets was also to encourage fruit farming and, in the late 1800s, many cherry and apple orchards were planted. In Prestwood and Spen there

Figure 8. Old wild cherry trees and ancient wood bank

The story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

The unique geological history which resulted in the evolution of the Chiltern Hills created the underlying foundations for everything else that takes place on the surface today. The root of the Chiltern Hills is in the Chalk.

Forming the Chilterns’ Chalk

The Chalk is divided into a series of formations which are now mapped across the whole of southern England. These include the Lewes Formation, which comprises nodular chalks and hardgrounds such as the Chalk Rock. This distinctive unit caps the top of the Chiltern escarpment and forms the spine of the Chiltern Hills, perfectly reflecting the topography we see today. The older underlying New Pit ‘marly’ chalk forms the lower part of the north-facing scarpslope and provides a floor for the important chalk aquifer below the southerly dip slope (see figure 2 overleaf).

While the clay-rich Lower Chalk and Gault Clay provide the deep floor of the region exposed along the northern foot of the escarpment, the relatively hard Middle Chalk which forms the scarp slope itself.

The root of the Chiltern Hills is in the Chalk. This steep slope is capped by the intensely ‘indurated’ (hardened) chalk which creates the ‘hardgrounds’ of the Chalk Rock Complex that form the backbone of the Chiltern Hills. These can be seen in the M40 cutting at Aston Rowant and they stretch north-eastwards throughout the region.

These hardgrounds represent a series of fossilised sea floors, approximately 90 million years old, which combine in some locations to create an important feature in the Chalk (see figure 3 overleaf), forming a break in the local topography. The chalk of the Chiltern dip-slope is younger, softer and flint rich, and acts as a major aquifer for the region.

Figure 1. Bledlow Scarp

Deposition of the Chalk ceased about 66 million years ago and a considerable amount eroded away over the next 6 million years, before sands and clays were laid down during the time periods that followed. These have all been affected by the next major chapter in the geological story of the Chilterns – the Pleistocene Ice Ages.

Influence of freezing and thawing

There were a series of glacial periods during the Pleistocene with intervening thaw’s, but perhaps the most important in its impact on the Chiltern escarpment was the Anglian Glaciation, which lasted from 480 to 425 thousand years ago. Glacial ice sheets spread southwards from the northeast, struck the edge of the Chilterns and spread southwards over the earlier line of the Chiltern escarpment.

During the cold periods the repeated freeze/thaw cycles would have broken down the chalk at the surface, and during the relatively warmer inter-glacial times melt-water erosion would have taken place. It was during these periods that the creation of the deep incised valleys which characterise the Chiltern dip-slope started.
to occur. Another effect of the Anglian ice-sheet was to push the river which later became the Thames further south, from the southern margins of the Central Chilterns to its current course.

One of the effects of the repeated glacial periods, both during and since the Anglian phase, has been the breakdown of the sands and clays overlying the Chalk into mixed sediments now often called Plateau Drift on the local geological maps. Beneath this, a layer of clay with flints, the latter derived from the underlying chalk, has also often been formed; this is inevitably referred to as the ‘Clay with flints’.

**Chalk flora and fauna**

As a consequence of this unique geological history, we find open chalk sediments exposed on the north-west facing scarp slope of the Chilterns, with a corresponding flora and fauna totally dependent on the calcium carbonate-rich chemistry that chalk gives rise to. Conversely, the presence of the Clay with flints capping the south-east facing dip-slope, together with sandy Plateau Drift and even pockets of the original sands and clays, all give rise to extensive areas of more acidic soils which are ideal for the beech hangers (hillside woods), oaks and other woodland plants which would otherwise struggle to survive on a chalky soil.

**Chalk streams**

The Chalk is an important water storage system. Below the surface its microscopic pores hold the water in place, whilst major fractures provide conduits through which ground-water can flow both laterally and...
The story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

Vertically. Where the water table intersects the gradient of the chalk slopes, springs form; they arise higher up in the winter than summer, with some valleys dry throughout much of the year but with seasonal flowing water known as ‘winterbourne streams’. The Chalk streams, principally the Misbourne and the Wye, provide unique ecosystems with indigenous plants and animals dependent on them. They are critically important to the ecological health and heritage of the region.


“We now know that the chalk accreted at the rate of just one millimetre in a century, a centimetre every thousand years. A small lump of chalk such as the one I was holding on that hillside bearing the imprint of a long-dead Inoceramus represents a greater span of time than has elapsed since the last ice age. And this lump was to this landscape as ten thousand years is to the length of time it took chalk to accumulate.”

**Figure 5.** Rangeley-Wilson’s ‘lump of chalk’ from the River Wye took tens of thousands of years to be deposited.

The past actions of ice and melt-waters, combined with the geology, soils and climate, and generations of human influence in the Central Chilterns give rise to distinctive, beautiful and varied habitats rich in wildlife and historical value.

**Unimproved grasslands**

Lowland chalk (i.e. calcareous) grassland is an attractive, specialised and fragile habitat. It results from centuries of grazing on nutrient-poor chalk soils, producing a short turf (or ‘sward’) that can be rich in herbs, flowers and grasses. Many chalk-grassland plants do not live in other habitats.

The Chilterns has nationally-important concentrations of such chalk grassland, particularly along the slopes of the steep scarps and dry valleys. Luxuriant stands of orchids and other local species such as the Chiltern gentian are vital components of the area’s distinctiveness. Many of the insects found here rely on chalk-grassland plants – for example the Adonis blue, Chalkhill blue and Duke of Burgundy butterflies. Glow worms and Roman snails are found among aromatic swards of thyme and marjoram.

**Figure 1.** The chalk grassland of the Central Chilterns provides an important habitat for butterflies such as the Adonis blue.

At Yoesdon Bank in the Radnage Valley, swathes of ancient chalk grassland, undamaged by ploughing, fertilisers and intensive grazing, are packed with

**Figure 2.** Ancient chalk grassland at Yoesdon Bank, Radnage Valley.
rare butterflies, wild flowers and chalk downland plants, including common spotted and fragrant orchids and Chiltern gentians. Low trees and bushes, or ‘scrub’, are often found in managed grassland habitats, and provide important shelter and niches for other species. As it grows quickly, scrub needs to be managed to allow chalk-grassland species to thrive.

**Arable field margins**

Agriculture has taken place over thousands of years in the Chilterns. Arable farming is especially suited to the gentler slopes of the plateau where there are thicker soils than on the steep scarp slopes. Natural England and Plantlife surveys have revealed that the Chilterns is particularly rich in plants that grow in arable fields and margins, including some rare and threatened species.

Arable field margins, if managed appropriately, can create beneficial conditions for key farmland species. Cornfield annuals, poppies and knapweed, which have suffered national declines in distribution and abundance can find a home there. Arable field margins are also important nesting and feeding sites for game birds and song birds including the skylark and corn bunting. Butterflies, grasshoppers and invertebrates may breed or spend the winter in the grassy banks between crops and hedges.

Hedgerows have been part of our landscape for centuries and provide a direct cultural link to our past

**Species-rich hedgerows**

Hedgerows have been scrubbed out to make way for large-scale agriculture in much of the country, but tracts of species-rich hedgerows remain among the arable landscape and rural areas of the Central Chilterns. They are home to native woody species and shrubs such as hawthorn, beechn, ash, hazel and blackthorn.

Hedgerows are essential corridors for wildlife movement and provide habitats, food and shelter for insect pollinators including the brown hairstreak butterfly and moths, as well as for farmland birds, bats and dormice. Occasional standard trees along the hedge-line are home to tree-nesting birds.

Hedgerows have been part of our landscape for centuries and provide a direct cultural link to our past; they still bear the marks of traditional hedgerow management, and help to uncover human activity in the area. Black Hedge at Princes Risborough, is known to have been in existence since AD 903 and is thought to be England’s oldest hedge.

![Figure 3. Arable plants such as black knapweed thrive in field margins and attract bee pollinators](image1)

![Figure 4. Musk thistle, bladder campion and common poppy grow in arable margins, enticing many pollinators](image2)

Sapphire carpets of bluebells and bright emerald leaves in spring give way to the rich golden hues of autumn

**Woodlands**

The Central Chilterns has been well-wooded for hundreds of years. The richest woodlands lie on the scarp slope of the chalky ridge where the nutrient poor, calcareous soils also support many rare orchid species.

**Beech woodlands**

Although ash, cherry and oak are widespread, the area’s famous beech woods, such as at the Bradenham Estate, are the jewel in the crown. Sapphire carpets of bluebells and bright emerald leaves in spring give way to the rich golden hues of autumn. Above the chalk bank at Yoesdon, is a strip of mature hanger woodland of beech, yew and whitebeam trees on the edge of a steeply sided valley. The woodland, once managed for timber for the furniture industry, now echoes to the sound of great spotted woodpeckers, buzzards and red kites. On the leafy floor, among the beech and yew trees, are woodland specialist plants including wood anemone, ramson (wild garlic), primrose and bird’s-nest orchid.

![Figure 5. A mixed hedgerow on Smalldean Farm, Bradenham](image3)

![Figure 6. A fine old hornbeam in Piggots Wood](image4)

**Ancient woodlands**

Ancient woodland is a nationally important and threatened habitat, where tree cover has been continuous since at least AD 1600. There are particular concentrations in the Central Chilterns, which have provided timber, fuel and other products to many generations, and their irreplaceable
ecological and historical features survive. In addition to ground flora, ancient woodlands often support protected species such as bats and dormice, as well as woodland birds and butterflies.

Most of the ancient woods are found on the Clay with flint soils which cap the chalk hilltops, such as at Wendover Woods. Penn Wood, one of the largest ancient woodlands in the Chilterns, was once part of Wycombe Heath common, and part of it is still grazed and managed as traditional wood-pasture.

**Ancient and veteran trees**

Ancient and veteran trees, found for example at Piggots Wood, Wendover Woods and in the Hughenden area, are particularly old specimens which occur either in woodland, wood-pasture, parkland, traditional orchard, or which stand alone. They are of special biodiversity value for invertebrates, bats and birds, and support a rich variety of lichens and mosses. In addition, the trees are of cultural and historical significance both locally and nationally.

**Traditional orchards**

Traditional orchards are low-intensity managed landscapes. They are hotspots for biodiversity and have layers of habitats similar to wood-pasture and parkland. Below the trees is an understorey of scrub and hedgerows, and the orchard floor includes fallen dead wood. The variety of different fruit trees leads to extended periods of flowering and fruiting, benefiting insects, birds and mammals.

Traditional orchards in the Central Chilterns produced varieties of fruit including dessert, cooking and dual-purpose apples, and cherries such as the Prestwood Black. The majority of traditional orchards lie south of the Chilterns Ridge, including around High Wycombe and Beaconsfield, such as at Little Kingshill and Seer Green.

**Chalk streams and rivers and their headwaters**

Chalk streams are an internationally rare and special habitat, created where streams and rivers rise from groundwater springing from chalk rocks. More than 85% of all chalk streams in the world are found in England, and many lie in the Chilterns.

Chalk streams and rivers are important habitats for wildlife and support a huge range of plants such as rare starworts growing midstream and watercress at the edges. They also support animals such as Britain’s fastest-declining mammal, the water vole, and fish including brown trout.

The Chilterns escarpment is also home to many sources, or headwaters, of the Chilterns chalk streams, such as the Wye headwaters in the beautiful Radnage Valley.

**Wetland areas and ponds**

Wetland areas such as ponds and streams, whether located within orchards (where they were used for watering the grazing livestock) or elsewhere, provide valuable additional habitats. They form breeding grounds for amphibians (frogs, toads and newts), insects and other invertebrates. Temporary summer ponds on heathlands, such as those found at Naphill Common, are home to the nationally-rare starfruit, a distinctive water-loving plant with large, spiky, star-like fruits after flowering.
Chalk, Cherries and Chairs timeline

Hover over photos to find out more (pdf version only)

125,000 BC Paleolithic
Nationally notable finds of flint tools – evidence of Neanderthal hunter-gatherers in the Chilterns

10,000 BC Mesolithic
Permanent occupation began after the last ice age, when vegetation returned as the ice sheets shrank

4000 BC Neolithic
Woodland clearance for arable farming and keeping of domestic animals began. The burial mound, Whiteleaf long barrow, dates from this time

2500 BC Bronze Age
Semi-nomadic farming gave way to permanent settlements. Increased use of metal tools and weapons

800 BC Iron Age
Hillforts and linear earthworks date from around this time, including Grim's Ditch whose function remains an unanswered puzzle

AD 43 Roman
Roman occupation evident in remains of villas, iron works and pottery kilns

AD 1066 Medieval period
The hilly landscape led to a patchwork of small fields and woodlands separated by hedges and earth banks. Wood became valuable as a fuel for brick and tile making

AD 1900 Twentieth Century
Chalk pits, such as at Chinnor, quarried for cement, lime and mortar, which were transported on their own railway. Charles Rothschild identified wildlife sites needing preservation – the forerunner of the Wildlife Trust

AD 1870 Late Victorian
Mills for flour, cloth and paper multiplied on the rivers. Chair making marked the start of the furniture industry of High Wycombe

AD 1837 Victorian
Turnpike roads, canals and railways brought population growth and new access to markets.

AD 1603 Stuarts to Victorians
Arable farming dominated as metropolitan demand increased. Early maps show the extent of woodland, considered ‘ancient’ if it is pre-1600, with bluebells often a good indicator

AD 1485 Tudors to Elizabethans
Political stability enabled farming to prosper; food and fuel supplied to growing London. Piecemeal enclosure saw open fields gradually disappear, leading to the intimate landscape character

AD 1949 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Legal protection was given for the best wildlife and geological sites in England

AD 1950-60 Post-war agricultural intensification
Some landscape features lost, including hedgerows and habitats; decline of land-based employment, skills and crafts followed

AD 1965 Designation of the Chilterns AONB
Recognition of the importance of landscape and wildlife resulted in the creation of the Chilterns AONB

AD 1967 M40
The new M40 cut through the Central Chilterns and led to a rapid increase in housing, transport and noise

AD 1980-2010
European agri-environment grant schemes encouraged farming practices to halt the decline in wildlife. John Lawton review resulted in Making Space for Nature paper

AD 2011 to present
Rapid growth increasing pressure on the protected landscape, along with new environmental awareness, new technology, and new people keen to explore, learn and protect the countryside
Archaeology and early History

Nigel Robert Wilson • Council Member for the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society

The presence of early humans hunting and gathering in the central Chiltern hills is confirmed by scattered deposits of worked flint and bone. Elsewhere in the Chilterns, Lower and Middle Palaeolithic flint tools have been recorded, providing evidence of human activity in the area as far back as 125,000 BC. However, it was not until the Mesolithic Period (10,000-4,000 BC) that we see evidence of hunter-gatherers, in the form of flint arrowheads, spearheads and other blades such as ‘microliths’.

The Neolithic Period from 4000 BC

The first significant signs of permanent human residence among the deciduous woodland and glades of the Chilterns are the development of agriculture, the clearing of woodland for arable use and the domestication of animals. Around 3700 BC an adult male was ceremoniously interred in a timber mortuary chamber under an oval earthen mound (a long barrow) at the very edge of the escarpment on Whiteleaf Hill. A few generations later, around the time Stonehenge was being formed, a large chalk mound was built around this barrow to ensure it stood out from the surrounding woodland, to provide both a memorial and a place for ceremony. Another recently excavated mound is a natural prominence where the cutting and shaping of flint-tools took place in those ancient times. During the late Bronze Age, circa 1000 BC, a ditch was dug across the ridge further to the south to define a large ritual enclosure around these monuments. Devotional objects some of which were of considerable value, were left at the site up to the late Roman period, demonstrating that this ceremonial site continued in use for over 4,000 years.

The Bronze Age from 2500 BC

Burial mounds known as round barrows began to appear on ridges and other high points in the Chilterns in the Bronze Age. Scatters of worked flint tools are found across the Central Chiltern hills, suggesting a semi-nomadic culture of animal husbandry accompanied by the cultivation of crops in the larger clearings. This latter activity eventually led directly to more woodland clearance and the development of coaxial landscapes defined by long lanes along valley floors.

More extensive settlement became evident as the Bronze Age evolved into the Iron Age when defined land boundaries were set.

The Iron Age from 800 BC

Grim’s Ditch, a long linear earthwork that extends from Bradenham in the west to Berkhamsted in the east, works its way across the Chiltern landscape as a high bank and accompanying deep ditch. It has been excavated to reveal a full height of 2 metres and a width of 3.5 metres for both bank and ditch and is believed to date from the Iron Age. The purpose of this remarkable monument is not clear, but it is suggested that it was designed to manage the movement of people and livestock across the Chilterns. Cheylesbury hill fort is strategically located within the boundary of Grim’s Ditch. One of a number of hillforts in the central Chilterns, it was inhabited right up until the Roman Conquest, which some argue may have been partly induced by the growing power of the Catuvellauni, the regionally dominant tribal polity. A folk tradition written long ago into the Chiltern landscape is that Cunobelin or Cymbeline, the king of the Catuvellauni who died in AD 40, lived close to Ellesborough and Great Kimble. An unfortified, linear settlement of this period has been identified along the Chiltern escarpment at Ellesborough.

The Roman Period

AD 43 to AD 410

During this period, a network of roads was established in the Vale of Aylesbury encouraging the development of farmsteads. Villas are known to have existed at Cobbler’s Hill, Missenden, at Saunderton Lee and elsewhere. Evidence from excavations at Latimer further east show that such estates produced their own vegetables and fruit. Herds of pigs were cultivated in the woodland. There were iron smiths at the Cobbler’s Hill villa and pottery kilns at Stone. Recent excavations at Coleman’s Wood, Holmer Green, show that burnt flint was produced for inclusion in ceramics, although where the finished goods were manufactured is not known. In the later Roman period the Chilterns became depopulated due to changes in the wider economy.
Late Antiquity and the Saxon Period AD 410 to AD 1066

The Chilterns missed out on the advent of the Saxons as they did not begin to settle the area until the Middle Saxon period around AD 850, long after the wider countryside had been converted to Christianity. This is evidenced by the spread of broken pieces of ninth century St Neot’s pottery-ware at Ellesborough, Kimble and Stone. Manor boundaries and the definition of property rights created elongated parishes that comprised some vale land, some escarpment and some dip-slope. Many of these parish boundaries were founded on earlier land divisions, becoming fully established by the tenth century. The planting of a continuous blackthorn hedge, known as the Black Hedge still defines the border between Monks Risborough and Princes Risborough. This land division was possibly intended to define the separate summer cattle grazing rights of each estate, within the strict laws of King Ine of Wessex. In the woodland areas, such as at Bledlow, pigs were still cultivated through ‘pannage’, being the feeding of acorns, beechmast and the like during the autumn.

The Medieval Period AD 1066 to AD 1485

The continued economic development of the Central Chilterns during the medieval period was quite slow. It was founded on the natural products of the landscape. Woodland persisted on the clay and flint uplands where coppicing, pollarding and wood-banks defined property rights, the management of timber resources and the organisation of its many products, including firewood. At Penn, high-class tile manufacture brought Chiltern designed and manufactured products into royal palaces. The clearance of woodland over the centuries had helped to create much enclosed land and dispersed settlements, so people could prosper through both craft and cultivation. Places such as Missenden and modern Cholesbury developed as settlements along the edges of commons with some irregular open fields. Towards the end of the Late Middle Ages, circa AD 1340 to AD 1485, many areas, Great Hampden in particular, experienced some population decline probably due to a deterioration in the climate.

Figure 3. Medieval woodland was an essential resource for rural communities, providing fuelwood, clay for bricks and tiles, and food for livestock

Figure 1. Chair bodging in Hampden Wood. The bodgers chop logs into billets before turning them on a pole lathe

Figure 4. Penn tiles at Missenden Abbey

The Central Chilterns has been an industrial landscape since the first humans settled there

Crafting the landscape

Today the quiet of the woods can be broken from time to time by a tractor in neighbouring fields, or the retort of a hunting gun. In the mid-19th century the woods and valleys echoed with the strike of an axe, the rasp of the saw, the hum of a lathe and the shouts of men as they laboured to supply fuel wood and timber for woodware and furniture workshops, or worked at the craft of ‘bodging’. Bodgers were men who worked in the woods using a foot-powered pole lathe to supply turned chair parts for the furniture workshops and factories in and around High Wycombe, an industry that came to define the region.

Other men found work in chalk pits and quarries, in tile and brickmaking, or down in the Wye valley in corn, fulling or paper mills. Their wives and children worked in cottages

As we follow one of the well-marked footpaths through the Central Chiltern woodlands, barely another soul in sight, we are moved as much by the silence as by the stately beauty of the beech trees.

The working landscape

Dr Helena Chance • Reader in the History and Theory of Design, Buckinghamshire New University
and workshops, making lace or plaiting straw to supply an insatiable market for dress trimmings and for hats.

The Central Chilterns has been an industrial landscape since the first humans settled there, extracting flints for tools and weapons and, over time, digging chalk for quicklime and clay for making bricks, tiles and vessels. Cement, made from chalk, sand and gravel, was in production in the Roman times. Tile making, which dates back to the 13th century, was also a lucrative trade and where tiles were made, so too were bricks; all came from the plentiful supplies of local surface clays. These, together with chalk and flints, are the building materials still seen in local houses. The Chesham firm, H.G. Matthews, continues to produce handmade bricks using the local Reading Formation clays.

Despite the quantity of useful minerals in the Chilterns, wood remained an essential resource for building, fencing, hurdle making and charcoal burning. Woods such as oak, ash, cherry and beech, were in such abundance that they supplied not only a local demand for fuel and woodware, but also served the great metropolis nearby.

Wood was carried by cart and wagon to the Thames near Windsor and thence by barge to London. It is said that the ‘Windsor Chair’, a type distinctive to the region, was named after this trading route. Another commodity, which became important to the economy of the Central Chilterns, arrived in the late 18th century. The River Wye, which joins the Thames at Bourne End, had supplied power for a string of corn and fulling mills at least since medieval times. With the coming of steam engines, the river enabled the establishment of a number of paper mills downstream of High Wycombe supplying, from one mill, award-winning papers to national and international markets. Entrepreneurs also seized the opportunities provided by new trading networks opened up with the coming of the canals to the district, from 1799, and then the railways, from 1832.

**Industrial expansion in the 19th century**

For the Chilterns fuelwood industry, so vital to livelihoods, the new transport routes spelled potential disaster as coal could now be brought cheaply to London from the North. The wooded landscape might have disappeared, and the population moved away, had landowners not promoted and financed the district’s already fledgling furniture industry. They planted more beech trees to produce the tall, narrow timber suitable for furniture making. By the middle of the 19th century, the Chilterns and the town of High Wycombe were rapidly becoming the leading centre for chair making in Britain. The local woodware industry expanded at the same time and nearby Chesham became an important centre for the manufacture of wooden domestic and dairy utensils. While the men worked in the woods, or in workshops and factories, women and children laboured at lace making for clothing, or straw plaiting for hats, both crafts for which the Chilterns gained a reputation for quantity and quality. Increasing demands for fashionable dress in the 18th and 19th centuries saw a rapid growth of these traditional crafts and, by the 1850s, thousands were employed in cottages and workshops. Special craft schools were opened – three lace schools in Chinnor alone – to train children as young as five or six (figure 2). Dealers and wholesalers, mostly men, took supplies of lace to sell in London, or plaited straw to Dunstable and Luton, towns which became famous for hat-making.

**A light mark on the landscape**

Unlike the textile landscapes of Derbyshire or Lancashire, where the physical presence of factory and labour can still be seen in the remains of the mills and waterways that powered them, the largely craft-based industries of the Chilterns are mostly invisible today. The temporary woodland shelters or ‘hovels’ where the bodgers set up their pole lathes to turn legs, spindles and stretchers for chairs are long gone. However, if you are out walking and look carefully, you may find a small deep hollow near an ancient footpath, once a saw-pit, where men called pit sawyers would transform tree trunks into planks. These men worked in pairs, the ‘top dog’ on top of the log, and the ‘under dog’ down in the pit. Examples of lace and plaited straw can be discovered in local museums, but the only clues to these crafts in the landscape are the village name of Lacey Green, roads and lanes called ‘Chairmaker Road’ or ‘Lace Lane’, lace makers’ cottages identified in old photographs, and buildings known to have been lace or straw plait schools, such as the former lace school in Watlington. The thin wheat originally grown on the land has been supplanted by high yielding corn for food, not hats.

There is however another industry that has left a light mark on the landscape or is being revived. Visit the village orchard at Prestwood in the spring and you can imagine Central Chilterns landscapes once blossoming with thousands of cherry and

![Figure 2. Children would learn their craft in plaiting schools held in cottages.](image)

**Figure 2. Children would learn their craft in plaiting schools held in cottages.**

Children under 10 worked for 5-8 hours per day, and over-10s for 10 hours (Engraving from Cassell’s Family Magazine, 1862)

The largely craft-based industries of the Chilterns are mostly invisible today.
The story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

The story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

The decline of the Chilterns craft industries came in the late 19th century, with machine production and competition from abroad. By the 1920s, the numbers of bodgers, lace makers and straw plaiters had dropped from thousands to a few hundred. One bodger, Reg Tilbury, who worked from his cottage on the Hampden Estate purchased an oil engine in 1924 to turn his lathes and circular saw, but after the War he gave up bodging to grow strawberries. Luckily for some women, the thriving chair making industry in High Wycombe continued to provide home-based employment in caning and rushing chairs. But by the 1960s, the last bodger had abandoned his lathe, lace and plait making had become hobbies for a few, and the new generation were drawn to more lucrative employment in towns.

Today, timber is still harvested from the woods, but for most of us they are places for rest, not work, where we can walk, enjoy peace and quiet, and look out for wildlife. However, the woods, valleys and villages are living legacies to past industries, helping us to remember that industry, land, landscape and nature have always been co-dependent.

Figure 4. View from Daws Hill Vineyard across Radnage valley, showing the ploughed arable, irregular pasture and hedged fields typical of this landscape character

Mixed farming country

Farming has been an essential ingredient in the history and economy of the Central Chilterns but, on these marginal lands, farmers cannot rival the yields of the flat lowlands of Middle England. More than 70% remains as agricultural land, but it is mostly run as small- to medium-sized mixed farms with a combination of crops, livestock and pasture, that have adapted to local conditions and increasingly depend on small-scale diversity to survive. But what has made it difficult for farmers, has also made it attractive countryside for the beholder, with irregular fields, ancient hedgerows and a seasonal patchwork variety.

The chalk downlands and commons rely on grazing livestock to maintain them, so the long-term decline in livestock numbers caused by a global market which controls commodity prices, is especially concerning for the local landscape and economy.

Going local with food and drink

The growing passion for locally-sourced food and beverages has created a rise in more traditional farm produce, from rare-breed meats and farm-made dairy products, to award-winning rape-seed oil, artisan bread, farm-pressed apple juice and craft beers. Farm shops and cafes have become popular family destinations. The chalky slopes of the Central Chilterns have been growing vines since Roman times, but now new commercial vineyards are joining established winemakers to produce prize-winning Chiltern wines.

Figure 5. Apple juice locally produced by Drovers Hill Farm

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Figure 4. View from Daws Hill Vineyard across Radnage valley, showing the ploughed arable, irregular pasture and hedged fields typical of this landscape character

The story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs

The Frognoors and the Bigaroos
The Blackhearts and Mirellas too,
The Hunies that all small birds attack
The Rivers and the Bastard Black
The Reynold Hearts they fill the sieves
The buds, the cherry pies to give.
The Casher which is red and black
But my favourite cherry is the nap.

G.A.S. Bowler
Landscape character

“Landscape: an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action, and interaction, of natural and/or human factors.”

Landscape Character Assessment

A Landscape Character Assessment is a standard assessment method developed by Natural England which helps us to understand the landscape and visual factors which make the rich and diverse Central Chilterns distinctive, and to decide which elements are in greatest need of conserving or enhancing. It also helps to establish what needs to be improved or how new changes can best be blended into the landscape.

The Central Chiltern landscape was looked at in detail by the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs team in 2017, as summarised in the map below. The full report, Development of a Landscape Character Framework by Steven Warnock, can be found in Appendix 1. Additional information is available from the Local Authority Landscape Character Assessments. The variety of landscape character types outside urban areas which have been identified are as follows:

1. **Wooded Chalk Scarp**

A prominent, often heavily wooded and steeply sloping landscape which defines the north-eastern edge of the Chiltern escarpment. It occurs in three locations in the Central Chilterns, at Aston Hill and Wendover Woods; Coombe Hill and Whiteleaf; and Beacon Hill to Chinnor Hill.

**Characterised by:**

- Steep slopes along the north-eastern edge of the escarpment; extensive areas of ancient semi-natural woodlands and stands of mature beech trees; commons and unenclosed land with species-rich chalk grassland, often with patches of secondary woodland and scrub
- Small areas of early field enclosures; hedgerow networks linked to woodland, providing wildlife corridors, with important biodiversity value; rich variety of archaeological features and historic landmarks
- Ancient, often sunken trackways and narrow winding lanes; network of local rights of way providing easy access
- Wide panoramic views over the adjoining vale; prominent wooded skyline when viewed from the vale

Figure 1. Landscape Character Types of the Central Chilterns

Taken from A Landscape Character Framework by Steven Warnock, Sept. 2017

1. European Landscape Convention

Figure 2. What is landscape? © Natural England

Figure 3. Wooded chalk scarp

2. Wycombe District Landscape Character Assessment 2011
Aylesbury Vale Landscape Character Assessment 2013
South Oxfordshire District Landscape Character Assessment 2017
2 Woooded Estatelands

A well-ordered and heavily wooded arable landscape set within gently undulating chalkland where views are tightly framed by landform and woodland edges. Found in large parts of the upland Chilterns’ undulating plateau, and closely related to the Ancient Farmlands. For example, Hampden Coppice and Hampdenleaf Wood, Penn Wood, The Larches, and Common Wood.

Characterised by:

• Large areas of ancient replanted and ancient semi-natural woodland; relatively wide, flat-bottomed floodplain with valley sides steepening in the upper reaches of the Upper Misbourne; rough grassland, permanent pasture and paddocks on the valley floor, divided into smaller fields by low hedges and wooden post and wire fencing; narrow, gently flowing and meandering River Misbourne, with occasional ponds
• Large estate farms set in a cultivated landscape with arable fields on the slopes and floor of the incised dry valleys; a mixture of regular and irregular enclosure fields predating the 18th century, with some coaxial and modern fields; early ‘assart’ (cleared forest) enclosure, often interlocked with ancient woodland; smaller fields of rough grazing, pasture, paddock and pig farms closer to settlements; elsewhere, large fields bounded by often thick hedges of mixed species; archaeological features including the prehistoric earthworks of Grims Ditch and medieval and post-medieval buildings in Little Hampden; post-medieval parkland at Shardeloes and Missenden Abbey
• Brick and flint is a common building material, with some timber-framed and thatched cottages; hidden historic houses and parkland landscapes, as at Chequers and Hampden House
• A remote and tranquil character prevails away from the busy roads, with limited public access and a strong sense of rural character; accessible areas of wooded common such as at Low Scrub, Little Hampden Common and Great Hampden

and enclosed by woodland which forms a backdrop to views; a sense of openness with views across open arable fields and rolling hills to wooded horizons, such as can be glimpsed over the escarpment to the Vale, to the Wendover Gap and to Hughenden Valley; Shardeloes House is a visually prominent feature on the valley side

3 Ancient Farmlands

The Ancient Farmlands are a wooded agricultural landscape created by the piecemeal clearance, or ‘assarting’, of woodlands since the medieval period. Found in large areas on the upland Chilterns undulating plateau, and closely related to the Wooded Estatelands.

Characterised by:

• Undulating topography with occasional steeper valley sides; irregularly shaped woodlands of ancient character; blocks of often ancient woodland and ‘hanging’ woodland, broadleaved (beech) with some clumps of coniferous, particularly along the upper slopes of valleys and along ridgelines; small areas of chalk grassland persisting on upper valley slopes (e.g. Little Stocking Meadow)
• Irregular pattern of small- to medium-sized fields bounded by mixed species hedgerows; low-density linear settlements along roads, mostly corresponding to ridgelines, with a pattern of farmsteads, rural dwellings and occasional hamlets; mainly brick and flint buildings with clay-tiled roofs
• Irregular network of winding lanes with thick roadside hedges; a concentration of ‘ancient’ sunken lanes such as Areweg Lane
• Filtered views through scattered mature hedgerow trees; remote, tranquil and rural character
4 Other plateau landscapes

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will also carry out projects in the smaller, plateau landscape types which distinguish this part of the AONB. These include:

Settled Plateau Farmlands - a settled agricultural landscape typically associated with a series of long narrow plateau summits and characterised by a gently rolling ‘upland’ character, associated with the extensive areas of Clay with flints. Mainly found on either side of the Radnage valley between High Wycombe and Chinnor;

Settled Commons - a small-scale pastoral landscape closely associated with the imprint of former unenclosed common land that lay on localised deposits of sand and gravel. Relatively rare, with pockets found around Wheeler End, Askett, Wiggington, Holmer Green/Widmer End, and Coleshill;

Settled Valley Farmlands - a rolling, settled agricultural landscape with occasional chalk streams, within the valleys that drain the dip-slope of the Chilterns escarpment and dissect the Chiltern plateau. The largest are found along the Misbourne, the valleys leading from the north-west into Chesham and High Wycombe, and the Wye Valley leading south-east from Princes Risborough;

River Meadowlands - flat alluvial floodplains in the lower parts of the chalk valleys, with narrow meandering river channels and adjoining alluvial floodplains. Located within the floodplain of the River Misbourne, from Great Missenden to Chalfont St Giles.

Characterised by:

• Gently rolling glacial plateau topography descending into the valley bottoms, with a low-lying flat corridor along the River Meadowlands; localised more-steeply sloping land on the surrounding valley sides
• Mixed arable and pastoral farming; small and large areas of parkland surrounding large country houses; small game coverts and belts of trees; a varied pattern of medium- to large-sized fields with hedges; settled pattern of minor rural villages, clusters of roadside dwellings and scattered farmsteads, and a nucleated pattern of small estate villages; traditional red-brick farmsteads, estate cottages and flint buildings with clay-tile roofs
• A network of minor roads linked to busy highways in the main arterial valleys
Section two:

Statement of Significance
Statement of Significance

Nick Marriner  •  Landscape Partnership Development Officer, CCB

The Central Chilterns holds a rich and varied heritage. The quality of its natural, built and cultural heritage is reflected in both the number of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and the strategic importance placed on the area by a number of conservation organisations.

Summary

The overriding designation for the area is the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – a national designation given to some of the finest landscapes in the UK. Dating from 1965, the AONB area covers 833km² and was designated for the natural beauty of its landscape and the importance of its natural and cultural heritage. At 278km² the Central Chilterns scheme area covers approximately one third of the AONB.

The Chilterns AONB was designated to protect its special qualities including the steep chalk escarpment with areas of flower-rich downland, woodlands, commons, tranquil valleys, networks of ancient routes, villages with brick and flint buildings, and a rich history of hill forts and chalk figures such as the Whiteleaf Cross.

The Chilterns is further recognised in the National Character Area (NCA) 110*. The NCA description recognises the Chiltern chalk bedrock, an extensively wooded and farmed landscape, a patchwork of mixed agriculture with woodland set within hedged boundaries, and small streams that flow on chalk down both dip-slope valleys and from the escarpment. The natural and built features of the Chilterns are recognised as special and attractive and offer wide-ranging opportunities for the growing populations of fringe towns such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury.

Natural heritage

1. Designated Sites

The Central Chilterns typifies the importance of the Chilterns’ natural heritage. This is reflected in the number, spread and scale of designated conservation sites as shown in figures 2 and 3:

- Designated conservation sites in the Central Chilterns, in relation to major population centres marked in black
- Brown – of international and/or national importance
- Orange – of local significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of significance</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Number of designated sites</th>
<th>Area of designated sites (hectares)</th>
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<td>International</td>
<td>Special Areas for Conservation (SAC)</td>
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<td>National Nature Reserve (NNR)</td>
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<td>Local</td>
<td>Local Nature Reserves (LNR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Biological Notification Sites (BNS)</td>
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<td>Local</td>
<td>Local Geological Sites (LGS)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Road Verge Nature Reserves (RNVR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>338</td>
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* SAC is made up of 6 specific sites

* Available at http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697?category=587130

Figure 1. Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve, a Chiltern chalk grassland and SSSI managed by Natural England

Figure 2. Designated conservation sites in the Central Chilterns

Figure 3. Designated conservation sites in the Central Chilterns

* Available at http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4977697?category=587130
In addition to the land contained within the various conservation designations, the total amount of land held in sensitive conservation management is greatly enhanced by the number of Nature Reserves owned and/or managed by many of the national statutory and non-governmental conservation organisations.

These include Yoesden Bank (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust), Brush Hill (Chiltern Society), Wendover Woods (Forestry Commission), Coombe Hill (National Trust) and Aston Rowant (Natural England).

The rich history and connection to conservation is further highlighted by the Scheme’s proximity to both Waddesdon and Tring Park, seats of the Rothschild family who have influenced conservation in the area. Of the 245 original sites identified in the ‘Rothschild List’, five are in the Central Chilterns.

In addition, the area plays host to significant coverage of land held in a range of conservation management schemes including Agri Environment, and various woodland grant schemes.

2. Priority Habitats

‘Priority Habitats’ is a national designation identifying habitat types that are most threatened and require conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Most noted for its areas of chalk streams, calcareous grassland, and lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodlands, the Central Chilterns (Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area) also plays host to a wide range of other priority habitats as shown in figures 4 and 5:

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<th>Habitat type</th>
<th>Area of habitat type (hectares)</th>
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<td>Grassland – lowland dry acid</td>
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<td>Grassland – lowland meadows</td>
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<td>Grassland – purple moorgrass and rush pastures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathland – lowland heathland</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood pasture</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards – traditional orchards</td>
<td>125.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,973.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4. Priority habitats in the Central Chilterns

In addition, the Central Chilterns is a nationally important area for internationally rare and globally threatened chalk streams (three of the 300 in the world are located in the Central Chilterns and flow for a combined total of approximately 37km. They are marked as Wetland and Water in figure 5).

Ancient woodland is defined as an area that has been continuously wooded since at least AD 1600. These areas have developed over time to become rich ecosystems and one the UK’s richest land-based habitats for wildlife. Ancient woodland covers only around 2% of the UK’s land area, yet 13% of the Central Chilterns is covered in formally recognised ancient woodland as highlighted in figure 7 (overleaf). The importance of ancient woodland led to the production of an Inventory of Ancient Woodland which is held by Natural England.

Figure 5. Priority habitats in the Central Chilterns

Please note that for ease of presentation priority grassland habitat types have been grouped together.
3. Notable species
Analysis of species records reported in the Central Chilterns highlights how significant the area is for protected and/or rare species as well as those in significant decline. Figure 8 shows the geographic range for notable species across the Central Chilterns that are:

- European protected species (such as otter and hazel dormouse)
- Priority species for conservation (such as the Duke of Burgundy and small blue butterflies)
- Nationally and locally rare or notable species (such as corn bunting and grey partridge)

4. Strategic importance
The Central Chilterns forms a key part of both national and local conservation strategies. Plantlife have designated the Chilterns as one of its ‘Important Plant Areas’ for:

- Vascular woodland plants
- Calcareous grassland plants
- Arable plants

Of the UK’s 121 rare and threatened species of arable plants, 81 have been recorded in the Chilterns since 1987 (including 20 of the 23 Section 41 [S41] arable plants listed under the NERC Act 2006) making the area one of the most important on a national scale for conservation effort. On a more specific level c. 20% of the 2km tetrads (a 2km x 2km survey area) in the Central Chilterns have been recognised by Plantlife:

- 1 is of European importance
- 14 are of National importance
- 15 are of County importance

In its current Biodiversity Action Plan the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership (NEP) has identified 23 areas across the county as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). These represent specific geographic areas where the greatest opportunities for habitat creation lie, enabling resources to be focused where they will have the greatest positive conservation impact.

The Central Chilterns contains 7 of the 23 Buckinghamshire BOAs (as well as a small part of a similar Conservation Target Area in Oxfordshire) as shown in figure 10 below.
Built and cultural heritage

The Central Chilterns has a rich and varied archaeological, industrial, social and built heritage that has played a key role in forming the wider landscape. The overlaying of these features creates a rich tapestry of heritage interest for the visitor.

1. Designated Sites

The number and range of designated sites highlights just how rich a built and cultural heritage the Central Chilterns area has and the strategic importance of some of those sites. For example, Hughenden Manor (owned and managed by the National Trust) was the country house in the 19th century of the then Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, and the Chequers Estate (in private ownership) plays host to many Prime Ministerial state visits and summit meetings.

Figures 11 and 12 show the number and spread of designated sites across the area of the Scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale of significance</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Number of designated sites</th>
<th>Area of designated sites (hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Scheduled Monuments</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Archaeological Notification Areas</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2,404.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Listed Buildings</td>
<td>944</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>Parks and Gardens</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,084.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Buckinghamshire Geological Sites</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>315.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,262</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,873.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11. Designated built and cultural heritage sites

2. Hillforts

The Central Chilterns is a significant area noted for the presence of hillforts. The Scheme area contains five Large Multivallate Hillforts which are defined as ‘fortified enclosures of between 5ha and 85ha in area and located on hills’.

They date from the Iron Age period, having been constructed and used between the sixth century BC and the mid-first century AD, and are regarded as centres of permanent occupation which were defended in response to increasing warfare resulting from the power struggle between competing elites. The five hillforts in the Central Chilterns – Boddington Camp, Cholesbury Camp, Desborough Castle, Pulpit Hill, West Wycombe Hill – are shown on figure 14.

The Beacons of the Past – Hillforts in the Chilterns Landscape HLF funded project will provide complete LiDAR coverage for the Central Chilterns and possibly help locate any additional hillforts and other archaeological features.

Figure 12. Designated built and cultural heritage sites across the Central Chilterns

Figure 13. Learning more about Boddington Hillfort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument near Wendover

Figure 14. Five hillforts in the Central Chilterns
3. Ancient routeways

Grim’s Ditch
Grim’s Ditch is a key feature of the Central Chiltern project area. Presumed to be an ancient routeway and thought to date back to the Iron Age (c. 700 BC to AD 43), much of its known and mapped length is designated as a Scheduled Monument of national importance.

The Ridgeway National Trail
The Ridgeway National Trail is one of only 16 National Trails in England and Wales. From its start point at the World Heritage Site at Avebury in Wiltshire it stretches for 139km, largely through the Chilterns AONB towards its end at Ivinghoe Beacon in Hertfordshire. It follows a northwesterly route across the Central Chilterns, tracing the line of the Chiltern escarpment for over 29km. It is best known as Britain’s oldest known road and passes many of the areas of significance and particular landscape features of the Central Chilterns, including chalk grassland, woodland, archaeological monuments including Stone Age long barrows, Bronze Age round barrows, Iron Age forts, and many of the Nature Reserves, SSSIs and other key designated sites.

4. Woodland archaeology

The Central Chilterns is a heavily-wooded landscape with much ancient woodland. Research has uncovered a rich and varied archaeological history, helping us to understand the significance of these woodlands, in particular their intense historic management and industrial heritage. Key local industries included clay extraction, brick making, charcoal burning, furniture making, iron smelting and timber production, as evidenced by the uncovering of many significant historic features such as banks, sawpits, charcoal hearths and coppiced or pollarded trees.

Figure 16. The known route of Grim’s Ditch and the Ridgeway National Trail are influential features in the landscape as they pass through the Central Chilterns

Figure 17. Sunset over Grangelands, a Nature Reserve managed by BBOWT and designated SSSI

Figure 18. Sawpits are a feature of ancient woods in the Chilterns and show past management. They were used for cutting timber trees, such as oak and cherry, into planks and beams
Section three:

People of the Landscape

5. Orchards

The Central Chilterns is notable for its orchard heritage. The traditional orchard was a component of many residences, farmsteads, market gardens and estates supplying families, farm workers and local markets. Until as late as the 1930s many commercial orchards were in operation, managed by a seasonal workforce and supported by the growth in the railway network to move fruit to market.

Cherry orchards and festivals were once a common part of the local economy and fruit was eaten fresh, preserved, and used for dyeing fabrics. Particular areas such as Prestwood, Seer Green and Holmer Green were famed for their cherry orchards. Plums, damsons, apples and pears were also grown with local varieties including Aylesbury prune, Prestwood Black cherry and Prestwood White Heart cherry.

Traditional orchards are on the brink of disappearing in the Central Chilterns. Most of the remaining sites are less than 0.6ha each, and while a few are well managed, many are neglected or poorly managed and in declining condition. In some cases, only lone trees survive. However, the orchard heritage is still celebrated in local areas such as in the Seer Green Parish championing itself as the ‘home of the Cherry Pie’.
“...there is a strong physical and emotional connection between places and people - and that these places have a positive effect on our wellbeing”

Places that make us, Research report, National Trust

Communities of the Central Chilterns
Like many parts of south-east England, the towns and villages of the Chilterns and surrounds have grown substantially in response to the demand for housing and its associated infrastructure. The maps below illustrate that growth, comparing 1960, the present day and a prediction for the next 20 years, including the route of the HS2 railway.
This growth in towns and villages has not only brought a rapid increase in the numbers of people living in the area but has also substantially changed the demographics, increasing the diversity of people living within it.

Within the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area itself, and within 5km of its boundary, there is a range of settlements of varying sizes and with diverse populations. About 80,000 people live in the rural areas and smaller settlements of this wider boundary, with a further 77,000 people in High Wycombe, 72,000 in Aylesbury, and 12,000–15,000 in each of the smaller towns of Beaconsfield, Amersham and Chesham (figures from Census 2011).

Demographic profiling reveals that this is an area of contrasts. Many people living in the rural area, the smaller villages north of High Wycombe and in towns such as Beaconsfield are very affluent, with more people in the highest social grade (AB) and less deprivation than the South East average. The average age here is also higher than the South East average and there are very few people of ethnicity other than white. This population, especially to the east of the area, shows strong characteristics of the spread of suburban populations from the outskirts of London and from neighbouring larger towns, with people having less connection to the land and farming (Census Area Classification). However, in High Wycombe and Aylesbury, as well as in smaller parts of Chesham, there is an ethnically diverse population. In High Wycombe, for example, 23% of the population is of Asian ethnicity, primarily of Pakistani origin (compared with 5% across the South East). In these areas, there are higher levels of deprivation, more people in the lowest social grades (DE), and a lower average age (probably because there are more families with young children).

In this section we outline who our current audiences are and what we know about them, and the audiences we will target for engagement in the Scheme. This understanding has been gained from a detailed online survey and from workshops with residents in the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area.

Insight into the current audience was gained through an online survey, which received 474 responses, 80% of which were from within 5km of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area. The online survey was publicised to contacts of the organisations taking part in the partnership scheme, and through social media and websites. As respondents could choose whether or not to complete the survey, it is more likely that those responding were already motivated to take part as they already had an interest in the area, in nature conservation or in the landscape. Therefore, this online survey provides valuable information about current audiences.

Of the survey respondents, 76% were over 45, with the highest numbers in the age groups 55–64 and 65+. Most (92%) are of white ethnicity, and only two respondents (<1%) were Asian. They live in the least deprived areas; half of respondents live in the least deprived 10% of areas of the whole of the UK, and 94% in the least deprived 50% of areas in the UK. Of those living within 5km of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area, nearly two-thirds had lived there for more than 20 years, and 20% had lived there for between 11 and 20 years.
Figure 6. About our current audience

**Older, white and affluent**

- Similar to that revealed by national research as being more likely to visit or be interested in the countryside (Natural England Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment)

**Lived in the area for many years**

- Likely to have lived in the area for 11 years or more
- Less likely to live in the larger urban areas, especially High Wycombe and Aylesbury

**Cares about the area and is knowledgeable about it**

- Understands why the area is protected and thinks it is important that it is
- Has good knowledge of the importance of ‘Chalk, Cherries and Chairs’ as part of the heritage of the area, with chairs the most well-known and cherries the least well-known

**Regularly visits and takes part in activities in the area**

- 57% take part in activities in the area once a week or more frequently
- The most popular activity is walking (without a dog) – 89%
- Second is visiting a National Trust property – 79%

**Thinks the area is under threat**

- The main concerns are High Speed 2 and general development
- Less knowledge about how changes in land management affect nature conservation and landscape

**Thinks taking an active part in looking after the area is important**

- 95% ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ that people should take an active role in looking after the area
- 39% had volunteered for a conservation or heritage project at some point; 29% had done so in the past twelve months
- Practical conservation volunteering and surveys are popular with all age groups, but those over 65 are particularly interested in finding out about ancient routeways
- Many are already members of organisations protecting the landscape and heritage, or supporting nature conservation

Figure 7. Planning a walk from Coombe Hill

Other current audiences included in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs are:

- Landowners/managers
- Parish Councils
- People who volunteer for local heritage
- Special interest groups (heritage, wildlife) etc.
- Residents and visitors, including walkers, cyclists, horse riders

**Barriers and motivators for audience participation**

A range of barriers could be making it harder or preventing people from engaging in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. We understand that different audiences have different motivations and that different types of activities might attract them. Through our online survey, workshops, and a series of focus group sessions, we have identified a range of barriers and motivators which will guide our development of supporter engagement and participation.

To increase understanding of why some people are under-represented in our current audiences and how we should reach out to these people, we commissioned a short report from a partner organisation which is very successful in working with under-represented groups, and we talked to the kind of people we would like to engage more, in a series of focus group sessions. This gave us important information about their interest in the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area, the barriers which are stopping them from getting involved, and what activities would interest them – see the summary overleaf.

Figure 8. Wide, flat paths at Ashridge Estate give more people the opportunity to get out into the countryside
Figure 9. What is stopping people getting involved?*

Disconnection from the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area

Applies to: this intellectual barrier applies particularly to under-represented audiences, i.e. those who are hard to reach, those living in urban areas, new residents, and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) populations, and it also affects engagement of volunteers and active citizens

- Our focus groups revealed that they felt less connection to the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area as a place for them
- There was less understanding of why the Chilterns is protected, low awareness of its natural and social heritage, and less of a feeling that they should care for it
- Lack of attachment to a place can be a barrier to volunteering and active citizenship, because people are motivated to improve somewhere they care about or to support a community they feel part of
- In some under-represented groups there was apprehension about visiting the area; these people preferred to visit well-known countryside sites such as National Trust-owned land or Wendover Woods

Multiple barriers preventing engagement

Applies to: under-represented and all hard to reach groups

- There may be multiple barriers which prevent these groups from becoming engaged. For instance, an activity may appeal, but people may not be able to afford transport, may not receive adequate information, or may not think it is ‘something for people like me’ due to the communication style or messages
- Partnering with organisations who work with these audiences will help to break down these multiple barriers

Lack of time

Applies to: volunteers and active citizens, less affluent, 20-35 year olds, families, youth

- The most significant barrier preventing people from volunteering, identified both in our survey and national research, is lack of time. For successful engagement, we must recognise this and provide opportunities to fit with people’s busy lifestyles

Poor provision of information

Applies to: all audiences

- Our online survey highlighted that not knowing where to find information is a barrier to volunteering
- Focus groups revealed that those less engaged did not know where to find general information on activities in the Chilterns, whereas the National Trust website was well-used for specific sites

*Based on findings from our research with under-represented groups

Poor provision of information (continued)

- There was confusion among those not already engaged (particularly new residents and youth) about the aims of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, about the wide range of activities available, about the overall purpose of the LPS, and about how the Scheme as a whole related to them
- Information which is not targeted to specific audiences is unlikely to appeal – and information which inadvertently excludes them (e.g. through age, gender or ethnicity) will create a further barrier
- Our survey showed that different age groups preferred different information channels to find out information

Transport

Applies to: youth, volunteers, those in deprived areas, BAME, families, new residents, disabled, those living in larger urban areas

- Lack of personal transport, poor public transport into the rural areas, and the cost and difficulty of arranging transport were highlighted as barriers by the under-represented groups living in urban areas near the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area

Youth-specific barriers

Applies to: youth

- Peer pressure can be a barrier to taking part; but equally, if young people see their friends having fun it can be a motivator. Activities need to appeal to this group so they are shared on Instagram or Snapchat
- Young people want novelty and excitement in the activities on offer, and they want to take part with their peers
- As a group, youths need to understand why they are taking part in a project – there was confusion among them about the aims of the Scheme, and they wanted a ‘narrative’ for their engagement
- Accreditation and recognition of skills gained by volunteering are important

Target audiences

We have also carried out an in-depth demographic analysis to understand how well our current audience represents the population of the area. From this, and considering the aims of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, we have made decisions about who we want to include as our target audiences.

- Youth (14-19)
- Young people (20-35)
- BAME communities – those of non-white ethnicity, primarily from the local Asian community, but also from other minority ethnic groups living in the urban areas
- New residents
- Families
- Those living within 5km of the Scheme, in larger towns or urban areas
- Children and schools
- Those who are less affluent or deprived
- Disabled people
- Students

Missing audiences

The online survey and demographic profiling revealed that not all of those living in or near the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area were represented in the current audience. The following are currently not engaged as much as they could be:
Focus groups were held with some of these groups to find out more about what prevents them from getting engaged in the area, and what Chalk, Cherries and Chairs could do to support them (detailed in section 4.4.2 Barriers to Access).

**Summary of audiences**
A summary of the audiences with which Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will engage is shown in figure 11 below:

### Audience | New or existing | Reasons and scope for engaging this audience
--- | --- | ---
Community and residents groups | Existing and new | Building support from all sectors of the community is important to deliver our legacy. We will engage with a range of community groups, including local Friends Groups.

General public | Existing and new | We will engage with residents and visitors in and around the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area through a range of events and activities to deepen their understanding of the natural and social heritage of the area. Those who do not join us directly in activities will increase their knowledge and understanding through web-based and other resources.

Special interest groups e.g. heritage, wildlife | Existing and new | We will provide opportunities for special interest groups to further their knowledge and skills and to support a long-term commitment to the area. We will engage with groups who we have not worked with before, across a wide range of interests.

Youth (14-19) | New | This audience is under-represented and it can also be hard to reach. We will work with a range of youth organisations to engage with this new audience and support our legacy.

Young people (20-35) | New | This audience is under-represented. It can be a difficult group to engage, as people are usually at a busy stage in their lives; some will be building a career or starting a family, some may be on a low income and some may simply not be interested in what the project has to offer. We will advertise to this group directly, e.g. through Facebook, and offer shorter activities (e.g. volunteering) for those who are ‘time poor’.

BAME communities | New | This audience is under-represented and it can also be hard to reach. We will work with a range of local organisations to engage with this new audience and support our legacy.
### Section four: Threats and opportunities

#### People of the Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>New or existing</th>
<th>Reasons and scope for engaging this audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New residents</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Those living in the area for a long time are engaged and knowledgeable, but those who are new to the area lack understanding and ‘connection’ to Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. There is significant new development in the area, providing an opportunity to engage with this important new audience and to build their connections to the heritage of the region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>This audience is under-represented; fewer people in the appropriate age range responded to our surveys, and we have had few requests for family or schools events. We will engage this audience through a range of family and child-friendly activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents of larger urban areas</td>
<td>Existing and new</td>
<td>Our current audience includes residents of the larger towns near the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area, but there is scope to engage more of these residents, to engage them more deeply with the area and to encourage them to visit more. Some people in these areas are under-represented or missing from our current audience, including those who are deprived and BAME residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and schools</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Engaging this new audience will help us to reach a wide range of people in our local communities and will improve understanding of our heritage within the next generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>We will make all our events and activities as inclusive as possible so that we do not exclude people due to disability or any other reason of access.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>New</td>
<td>Through partner organisations we will engage local students, helping them to develop new skills to deliver arts and digital content, while increasing an awareness of their local landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Full reports of Audience Development work and Public Meetings can be found in Appendix 2.
Threats and opportunities

The landscape of the Central Chilterns is recognisable from afar, with its dramatic chalk slopes and distinctive beech woodlands. It is legally protected because of its nationally important landscape character, wildlife and leisure opportunities. However, it is a landscape under immediate and extensive threat from change, the pace and scale of which are unlike anything we have witnessed before. This section identifies these risks and threats, but also highlights opportunities to address or lessen them. Risks to the delivery of the scheme can be found in section 5.7.

Landscape character
The long-established landscape character-types of the Central Chilterns described in Section 1.7 are at risk of losing their distinctive local character.

The most immediate and substantial risk is the construction of the High Speed 2 railway and its associated infrastructure over the next 10 years. It will dissect the settled valley farmlands, wooded estatelands and the ancient farmland landscape character types in the Misbourne valley, changing them forever.

Development pressures threaten to damage distinctive countryside and rural settlements, suburbanise the edges of settlements and intensify ribbon development in the valleys. This will lead to structures which are out of scale with the landscape, eroding scenic beauty and causing the loss of open land and green space.

Changes in the economics and methods of land management will lead to scrub encroaching on chalk grassland, reducing biodiversity. Poor hedgerow management breaks hedgerow links, changes historic field patterns and reduces wildlife habitat. Similarly, reduced management of woodlands, reduces historic landscape features and the richness of wildlife.

The intensification of agricultural diversification changes distinctive local landscape character through the loss of landscape features such as hedgerows, increasing manmade structures on agricultural land, and promoting larger fields rather than traditional small-scale field patterns.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:
- Working with landowners and managers to: improve hedgerow connectivity and create links between woodland areas and the hedgerow network; restore, link and manage chalk grassland; manage farmland to generate a rich wildlife habitat and visually attractive landscape; plant new tree and woodland belts and establish a matrix of small-scale woodlands reflecting the local landscape pattern and species mix.
- Working with communities to: enhance neighbourhood planning and influence local development; strengthen the role of green space in defining and separating settlements; enhance local distinctiveness of the historic environment; preserve the contrast between the rural landscape and adjacent urban settlements; enhance the appreciation of heritage assets, provide improved interpretation of the area’s rich archaeological resource, and retain the pattern of small woodlands.

Habitats and species
The Central Chiltern landscape supports a rich mosaic of distinctive habitats, reflecting past land management practices and underlying geology. However, these high-quality habitats have become more fragmented and support less wildlife.

The nationally-important concentrations of lowland chalk (i.e. calcarceous) grassland in the Chilterns are fragile habitats resulting from centuries of grazing on nutrient-poor chalk soils, but they are suffering significant declines in species diversity.

Woods and ‘treescapes’ in the Central Chilterns are facing huge change. Ash, one of the most common hedgerow and woodland species is now being adversely affected by ash dieback (a fungal disease). Other pests – deer, grey squirrels and glis glis (edible dormouse) – are having a growing impact. Glis glis is a uniquely Chiltern problem.

Figure 1. The planned route of HS2

Figure 2. The scrub growing on this chalk grassland at Whiteleaf Hill would, in time, reduce the species diversity of the site if it were not cleared regularly by volunteers
A 2008 survey showed that fewer than half of hedgerows in the Chilterns were in good condition, because of gaps in their continuity and nutrient enrichment at the base.

Wetland features have special significance in the Central Chilterns because it is a relatively dry area due to its relief and underlying, relatively permeable, geology. Chiltern chalk streams, including the Rivers Wye and Misbourne, are threatened from low water flows, inappropriate management of banks and the spread of invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.

Many crops and wildflowers rely on their pollen being spread by bees, hoverflies, wasps, moths, beetles and butterflies. These pollinators are essential for much of our food production and biodiversity. However, they face many pressures leading to a serious decline.

Currently, the strongest protection for habitats and some species is European legislation. With the country on the brink of leaving the European Union, it is uncertain what environmental policies the UK will have in place into the future.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Developing new relationships between partner organisations, land managers and local communities, to invigorate the debate and share knowledge more widely.
- Raising awareness of the significance of the landscape heritage and the need to conserve it.
- Involving local groups and volunteers in creating more wild spaces and increasing biodiversity, including pollinators, in their local area.

Figure 3. Glis glis or edible dormouse is a very Chiltern problem, having escaped into the local countryside just over a century ago. It can cause widespread damage to woodland by stripping bark from trees and destroying fruit crops such as apples and plums.

Figure 4. Chiltern gentian at Yoesdon Bank Nature Reserve. A rarity found mostly on the chalk downs of the Chilterns, it likes areas of open turf with bare patches.

Figure 5. Horse paddocks – a common sight in the Central Chilterns today.

Land Management

The overall value of the natural environment in the Central Chilterns has been compromised and reduced by a general lack of joined-up, long-term land management planning in areas outside of nature reserves.

Changes in farming practice, prompted by the drive for efficiency, have profound incremental impacts on the habitats and associated wildlife. In the Central Chilterns, larger habitat parcels have been divided into multiple smaller fragments disconnected from each other. This has resulted in:

- A decline in once-common farmland species such as yellowhammers and cornflowers;
- Less uncropped land and associated habitat important for invertebrates and other wildlife survival;
- Loss and neglect of ancient hedgerows, wood pasture and veteran trees.

A reduction in the number of grazing livestock is reducing the biological value of chalk grassland; the small isolated grassland sites are difficult to graze with commercial cattle and sheep, and so scrub takes over. Grazing continues, but with horses and ponies because it is believed that the nutrient-poor grass reduces the occurrence of Laminitis and is therefore better for equine health. Their different grazing pattern causes some grasslands to further decline in species diversity.

Britain leaving the EU could increase demand for UK food production, creating greater pressure on agricultural land and leading to more intensive arable farming, further threatening declining species. Changes in agri-environment schemes have reduced grants for managing land for wildlife and there is uncertainty about what will follow.

Lack of regular monitoring and neglect of Local Wildlife Sites leads to loss of habitat and ‘stepping stones’ that allow species to disperse through the landscape.
Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- **A focus on landscape-scale conservation action**, implementing the ‘Lawton’ principles of more, bigger, better and more-joined habitats.
- **Working with new and experienced landowners** to provide advice, training and resources to assist with the sensitive management of their holdings, control of invasive species, and to promote the effective use of agri-environment schemes.
- **Working with partners and volunteers** to increase Local Wildlife Site monitoring.
- **Using well-managed nature reserves** rich in wildlife as ‘core areas’ linked to others to create stepping stones and corridors for wildlife.
- **Harnessing local people’s enthusiasm and leisure time**, and promoting the health benefits of volunteering to encourage more people to help manage wildlife sites.
- **Bringing land managers together** to help match need and availability of grazing stock and equipment.

**Development and Infrastructure**

Increased development within the AONB and on its fringes is placing huge and growing pressure on the Central Chilterns green space, landscapes and wildlife habitats.

**Unsympathetic developments** and infrastructure projects threaten to compound habitat fragmentation by causing habitat loss and creating obstacles to successful species dispersal.

Construction of High Speed Two (HS2) will cut a swathe through the Misbourne valley, impacting on the landscape and communities.

Unprecedented levels of **housing growth** are proposed (for example the town of Princes Risborough is set to double in size by 2031) and will inevitably increase visitor pressure on the area.

Very few **Neighbourhood Plans** include information or action that capitalises on the characteristics of the protected landscape or provides ways to enhance landscape features and biodiversity.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- **Developing tools** for neighbourhood planning groups, landowners and planners.
- **Working with neighbourhood planning groups** to increase knowledge of the protected landscape.
- **Potential funds** to support biodiversity enhancements through a local authority Community Infrastructure Levy to developers.

**Figure 6.** Traditional hedge laying rather than just cutting creates species-rich hedges

**Figure 7.** Communities in the landscape show their objection to the building of HS2

**Figure 8.** Standard types of modern housing, built at the foot of the Chiltern Chalk escarpment, do not sit well in their Chiltern setting

**Figure 9.** Housing built in a style in keeping with older local buildings can lessen the impact of modern developments, as at Kingston Blount
Climate Change

In the UK it is predicted that, by the 2050s, almost half of our land area will have a bioclimate unlike any currently found here. Increased stress on our priority habitats and ecosystems is almost certain to come from climate change. It is not clear what the precise impacts will be, so it is important to enable habitats and species to cope with any climate change.

It is thought that our weather will be more erratic, with an increased number of extreme weather events, such as excessive rainfall, drought and storms, impacting on the environment.

Seasonal timings are likely to alter, the composition of ecological communities is likely to change, and invasive species and disease are likely to increase. Species which cannot adapt quickly, or which cannot disperse are likely to suffer significant and increasing declines and even local or complete extinction.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Promoting and implementing the 'Lawton' principles of better, bigger and more connected.
- Developing healthy, robust ecological networks to support adaptation, and improving habitat and species monitoring to assess impact.

Forgetting the Past

Some of the rich and unique heritage of the Central Chilterns is well documented, but other undiscovered and undesignated heritage features are vulnerable to development and neglect.

The area’s ancient routeways and hollow-ways have never been fully mapped: most are undesignated; many are unrecorded, forgotten and neglected, and at risk of loss. Some are under direct threat from HS2 and will be severed or degraded with loss of heritage, tranquility and character, and blighted views.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Capturing the stories of the people who remember the old ways of working.
- Mapping important archaeological features such as routeways and Grim’s ditch, to help improve their management and future conservation.
- Harnessing renewed interest in orchards; restoring derelict ones, planting new ones, and conserving local varieties of fruit.
- Galvanising local people to explore, uncover, record and interpret their heritage.

Traditional orchards, once a characteristic feature of the landscape and local economy, are on the brink of disappearing. With poor economic viability, ageing traditional orchards, the wildlife that thrives in them, traditional local fruit varieties, and cultural heritage (such as cherry festivals and products) are all under threat.

Cherry orchards and cherry festivals were once common and a focus for tourists and the local economy; fruits were eaten fresh, preserved, and used for dyeing fabrics.

Of the 10 mills on the River Wye, little remains today apart from a few buildings, a mill wheel and mill race, and the restored Pann Mill. The important and rich heritage of the mills is in danger of being forgotten.

A generation still remembers the traditional land-based economies of the 20th century, but these people are in the later years of their lives and their stories will be lost if we do not capture them soon.

Figure 11. A derelict cherry orchard near Little Chalfont

Traditional orchards, once a characteristic feature of the landscape and local economy, are on the brink of disappearing. With poor economic viability, ageing traditional orchards, the wildlife that thrives in them, traditional local fruit varieties, and cultural heritage (such as cherry festivals and products) are all under threat.

Cherry orchards and cherry festivals were once common and a focus for tourists and the local economy; fruits were eaten fresh, preserved, and used for dyeing fabrics.

Figure 12. The Central Chilterns has many ancient routeways such as this hollow-way
Threats and opportunities

Traditional Skills

As traditional land management practices fall into disuse, skills and knowledge are lost, along with traditional farming systems and the understanding of the dynamic nature of the landscape and wildlife habitats.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the rural Central Chilterns was a hive of craft-based industries vital to the furniture, straw hat, and lace industries of the larger towns. However, little is known of the lives of these craftspeople and their families.

Traditional crafts declined in favour of mass-produced products, but they are still an important part of Chiltern heritage. Some land management skills (e.g. scything) continue to play an important role in sensitive management of land to benefit wildlife.

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs’ development research uncovered a keen interest in crafts with many people wanting to know more and have a go. Local craftspeople also told us that they were interested in doing more to share their knowledge with others. Crafts are a perfect conduit for learning about the landscape.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Developing a programme of craft demonstrations and hands-on training days.
- Raising the profile of the crafts and craftspeople still working in the area.
- Employing and teaching traditional land management skills for sensitive wildlife conservation.

Loss of understanding, connection and action

Designation alone will not conserve what is special here. Lack of information about natural, built and cultural heritage reduces our understanding of them, and thus their protection. Lack of understanding and connection leads to reduced commitment and action needed to conserve and enhance the characteristic landscapes of the area.

While visitor numbers are increasing at certain sites, overall there is a sense of growing disconnect between a more urbanised population and the surrounding rural landscape; it is no longer relevant to people’s everyday lives.

The way in which people want to receive information has changed, and barriers can prevent people exploring and enjoying the local countryside.

There are a number of active heritage organisations in the area, including geology, archaeology and conservation groups, and local societies, but they need support to increase involvement and reach more people.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Supporting existing local groups to spread their work, knowledge and enthusiasm, and to increase membership. Establishing new local groups.
- Using innovative ways to engage new audiences in uncovering their rich past.
- Offering a range of volunteering opportunities and reducing barriers to people accessing them.
- Using technology to develop fun, informative digital information and interpretation.

Lack of resources

Given the current economic climate and financial cuts to public bodies and local authorities, there is increasingly less money to spend on heritage conservation, awareness raising and education. Central government core funds to support Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been reducing for some time.

Management mechanisms such as Environmental Stewardship increasingly require match funding from landowners and conservation organisations to deliver agreements, but this is getting harder to find.

With Brexit on the horizon, it is uncertain what resources will be available to protect and enhance the environment in the UK by the end of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Scheme delivery.

Opportunities to mitigate these risks are:

- Providing resources to conserve and protect local heritage with the establishment of the Landscape Partnership.
- Strengthening existing partnerships and creating new ones to facilitate the sharing of resources and skills.
- Providing small grants to communities and local organisations, for heritage projects.
- Harnessing the enthusiasm of local volunteers to become stewards of the land.

“...we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, we will understand only what is made known to us.”

Baba Dioum, Senegalese Conservationist

Figure 13. Scything is a traditional way of cutting hay. It is used today mostly in the management of small conservation sites where a late cut by hand encourages a wider diversity of grassland plants

Figure 14. The traditional blacksmith’s forge would have been a familiar sight in the 19th and early 20th centuries
Section five:

The Scheme
Vision, Aims, Development and Consultation

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs is a Landscape Partnership bringing together diverse organisations and communities in the Central Chilterns to work together towards a vision of:

A healthy, resilient, connected landscape, with its unique natural, historical and cultural heritage cherished by present and future generations.

Aims

The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs partnership aims to:

1. Restore, enhance and record wildlife habitats, landscape features and the cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns
2. Create new opportunities for people to investigate and celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the Chilterns, inspiring more people to become stewards for their local heritage
3. Strengthen the capacity of local communities to take action for their local landscapes and natural heritage

Development

The Chilterns Conservation Board was awarded a development grant of £185,600 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme in November 2016. A development team was recruited to deliver a Stage 2 application to HLF in Summer 2018, for the full grant amount of £2.18m. The delivery of the five-year Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) will start in April 2019 and bring a total investment of £2.8m to the Central Chilterns.

Figure 1. From Beacon Hill

Consultation

A major part of the development of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs has been the consultation with a wide range of people, to develop ideas, test out plans and ensure that the Scheme and projects were designed to deliver the stated aims and HLF outcomes. This was essential to secure both community-level and strategic support for the Scheme.

The consultation undertaken can be summarised as follows:

- Individual and group meetings with representatives from over 70 local groups, community organisations, parish councils, local authorities, and local, regional and national organisations. These organisations cover sectors including environment, built and cultural heritage, community, arts, academic and volunteering. Several of them became partners to the Scheme.
- Workshops to develop ideas in response to identified needs included: a Heritage workshop, several Natural Environment workshops, a geology meeting and a workshop for local craftspeople.
- An online public survey to assess people’s current views on the Central Chilterns and their potential interest in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. Of the 474 people who responded, 77% wanted to receive updates about Chalk, Cherries and Chairs.
- An online parish survey with the purpose of getting the views specifically of parish councils. Eleven parishes responded.
- Six public community meetings with 118 attendees, 89 of whom left feedback registering their interest in several aspects of the Scheme.
- Four focus groups to reach target audiences not captured in the online survey or through community meetings. These were held in areas surrounding the HS2 proposed route, and urban areas (Aylesbury Vale and High Wycombe).
- A review of the AONB management plan took place during the time that the Scheme was in development. Its survey provided some useful responses relevant to Chalk, Cherries and Chairs.

We learned a lot about our current and potential audiences and their interests and developed the Scheme, projects and activities with this knowledge.
Interest in events and activities

Feedback indicated that there is a lot of interest in investigating the past and taking action for wildlife. The chart below shows survey responses when people were asked in which Chalk, Cherries and Chairs events and activities they would be interested in taking part.

At a focus group meeting with residents at the Aylesbury Healthy Living Centre, the Schemes which were the most attractive to people were:

- Opportunities for my children to learn about the local wildlife and history through school
- Family wildlife or history days
- Self-guided wildlife or history trails
- Online information telling me about the history and wildlife
- Learning craft skills and techniques
- Learning about the social and cultural history of the area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event/Activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>% of people giving this as a response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-guided wildlife &amp; history trails</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience days that include food, drink and crafts</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching an outdoor performance</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the social and cultural history of the area</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrations at community orchards (such as apple day, cherry pie festival)</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about the wildlife of the area</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online information telling me about the history and landscape</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided walks about history</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to stories about the people who shaped this landscape</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming along to a History Festival</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided walks about wildlife</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a go at heritage crafts (e.g. basketmaking, brick making or spoon carving)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Area

Why the Central Chilterns?
The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a very distinct landscape within easy reach of London, defined in part by its internationally rare chalk geology, and one of the most wooded landscapes in England. The Central Chilterns is an intimate mosaic of woodland, chalk grassland, farmland habitats, chalk streams, relict wood pasture and parkland.

The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area is based on landscape character and Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), and includes areas of need and opportunity. BOAs are identified by Local Nature Partnerships and indicate areas where there are substantial opportunities to make positive changes for biodiversity. The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area is facing particular threats to its unique heritage: housing growth is proposed at unprecedented levels; construction of High Speed Two (HS2) will slash through the Misbourne valley; the rural environment is being urbanised; and there’s a strong trend towards fragmentation of land holdings.

Consideration of the combined character, need, opportunity and threats resulted in a large area (278 km²) being incorporated into the Scheme. Practical delivery of projects will be focused on key areas within the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs boundary.

Marketing and communications

The success of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will be dependent upon reaching a broad and varied audience. Our marketing and communications strategies take advantage of this opportunity and challenge.

With an eye to building a strong supporter base and contact list, we have sought permission to retain the details of everyone involved in the consultation period. This will enable us to keep them, our partner members and other supporters informed of opportunities for involvement and action as the Scheme gets under way. For instance, there was a lot of interest from communities in Aylesbury that we spoke to as part of our focus groups, and it is essential that we find ways to build on their enthusiasm.

In the earlier section on Barriers to Engagement for new audiences (see p53), we learned the importance of using different ways to communicate with people and to invite them to take part, ensuring that communications are relevant to each of them. This learning is reflected in the breadth of activities in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs; some are tailored for particular audiences and others are intended to make the invitation to join in as open as possible, helping more people to feel they can and want to get involved.

One problem of such a broad programme is its complexity, and we learned from consultation that sometimes it is difficult...
to explain concisely what it is about. Therefore, our first communications task when delivery starts is to create clear, appealing key messages for Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. These will focus around:

- The Central Chilterns is a great place to live, work and visit.
- There are lots of opportunities to enjoy and get involved in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs – such as exploring the area, learning skills, getting creative, and volunteering for the area’s wildlife, historical and cultural heritage.
- Everyone is welcome, you do not need to make a big commitment and we shall invite you and guide you.

There will be communications promoting the whole Scheme and others for key activities, in a range of styles and mechanisms for different audiences. A plan of what communications will take place and when, will be the responsibility of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Community and Media Officer, in consultation with partner organisations and overseen by the Scheme Manager.

The range of communications media we will use, includes:

- **Social media** – A lively social media presence is key to engagement with our target audiences, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Other tools such as YouTube, Pinterest, Tumblr and blogs may also be employed to share lively and engaging film, copy and images promoting Chalk, Cherries and Chairs.
- **Printed materials** – Leaflets and posters, produced professionally and with consistent branding to give impact and build awareness, distributed into communities in and around the Scheme area.
- **Online resources** – Our Coming Alive activities include creating webpages, interactive maps, videos, volunteering opportunities, events booking and other digital resources. These webpages will be part of the Chilterns Conservation Board website, with links to partner websites.
- **Champions/ambassadors** – Given that many people hear about activities and events by word of mouth, as the Scheme gets going, the participants and volunteers will be the best spokespeople for involving others. This is a particularly effective way to involve young people.

- **Local Press** – Newspapers, magazines, radio, television and associated news websites are useful vehicles to reach a range of audiences and increase engagement in the Scheme.
- **Advertising** – Paid-for advertising can have a role in the marketing mix. As this is an expensive channel, advertising will be used in a focused way for specific occasions such as the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs festivals, where we are targeting large numbers of people.
- **Other promotional materials** – Some branded display materials, such as pull-up banners, for use at events for the staff team and partners will help to ensure that there is a professional and consistent image and message.
- **A launch festival** – In September 2019, a 10-day festival with events and activities mostly in the main towns, will promote all the opportunities on offer in the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Scheme.
The Scheme

The Scheme involves local people getting active in caring for their local countryside; becoming champions of their local heritage and green spaces and passing on their passion and enthusiasm to the next generation.

Across the suite of projects there will be chances for people to:
- **Explore** the Chiltern landscape and wildlife
- **Investigate** and celebrate Chiltern heritage
- **Learn** new skills
- **Take action** for managing and preserving the Chiltern heritage through its landscape, culture and wildlife

The chart below shows the three themes and their projects. The sections that follow explain each of the themes in greater detail. Part 2 of the LCAP gives a summary of each project.

### Themes and Projects

**The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Scheme** is divided into three themes with a number of projects under each. The themes and projects interweave, with many interdependencies and much interconnectedness. For example, an annual festival will provide an opportunity to showcase and promote the work of other projects. Training in mapping skills will benefit all those involved in any of the History and Landscape projects.

Volunteering and training are essential elements weaving the projects together. Increasing skills, knowledge and depth of engagement, and empowering people and communities are essential to achieve an outcome and legacy of more people and communities being essential to achieve an outcome and legacy of more people with a sense of place in the Central Chilterns. Protection and enhancement of the landscape will only be lasting if

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Wildlife and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Woodlanders’ Lives and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Celebrating Crafts and Heritage Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Cherry Talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Routes to the Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>The Mystery of Grim's Ditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>People &amp; Mills of the River Wye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Planning for the Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Chilterns Champions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Echoed Locations – Listening to the Chilterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Chalk, Cherries &amp; Chairs Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Coming Alive – Digital interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Understanding the Central Chilterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>History and Landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>People, Communities and Landscape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme A: Wildlife and Landscape**

The natural heritage of the Central Chilterns holds a range of nationally important chalk grassland, woodland, chalk stream and hedgerow habitats that are hosts to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, many of which are nationally scarce and internationally important.

Key habitats are under increasing pressure from development, lack of management, modern farming practices and changes in land ownership, and are becoming degraded and fragmented. Across a range of species groups, their presence, range and abundance is declining.

Projects will create a landscape-scale focus on habitat creation, restoration and/ or management, to develop a network of improved habitats in more, bigger and better-connected sites. They will focus on connecting sites where the greatest need and opportunities lie – in the seven Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, the Conservation Target Area, the Vale Buffer Strip and the HS2 corridor. The projects will significantly increase the number of hectares in active and positive management that will improve habitat condition and species presence, range and abundance as a long-term legacy.

Practical support will be offered to a wide range of landowners and community groups

Key habitats are under increasing pressure from development, lack of management, modern farming practices and changes in land ownership

Figure 1. Grazing to benefit conservation is essential for maintaining a flower-rich chalk grassland, as at Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve

to work more collaboratively on both large- and small-scale community projects. The range of support includes direct capital investment to carry out major works, increasing capacity of volunteer work parties, species surveys and training in practical skills, habitat-specific management advice, and resources such as packs of ready-to-plant tree saplings and owl boxes.

More volunteers will be recruited to get stuck into a range of practical conservation tasks. Training and support will be offered to help people get involved in habitat management work parties, to carry out species surveys and to develop community environment groups.

Projects will leave a lasting legacy of not only a greater range of better-connected habitats but also a more engaged and collaborative network of conservation organisations, landowners and volunteers who are better informed, equipped and actively working together for wildlife.
### Theme B: History and Landscape

**Jacky Akam • Landscape Partnership Development Manager, CCB**

As we have seen from Section 1 The Story of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, and the Statement of Significance, the Central Chilterns has a very rich cultural heritage stretching back thousands of years. But we have also seen from the Threats, how historic features are becoming degraded, and how people generally don’t understand the significance of their place in time and the landscape. Younger generations appear not to feel the same connection to history and landscape in their everyday lives as their forebears did.

The Opportunities show us that with the right range of interesting projects, people can become fascinated by the past, and are then keen to get involved and help put the Central Chiltern historic landscape back on the map and into people’s lives.

Projects under this theme aim to increase understanding, knowledge, enjoyment and overall commitment to conserve and enhance local built and cultural heritage. By offering a range of activities and ways to connect with aspects of the past, we hope to capture the imagination of lots of different people, developing their curiosity and connection. The projects span the millennia from the mysterious Grim’s Ditch thought to date back to the Iron Age (c. 700 BC – AD 43), through historic routeways and hollow-ways used from the medieval days onwards, to the industrial heritage of the 18th to 20th centuries such as the chair making that defined High Wycombe, water-powered mills, traditional crafts and the spread of cherry orchards. Our aim is to inspire people to get involved, to identify, record and create new stories. They will help to leave a beautiful and enduring legacy to inform and inspire future residents and land managers to conserve and celebrate this remarkable landscape.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Delivery Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Landscape Connections</td>
<td>CCC Team with delivery by a number of partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Rough Around the Edges</td>
<td>Berkshire, Buckinghamshire &amp; Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>Water in a Dry Landscape</td>
<td>Chilterns Chalk Streams Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>Chilterns Orchards</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Rock Around the Chilterns</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>Tracking the Impact</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1. Traditional tools, including a spoke shave and chisels, used to make chair legs and spindles (top left)*

*Figure 2. Abi Tompkins talking on video about developing the Routes to the Past project*
Projects under this theme aim to increase understanding, knowledge, enjoyment and overall commitment to conserve and enhance local cultural heritage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Delivery Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1 Woodlanders’ Lives and Landscape</td>
<td>Uncovering the lives of the rural communities associated with the furniture industry of the Central Chilterns, by documenting how people's lives and work have shaped the landscape we see today.</td>
<td>Bucks New University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Celebrating Crafts and Heritage Skills</td>
<td>A programme of events, demonstrations, and hands-on experience of traditional crafts and skills.</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3 Cherry Talk</td>
<td>A cross-generational spoken-word project using memories of the cherry orchards and Central Chilterns dialects, both of which are in danger of dying out, to inspire new works.</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4 Routes to the Past</td>
<td>Local communities will help to investigate, record, interpret and celebrate ancient routeways and their role in shaping the landscape.</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5 The Mystery of Grim’s Ditch</td>
<td>What was the purpose of Grim’s ditch? We aim to uncover some of the mystery with the help of local people.</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6 People and Mills of the River Wye</td>
<td>Volunteering opportunities and activities for people throughout the local community to increase awareness, knowledge, involvement and a sense of ownership of the river Wye in High Wycombe and the social and cultural heritage of its mills.</td>
<td>Chiltern Rangers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Theme C: People, communities and landscape**

**Sarah Close • Landscape Partnership Development Trainee, CCB**

Our audience development work demonstrates that those already involved in the Central Chilterns are passionate about protecting the area for future generations. However, there are barriers which are preventing participation.

With this knowledge, and having identified specific groups of people who are underrepresented and/or ‘hard-to-reach’, we have developed projects in order to engage new and existing audiences.

Projects under this theme will promote a stronger sense of place by helping people relate to today’s landscape and by breaking down barriers which prevent them from engaging with the countryside. By sharing knowledge and skills, we aim to empower communities to look after their local special places, and to catalyse local volunteering.

The provision of opportunities for community engagement is vital to the overall success of the Scheme. Projects under this theme look at new approaches to delivering and promoting events and activities, from the creative arts to digital soundscapes. By taking these opportunities to urban areas we hope to help different people, including ethnically and culturally diverse communities, to overcome their barriers to involvement, and help them to protect and celebrate their local landscape.

Our aim is to inspire people to get involved, to identify, record and create new stories. They will help to leave a beautiful and enduring legacy to inform and inspire future residents and land managers to conserve and celebrate this remarkable landscape.

**Figure 1. Volunteers clear scrub for conservation at Whiteleaf Hill – a great way to keep fit**

**Figure 3. Theme B: History and landscape projects**

**Figure 4. Pann Mill is now the only working water mill on the river Wye. To find out more see this video by Stuart King.**
By sharing knowledge and skills, we aim to empower communities to look after their local special places, and to catalyse local volunteering.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Delivery Lead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Planning for the Future</td>
<td>CCB Planning Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing an interactive toolkit on AONB planning for communities preparing neighbourhood plans; followed up with training and advice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Chilterns Champions</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To recruit, train, support, recognise and reward volunteers working across the Central Chilterns to care for their natural and historic landscape.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Echoed Locations – Listening to the Chilterns</td>
<td>CCC Team with National Trust advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using community engagement to build a sonic map by recording sounds that define the Central Chilterns; young urban people in particular will be encouraged to explore their creative responses to the sounds of the Chilterns.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Festival</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with partners to deliver an annual Chalk, Cherries and Chairs festival; inviting people of all ages and backgrounds to a wide variety of arts, heritage and environment events and activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Coming Alive</td>
<td>CCC Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digital interpretation will be used with a wide range of creative techniques to disseminate and deliver the output of other projects, particularly those relating to the area’s heritage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Understanding the Central Chilterns: human activity in time and place</td>
<td>Amersham Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working with local primary schools to teach children about settlement patterns, using fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area through methods including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Theme C: People, communities and landscape projects**

### Finances

The overall expenditure budget for Chalk, Cherries and Chairs is £2,845m, as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Costs</th>
<th>Projects costs</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Total £</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1: Landscape Connections</td>
<td>85,842</td>
<td>119,174</td>
<td>112,134</td>
<td>101,504</td>
<td>77,597</td>
<td>496,250</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A2: Rough Around the Edges</td>
<td>29,146</td>
<td>59,618</td>
<td>66,508</td>
<td>75,917</td>
<td>81,657</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A3: Water in a Dry Landscape</td>
<td>17,412</td>
<td>19,088</td>
<td>2,514</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>7,200</td>
<td>53,414</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A4: Chiltern Orchards</td>
<td>13,536</td>
<td>19,291</td>
<td>20,607</td>
<td>19,260</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>75,694</td>
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<td>A5: Rock around the Chilterns</td>
<td>9,014</td>
<td>4,673</td>
<td>4,623</td>
<td>4,878</td>
<td>4,238</td>
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<td>A6: Tracking the Impact</td>
<td>13,008</td>
<td>15,810</td>
<td>23,791</td>
<td>26,137</td>
<td>27,699</td>
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<td>B1: Woodlanders’ Lives and Landscapes</td>
<td>11,438</td>
<td>15,179</td>
<td>12,859</td>
<td>16,022</td>
<td>8,225</td>
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<td>3,515</td>
<td>11,655</td>
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<td>7,260</td>
<td>4,740</td>
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<td>8,740</td>
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<td>3,728</td>
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<td>4,520</td>
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<td>5,495</td>
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<td>C3: Echoed Locations</td>
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<td>11,133</td>
<td>13,198</td>
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<td>15,000</td>
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<td>Project Costs Sub-totals</td>
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<td>368,550</td>
<td>350,532</td>
<td>351,173</td>
<td>271,255</td>
<td>1,584,402</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Assumptions in the expenditure budget

- All project figures include the value of volunteer time and non-cash contributions.
- Inflation has been calculated annually at 1.5% for each year after year 1.
- Contingency has been calculated at just under 4% of all costs. This is primarily for any unpredictable staff needs such as maternity or long-term sickness.
- The majority of the capital spend is in relatively small amounts and therefore carries low risk.
- Core staff activities include the delivery of a number of projects. The core staff costs include on-costs, recruitment, training and travel costs. Salaries have been budgeted with an annual increase of 1.5% for years 2 and 3, and 2% for years 4 and 5. Redundancy payments are included in year 5.
- Costs for staff employed by partners, are included under the project on which they are leading, and include an annual increase in line with their organisation’s standard.

The financial management of the Scheme will be the responsibility of the Scheme Manager with support from the CCB Finance and Admin Officer. The Steering Group will provide scrutiny and direction but accountability will remain with the lead body, CCB.

Where a project is led by CCB or the LPS team, the CCB procurement procedure will be used. Where another organisation is the project lead, they will use their own procurement procedure, as long as this is within the HLF procurement parameters.

Small Grants Fund

As shown in the expenditure budget above, from Year 2 of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs there will be a small fund available to local groups, organisations, and individuals with activity and project ideas for built and cultural heritage that support the aims of the Scheme within the Central Chilterns. Local biodiversity initiatives will be supported via the Rough Around the Edges project.

Applications to the small grants fund will be accepted twice a year from Year 2 and the fund will be administered by a Small Grants Group against the fund criteria. Information on the guidelines and the application form will be available on the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs webpages.

Scheme match-funding

The HLF grant accounts for 70% of the overall costs of the Scheme. The Partnership is committed to securing £503,000 of cash match-funding, along with a £327,000 worth of volunteer support, as shown opposite:

The secured match-funding represents 87.5% of the amount needed for the five years and comes from a variety of sources:

- Local Authorities – including funds from Wycombe District Council via their Community Infrastructure Levy, and Bucks County Council.
- Central Government – the primary source of match-funds is the HS2 Community and Environment Fund, established to help communities along the first phase of the HS2 construction (London to Birmingham) deal with the disruption to their communities and environment.
- Match-funds from partners towards work on their land – this includes funds from commercial, public sector and not-for-profit organisations towards the delivery of work on land they own or manage, such as Natural England, The Forestry Commission, National Trust, The Local Wildlife Trust, Chilterns Society, parish councils, golf clubs and churches.
- Own reserves – funds from the Chilterns Conservation Board as the lead body.
The value of the volunteer time is based on the HLF recommended values:

- **Professional labour** – £350 a day
- **Skilled labour** – £150 a day
- **Unskilled labour** – £50 a day

The non-cash contribution is the use of equipment and resources that would otherwise have to be paid for, such as tools for conservation work, meeting rooms, and educational resources.

The balance of funds needed will be raised during delivery of the Scheme, as follows:

- Private landowners will be asked to contribute a percentage of the cost of works carried out on their land.
- Income generation throughout the delivery of the scheme, through small charges being made for events, training, school visits and other Chalk, Cherries and Chairs activities.

### Post-Scheme budget

In addition to the budgets shown, a modest budget would be needed to manage and maintain the outputs for the five years beyond the completion of the Scheme, and 10 years for digital outputs. It is expected, however, that the legacy planning from year 3 onwards will define a more ambitious next phase of the Landscape Partnership Scheme with detailed budgeting.

### Structure and management

The Chilterns Conservation Board (CCB) is the Accountable or Lead Body, and the Grantee for receipt of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant and other funds on behalf of the Scheme and Partnership. The Scheme is overseen by a Partnership Steering Group that meets quarterly and is comprised of lead delivery partners and other strategic representatives.

The Accountable Body ensures the Scheme meets all legal and contractual responsibilities and HLF Approved Purposes. It carries out this role in accordance with the Aims and with direction and agreement of the Steering Group.

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs has a Partnership Principles document that sets out the aims, structure, and ethos of partnership and collaboration, for anyone wishing to be involved in the Scheme.

The Steering Group’s role is to guide and support the overall development and delivery of the Scheme and the Scheme’s staff team. It is the main decision-making body which sets the strategy and direction for the Scheme, and its members act as ambassadors for the Scheme and Partnership.

CCB employs a Scheme Manager and staff team to administer the Scheme, carry out delivery and support the delivery of Projects by Delivery Partners and community groups. Advisory or working groups will be convened as and when needed, such as to oversee Legacy Planning. They will be comprised of invited partners or those with relevant knowledge who support the Scheme (i.e. members of the local community and private, public and third sector representation).

A Small Grants group will be established to assess applications for grants under the ‘Small Grants’ element of the Scheme and make recommendations to the full Steering Group for approval.

There is a broader group of organisations and local groups, in addition to delivery partners and the Steering Group, which

![Figure 1. Chalkhill Blue](image1)

![Figure 1. Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Partnership](image2)
together make up the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership (the ‘Partnership’). They will meet to share ideas and successes at an annual get-together, and will be kept in touch via emails and newsletters.

Figure 1 shows the organisational structure of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs.

**Partnership**

Figure 2 provides information on each of the partners and the role they play in the Partnership. CCB, as well as being the Lead Body, is also a delivery organisation where staff outside the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs team are delivering projects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Steering Group Member</th>
<th>Delivery Lead Partner</th>
<th>Delivery organisation</th>
<th>Delivery Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Rocha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amersham Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berkshire, Buckinghamshire &amp; Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biodiversity Consultant Martin Harvey</td>
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<tr>
<td>British Trust for Ornithology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckinghamshire &amp; MK Natural Environment Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckinghamshire Bird Club</td>
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<td>Buckinghamshire County Council</td>
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<td>Buckinghamshire Owl and Raptor Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bucks &amp; MK Environmental Records Centre</td>
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<td>Bucks New University</td>
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<td>BugLife</td>
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<td>Butterfly Conservation</td>
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<td>Caring for God’s Own Acre</td>
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<td>Chiltern Forest Golf Club</td>
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<td>Chiltern Society</td>
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<td>Chiltern Woodlands Project</td>
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<td>Chilterns Chalk Stream Project</td>
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<td>Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway</td>
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<td>Chinnor Churches Go Wild</td>
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<td>Farmer Cluster (Central)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Ambassador*</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* A Youth Ambassador will be sought from the wider Partnership, to sit on the Steering Group and represent the interests of young people in the Scheme.
Agreements
The Scheme has several agreements to cover working arrangements, as outlined below:

Staffing
The staffing for the Scheme is shown below:

- Full-time Scheme Manager – responsible for: overall project, staff and finance management; partnership steering group; project development and agreements; health and safety, policies and procedures; fundraising; reporting, monitoring and evaluation; small grants and volunteering. Reports to CCB Countryside Officer.

- 30-hours per week Landowner Engagement Officer – responsible for: landowner engagement, project delivery and partner relations, delivery organisations, volunteers, and surveying under the Wildlife and Landscape Theme projects.

- Full-time Land Management Officer – responsible for: delivering and partner relations, delivering site specific Plans under the Wildlife and Landscape Theme projects.

- Full-time Community Heritage Officer – responsible for project delivery of history and community projects and partner relations under the History and Landscape Theme.

- Full-time Community and Media Officer – responsible for: project delivery and partner relations under the People, Communities and Landscape Theme; across-scheme communications.

- 1-day per week Finance and Administration Support (as an extension to CCB part-time Officer role) – responsible for assisting with Scheme finance, office admin, personnel, IT, data, and monitoring.

- 1 Trainee per year for 4 years, working either full-time for 10 months or 30 hours per week for 12 months – will report to a different member of the team each year and be responsible for GIS mapping, interpretation, assisting with the festival, and other duties according to their interests and career path.

In addition:

- Part-time Rough Around the Edges Project Officer – employed by Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust – responsible for developing and delivering Rough Around the Edges and Orchard projects.

- Part-time Community Ranger – employed by Chiltern Rangers – responsible for recruiting and supporting volunteers to deliver practical conservation tasks for the Wildlife and Landscape Theme projects.

- Part-time project assistant employed by Buckinghamshire New University to work alongside the seconded Project Lead. A lecturer will be recruited to backfill the teaching hours.
Volunteers Volunteering is a key way for people to connect with or deepen an existing connection with their local landscape. It increases the likelihood of them caring about and becoming stewards of their local heritage.

The audience development work showed the enthusiasm of people to volunteer, both among those people who already volunteer and are keen to do more, and those who would consider volunteering given the right opportunities. In addition, with a range of volunteer opportunities designed to reduce known barriers to volunteering, the scheme can reach people who have not volunteered for heritage before. Volunteering is an opportunity to reach out to new supporters. Much of the wildlife conservation work (practical habitat management and wildlife surveying) will be carried out by new and/or existing volunteers. Significant effort will be made to recruit, train and support volunteers not only deliver specific projects but also provide the long term legacy of the Scheme.

We estimate Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will provide approximately 23 different volunteering opportunities for up to 1,400 people. We assume 60% will be core volunteers involved regularly in one or more projects, 30% occasional, and 10% people who volunteer just once. Volunteers will contribute almost 9,800 days of time over five years.

The range of volunteering on offer will include:

- Creating and looking after wildlife areas
- Practical wildlife conservation
- Leading local wildlife conservation tasks
- Wildlife surveying and recording
- Finding out more about ancient routeways and green lanes
- Helping plant and care for a community orchard
- Organising orchard-related celebrations
- Helping to recruit other volunteers
- Organising a stall or activity at a festival
- Passing on countryside skills or knowledge to others
- Helping to uncover the mystery of Grim’s Ditch
- Creating videos and other digital web content
- Creating oral histories
- Making aural history for a sonic map
- Interpreting old maps and new digital information
- Creating new spoken performances from old stories
- Photography
- Helping with promotion and communications

For more information on how Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will work with volunteers, see the Chiltern Champions Project summary in Part 2.
## Management timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Year 1 - April 2019-March 2020</th>
<th>Year 2 - April 2020-March 2021</th>
<th>Year 3 - April 2021-March 2022</th>
<th>Year 4 - April 2022-March 2023</th>
<th>Year 5 - April 2023-March 2024</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appointment of Scheme Manager</td>
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<td>Scheme Manager Contract</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appointment of other staff</td>
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<td>Staff contracts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainee recruitment</td>
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<td>Steering group meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish working groups, small grants group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review Scheme, project documents and budgets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish project management &amp; monitoring systems</td>
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<td>Establish web-pages, digital mapping platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop project-specific promotions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation - appointment, review, mid-term, final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications, social media, e-newsletter</td>
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<td>HLF Progress Reports &amp; claims</td>
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<td>Legacy planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>End of Scheme conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1 Landscape Connections</td>
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<td>A2 Rough Around the Edges</td>
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<td>A3 Water in a Dry Landscape</td>
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<td>A4 Chatsfield Orchiends</td>
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<td>A5 Sit around the Chilterns</td>
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<td>A6 Tracking the Impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>B1 Woodlanders’ Lives and Landscapes</td>
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<td>B2 Celebrating Crafts and Heritage Skills</td>
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<td>B3 Cherry Talk</td>
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<td>B4 Routes to the Past</td>
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<td>B5 The Mystery of Gimm’s Ditch</td>
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<td>B6 People and Mills of the River Wye</td>
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<tr>
<td>C1 Planning for the Future</td>
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<td>C2 Chilterns Champions</td>
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<td>C3 Echoed Locations</td>
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<tr>
<td>C4 Chalk, Cherries &amp; Chars Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>C5 Coming Alive</td>
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<tr>
<td>C6 Understanding the Central Chilterns</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Risks

A number of potential risks to the Scheme delivery have been identified and are listed below, together with actions we intend to take to minimise them and to deal with them should they arise. Risks to projects are documented within the individual project plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HLF do not award LPS Grant</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Carry out development to best possible standards. Work to strengthen partnership, and secure match-funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential shortfall in match-funding</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>87.5% of the match-funds have been secured. 12.5% will be generated during delivery. Applications will be made for the balance and a strategy is in place should these be unsuccessful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty about policies and grants following Brexit</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Risk is minimal as there is no dependency on European grants in the Scheme. Potentially this is an opportunity by offering interim support to landowners during the period of uncertainty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced core funds of CCB impacting on the ability to lead and host LPS Scheme</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Minimal risk as the costs of the CCC delivery team are covered, as well as some overhead costs for hosting. As delivery partnership is across a number of partners, the risk is spread.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to recruit staff</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Circulate adverts widely. Use AONB contacts, partners’ networks and social media. Ensure salaries are competitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in CCC staffing, sickness, or maternity</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Good planning and scoping of roles, responsibilities and capacity. Recruitment of people with the right skills for the jobs. Contingency allowance for staffing costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortfall in targeted involvement in volunteering and activities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Very positive response to date; ensure sufficient resources given to marketing/promotion. Use of a range of relevant marketing methods, including face-to-face and social media. Increase focus on more popular activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to gain wide support for the Scheme and to engage target audiences in events, activities and opportunities</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Dedicated staff resource for communications. Whole Partnership contributing to promotion. Communications Plan in place - use regular communications using a variety of media. Increased budget for marketing and promotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of momentum, enthusiasm and change of contacts in the interval between submitting the bid and starting delivery, made more difficult by new data protection laws</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Capture contact details and permissions during development. Encourage contacts to receive CCB e-newsletter and send updates during the interval via the newsletter. Encourage partners to keep the Scheme alive with their contacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowners not willing to sign landowner agreement</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>The capital budget is spread across a high number of landowners. Confidence from the development work of a high demand. Landowner consent secured for first year of works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure to secure other permissions, such as felling licences</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Confidence from the development work identifying permissions needed early in the process, along with involvement and communication with authorising bodies. Projects planned and delivered in accordance with statutory frameworks and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing pressures on and reduced capacity of partners, reducing their ability to deliver</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Develop the scheme to help increase capacity of small organisations, set realistic targets and use breadth of Partnership to support one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure of a partner to deliver</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Quarterly reports will identify any problems early, so solutions can be found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineffective engagement and attendance at CCC Steering Group</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Cooperative development, delivery agreements in place. Reallocate resources to other activities or identify new partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merger of Buckinghamshire Councils</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Highly likely to take place but with low impacts in relation to the delivery of this project. Final decision not yet made, and if it proceeds will take several years to put in place. Strong relationships are in place with the existing Bucks Local Authorities and we will continue to communicate with them to ensure minimal impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor project management leading to failure to deliver project to time and budget</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Adequate budget allowed to recruit a person with excellent project management and line management skills. Effective, regular line management and project reporting with scrutiny by line managers and Partnership Steering Group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section six:
Monitoring and evaluation

Chris Smith
Monitoring and evaluation

Rich Clarke • CEPAR, Evaluation Consultancy

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership’s approach to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) will follow Heritage Lottery Fund’s (HLF) generic Evaluation Good Practice Guidance and will be informed by HLF’s earlier tailored guidance on evaluation and legacy planning produced specifically for Landscape Partnerships. HLF guidance embeds M&E in a wider process of activity planning and delivery focused on ‘improving’ as well as ‘proving’. It distinguishes between monitoring of outputs (as measures of activity, i.e. what has been delivered), evaluation of outcomes (their impact, including benefits to heritage and for people), and planning for legacy (the need to ensure that these benefits endure beyond the end of HLF funding).

This section summarises the contents of an M&E Framework, submitted as a supplementary document in parallel with this LCAP as part of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs’ Stage 2 (delivery) submission to HLF. This will form the basis for an M&E strategy to be developed and implemented in the early stages of delivery. The strategy will be ‘owned’ by all partners and will be central to the delivery both of individual projects and of the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs scheme as a whole. Wherever possible evaluation will be embedded in project delivery and will engage project participants in such a way as to enhance outcomes. M&E will be the responsibility of everyone involved in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs – partners and project leads as well as the LP team.

Project level M&E

Full project plans include details of activities, output targets and anticipated outcomes. These are summarised together with associated indicators and relevant baselines as a matrix in Appendix 5. This will be revised on the start of delivery to provide an ‘at-a-glance’ updateable summary of project progress which, with the addition of further columns (e.g. financial data, milestones, ‘achieved to date’, risks etc.), can be used as the basis for periodic reporting to the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Partnership Board.

Most projects have multiple outputs and outcomes, some of which (such as those relating to habitat enhancement) are specific to particular projects whereas others (for example volunteer time and participant numbers) are common to several projects. All projects (not just those specifically aimed at people) will deliver benefits for individuals, communities and/or organisations.

Each Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project is associated with clear target outputs. These will be reviewed early on in the delivery phase, and any significant changes cleared with the HLF Monitor. In identifying and capturing outputs, the Scheme will have regard to the output data reporting categories required by HLF.

Some outcomes (for example those related to the benefits of physical work to natural or cultural heritage) can be captured objectively, often through quantitative measures (e.g. surveys of habitat condition). Others will require proxy indicators, which may be as simple as ‘before’ and ‘after’ photographs. Yet others, particularly those related to ‘people’ benefits, may be less tangible, requiring a mix of qualitative approaches including interviews, focus groups, case studies, expert testimony, anecdotal and other evidence.

Partners and project leads will be asked to report on progress in delivering output targets and in identifying and capturing outcome evidence with each interim financial claim.

All projects will be asked to submit an end-of-project evaluation with their final claim. In addition to final output data this will include a narrative ‘story’ of their project together with quantitative and qualitative evidence of outcomes including case studies and other illustrative material.

Figure 1. Grizzled skipper, a key indicator species of the Central Chilterns

Figure 2. Learning traditional scything skills

A key element is the expectation that the Scheme will deliver outcomes that go beyond the outcomes of individual projects.

**Evaluation of whole-scheme outcomes**
A key element in Chalk, Cherries and Chairs’ funding from HLF is the expectation that the Scheme will deliver outcomes that go beyond the outcomes of individual projects. Where those outcomes endure beyond the end of HLF funding they contribute to legacy. Part of the challenge of evaluation will be to demonstrate to what extent this has been achieved.

**Baselines**
On-going data collection relating to heritage and people within Chilterns AONB includes condition indicators relevant to a range of attributes, including: landscape and biodiversity; the historic environment; social and economic; and community and visitor understanding, engagement and enjoyment. Where this is specific to the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs LP area it may be appropriate as baseline data.

**Delivery phase monitoring and evaluation stages**
Formal evaluation of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will involve the input of an Independent Evaluator to be appointed soon after delivery commences. It will include formative and summative elements in three overlapping phases, as shown on the following page:

---

**Figure 3. Linnet, a key farmland bird whose population trends will form part of Tracking the Impact**

Additional data collected specifically for the Scheme’s development phase includes:
- ‘Tracking the impact’ volunteer, biodiversity and habitat monitoring on key sites
- An audience survey conducted in December 2017 of more than 470 individuals, the majority of whom live and/or work within the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs area.

In addition to quantitative indicators the latter included open-ended questions which have provided valuable qualitative feedback. It has been supplemented by a number of community consultations carried out between December 2017 and March 2018. These provide baselines against which to assess immediate and longer-term outcomes and will be integrated with monitoring specific to individual projects and to the Scheme as a whole.

**Methods**
Methods include: desk study; site visits; liaison with CCC LP team, partners and project leads; workshops; training in appropriate evaluation tools; data collection and assembly methods; online participant survey(s); focus groups; key informant interviews with project leads, volunteers and beneficiaries; case studies of individual projects. The three stages will be facilitated by an Independent Evaluator to be appointed at an early stage in delivery.

---

**Phase 1: Refinement and implementation of an M&E strategy.** This will include a review of project plans. It will include an updated M&E matrix which will be used as the basis for recording and reporting progress through the life of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. This will be part of a wider M&E strategy incorporating a revised framework document ‘owned’ by the partnership as a whole, which will identify who does what and when, and include a timetable for the interim review, final evaluation and legacy planning.

**Phase 2: Mid-Delivery review and legacy planning.** Formal evaluation; review of progress to date; what’s worked well/less well and why; identification of needs and changes for second half of the LP; start of planning for legacy.

---

**Phase 3: End-of-Scheme evaluation.** This will lead to a Final Evaluation Report which will include: an updated M&E strategy which will be used as the basis for recording and reporting progress through the life of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. This will be part of a wider M&E strategy incorporating a revised framework document ‘owned’ by the partnership as a whole, which will identify who does what and when, and include a timetable for the interim review, final evaluation and legacy planning.

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**Phase 2: Mid-Delivery review and legacy planning.** This will take stock of progress and provide a critical assessment which will identify what has worked well and what has worked less well and why, across the breadth of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs activities. It will assess individual project outputs and likely outcomes in relation to the Scheme aims, HLF’s programme priorities and the wider aspirations or expectations of partners and stakeholders. It will consider any changes needed in delivery and management during the second half of the scheme, provide new impetus to the work that remains and feed in to Chalk, Cherries and Chairs’ own planning for legacy.

**Phase 3: End-of-Scheme evaluation.** This will lead to a Final Evaluation Report which will include: an updated M&E strategy which will be used as the basis for recording and reporting progress through the life of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. This will be part of a wider M&E strategy incorporating a revised framework document ‘owned’ by the partnership as a whole, which will identify who does what and when, and include a timetable for the interim review, final evaluation and legacy planning.

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Section seven:
Legacy
Legacy

Nick Marriner • Landscape Partnership Development Officer, CCB

Starting with the end in mind

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs sets out to deliver a wide-ranging and exciting set of outcomes that will achieve a step change in the scale of delivery of conservation activity and the number of people engaged and caring for the Natural and Cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns.

The previous section on monitoring and evaluation set out how the outcomes of all the projects together will deliver more than their individual sums towards the HLF Outcomes for Landscape Partnership Schemes. This section looks at how the long-term legacy of the Scheme will be secured.

The post-delivery maintenance and continued use of outputs, resources and digital media produced by the projects has been considered and a plan is in place to maintain them and ensure that they continue to be used by and are accessible to a wide audience.

Each project will carry its own legacy as set down in the summary project plan in Part 2 of this LCAP. These legacies are tailored to each project and audience and will build on the enduring benefits that Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will leave.

The legacy of the Scheme as a whole is to seek to change the way in which the Central Chilterns does its business. To achieve this, a collaborative approach will be driven throughout the delivery phase. This will demand a fundamental shift in the way in which organisations with an interest in creating a thriving Central Chilterns landscape are challenged, supported and/or created to widen the scope of their work and the audiences they work with, and to develop their organisational capacity.

The following offers a summary of the legacy vision for Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, with examples of ways in which it will be built into the delivery of the Scheme.

The legacy of the Scheme as a whole is to seek to change the way in which the Central Chilterns does its business.

Agreeing a common set of Heritage priorities for the Chilterns

The new Chilterns AONB Management Plan (2019-2024) has been developed in tandem with Chalk, Cherries and Chairs and sets a strategic framework for the Chilterns. Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will bring to life the aspirations of the Management Plan, increasing commitment to creating and tackling shared priorities on a landscape scale. By engaging with a wider range of partners, stakeholders, volunteers and new audiences:

- Specific strategic priorities for the area will be agreed
- Opportunities to secure new sources of long-term funding will be identified
- Common approaches to engaging with new audiences will be tested
- A wide range of opportunities for people to engage will be created.

In addition, we will support and influence key decision makers in partner organisations to place greater priority on the Chilterns in their respective strategic planning, decision-making and resource prioritisation processes.

Lessons learned during the delivery phase will directly inform the production of the 2025-2030 Chilterns AONB Management Plan (which will be published in 2024) meaning that the legacy of the Scheme will directly influence long-term planning across the whole of the Chilterns AONB.

Planning and making key decisions together

It is already clear that there is an appetite among partners to work together to build on the work delivered by Chalk, Cherries and Chairs. It will take time to engage all partners, create a common understanding, generate trust and give confidence for them to commit to new ways of working. Capacity has been built into projects and staff roles to deliver this.

For example, a Natural Heritage Advisory Group will be established, consisting of LPS staff and project partners, to ensure strategic and operational connections are made both between projects and with the wider work delivered in the Scheme area. This Group will work closely with the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership to establish a two-way sharing of best practice.
Developing local Community Groups

Practical support will be offered to Community Groups to strengthen their organisational capacity, policies and processes to help them become more resilient and self-sufficient. Community Groups will be offered support, training and advice for:

- Governance improvements (e.g. financial management, appointment of trustees)
- Volunteer recruitment, support and management
- Communications (use of websites and social media)
- Shared buying and use of tools, equipment and training
- Compliance (GDPR regulations, HR processes, financial reporting).

Support will be offered through a package offered directly by Community Impact Bucks (which specialises in this area of work), sharing best practice, and input from LPS staff.

Building strong local groups that work together

Supporting neighbouring and like-minded landowners, interest groups and community organisations to work together more collaboratively is key to achieving long term legacy. This will be done in both structured and informal ways by establishing:

- Farmer clusters. Local groups of farmers working together to deliver projects, share resources, find solutions to specific issues and access funding such as the Facilitation Fund
- Groups of like-minded organisations such as Golf Clubs, Churches, Orchard Groups and wider local Community Groups to share best practice and ways of working together

The Scheme will work in innovative ways to engage a broader and more diverse audience who will develop a greater awareness, appreciation and understanding of the area’s heritage.

Central Chilterns heritage for a new generation

Audience development research has highlighted high levels of engagement in the Central Chilterns landscape from traditional sections of communities and in established activities. However, there are low levels of engagement among specific younger and more diverse demographic groups and in population centres such as High Wycombe and Aylesbury.

The Scheme will work in innovative ways to engage a broader and more diverse audience who will develop a greater awareness, appreciation and understanding of the area’s heritage. It will equip them with new skills, knowledge, confidence and opportunities to
New and exciting partnerships will be established by working with non-traditional community groups, to create a wider platform for future projects.

New and exciting partnerships will be established by working with non-traditional community groups, to create a wider platform for future projects – changing forever the range of audiences engaging in the Central Chilterns.

**Attracting new sources of income**

The Legacy Plan focuses on stronger partnerships, clarity of purpose, collaboration and increased capacity to deliver. This will develop a foundation for accessing new and additional sources of funding and resources to support long-term delivery including:

- Work with landowners to secure and/or extend agri-environment schemes
- New opportunities for partnership funding from trusts and foundations
- Opportunities for collaborative approaches to new funding bodies across heritage themes
- Opportunities to prioritise existing resources on specific projects and/or sites

**Developing best practice and testing new ideas**

During the delivery phase many important strategic documents, each seeking to address similar issues as Chalk, Cherries and Chairs, will be reviewed and rewritten:

- Chilterns AONB Management Plan (2025-30)
- Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership:
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Green Infrastructure Plan
- Many Local and Neighbourhood Plans

Transferring learning and incorporating new ways of working and best practice into such plans will embed Chalk, Cherries and Chairs into a wider legacy across the whole Chilterns and Buckinghamshire.

**Making it happen – driving legacy from day one**

Accountability for legacy delivery will lie with the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Steering Group. Legacy planning will be a standing agenda item and a Steering Group member will be appointed as Legacy Champion to ensure all areas of the Legacy Plan are being delivered and progress is regularly reviewed.

Responsibility for the delivery of legacy will lie within the job descriptions and work programmes of staff and project partners. This will form part of the work programmes for specific roles both within the core LPS team and/or staff appointed by Delivery Partners.

Chalk, Cherries and Chairs will achieve a step change in the scale of conservation activity and the number of people engaged and caring for the heritage of the Central Chilterns.