

Caring for the Chilterns forever & for everyone

An introduction to the Chilterns
Area of Outstanding Natural
Beauty Management Plan
2019-2024

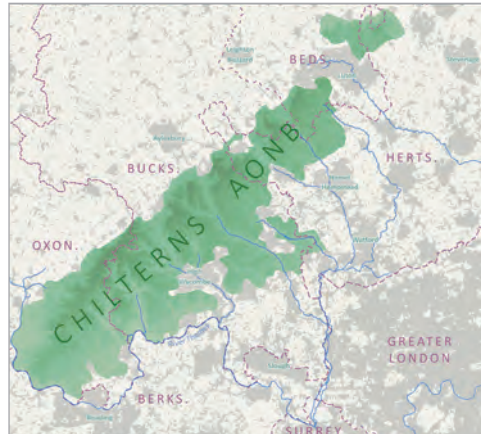


CHILTERNS
CONSERVATION BOARD

www.chilternsaonb.org/management-plan

About the Chilterns

The Chilterns is a landscape of remarkable beauty and distinctive character with a unique interaction of geological, ecological and cultural heritage features. Designation of the Chilterns as an AONB was in 1965, with an extension in 1990. It now extends over 833km² of mainly privately-owned land. The Chilterns is a home and a workplace for over 80,000 people and some 1.6 million people live within 8km of the AONB.



Introduction to the Management Plan

The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is nationally protected as one of the finest areas of countryside in the UK. To help look after this special landscape, The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) created a duty to produce a plan for the management of the AONB.

This leaflet introduces the Plan, its vision for the Chilterns and some of the issues that its policies and actions are tackling.

What does the Management Plan address?

Some of the questions the Management Plan addresses include:

- How to ensure that unprecedented development does not damage wildlife and fragile habitats such as chalk streams
- How to ensure the Chilterns remains a healthy landscape with a viable rural economy
- How to respond to environmental problems such as climate change and loss of pollinators
- How to ensure more people understand and enjoy the Chilterns
- How to get more people to benefit from the recreation and nature on their doorsteps

How will the Plan be delivered?

The implementation of the Chilterns AONB Management Plan will require the efforts of many organisations, businesses and individuals. Partnership working across the Chilterns, a strengthened designation and greater resources are all required to ensure the Chilterns are conserved and enhanced for future generations.

About the Chilterns Conservation Board

The Chilterns Conservation Board was established by Parliamentary Order in 2004 to:

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Chilterns; and
- Increase the understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities

In fulfilling these purposes, the Board has a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

Who is the Plan for?

This Management Plan helps all those with a responsibility for the AONB care for it, for current and future generations. The plan provides guidance and policies for everyone with an interest in, or responsibility for, the Chilterns. That includes all those organisations and individuals who manage or have an influence over land in the area, as well as those who live, work and enjoy leisure time here.



A Vision for the Chilterns AONB

The Management Plan is based on a vision that the Chilterns will be cared for, forever and for everyone. To achieve this vision, the CCB advocates that:

1. All special qualities and natural resources of the Chilterns will be protected forever for everyone, current and future generations
2. The wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns have an intrinsic value that will be preserved and restored
3. The landscape is designated for the nation and will be protected by the nation
4. To ensure its future care, more people need to understand the value of the Chilterns as a unique and special landscape, of national and international significance
5. The Chilterns provides a valuable resource for the enjoyment, health and wellbeing of a significant proportion of the country's population
6. The landscape is a place where many people live and work, where community facilities must be retained to foster sustainable, vibrant communities
7. Viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors are essential to conserve and enhance the wildlife and natural beauty of the Chilterns, and public benefits of land management are supported by public funding
8. As one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe, more people should use the Chilterns for quiet recreation, especially the 1.6 million people who live within 8km of the boundary and the adjacent urban populations, with carefully managed access to ensure the special qualities are protected
9. Those who live in or near, make a living from, visit and love the Chilterns are encouraged to help care for it
10. Given the Chilterns is already more developed than most protected landscapes and given the potential benefit of the landscape to millions, there should be no major development in the AONB; only the most essential development should take place and where it takes place, there should be no adverse impact on landscape, special qualities or access, and it should deliver an environmental net gain

The special qualities of the Chilterns AONB

These are some of the special features that the Management Plan aims to conserve and enhance:

THE AONB CONTAINS A RICH MOSAIC of chalk escarpment, woodlands, commons, tranquil valleys, ancient routes, chalk streams, attractive villages, flower-rich downland and prehistoric features.

The Chilterns AONB was designated for the **NATURAL BEAUTY** of its landscape. The term 'natural beauty' refers not only to the scenic beauty of its countryside but to the other elements which together create the special character of the Chilterns, including its wildlife, history and cultural heritage.



64 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, three National Nature Reserves and three European-designated Special Areas of Conservation demonstrate **THE AREA'S IMPORTANCE FOR WILDLIFE.**



23% OF THE AONB IS COVERED IN WOODLAND, 55% of that is ancient woodland, and it also has a nationally important concentration of chalk grassland.



With **OVER 55 MILLION LEISURE VISITS** a year the Chilterns is one of the **MOST POPULAR LANDSCAPES IN THE UK**, yet offers;



Relative **TRANQUILLITY AND PEACE** on the doorstep of ten million people, one of the most accessible protected landscapes in Europe; relatively dark skies, of great value to human and wildlife health; unspoilt countryside, secret corners and a surprising sense of remoteness.



Securing the Chilterns for Future Generations

We have set out a number of ambitions to tackle the key issues facing the area and care for the AONB. These include, but are not limited to:

Nature

- Ensure that spaces for wildlife are expanded, well connected, well managed and diverse
- Increase the range and abundance of populations of key wildlife species
- Ensure that chalk habitat management in the Chilterns is widely considered an exemplar of best practice
- Secure greater protection for chalk streams as a globally rare habitat
- Encourage people from different organisations, communities and backgrounds, to work together to 'make space for nature' in the Chilterns

Historic Environment

- Better protect the Chilterns historic environment, both designated and unprotected heritage assets
- Seek new discoveries of unknown heritage assets and improve understanding of those already identified, to reveal the significance of the historic environment and cultural heritage of the Chilterns
- Increase the knowledge and enjoyment of Chilterns heritage and culture by local residents, visitors and the wider public, and bring a love of heritage to wider society

Land Woodland & Water

- Protect and, where degraded, improve the Chilterns' natural capital resources, including soils, water, clean air, plant and animal life
- Ensure that the Chilterns remain a functional, working landscape with viable, sustainable and diverse farming, forestry and rural economy sectors
- Safeguard the Chilterns landscape by maintaining and enhancing all landscape features (such as hedges and trees), important wildlife habitats and cultural heritage at all times
- Increase resilience to and effective management of pests, diseases, non-native invasive species and climate change
- Achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for the Chilterns water environment – rivers, valleys, wetlands and other riparian habitats
- Ensure that those who work in the landscape, local and national policy makers, and the public, understand the link between environmentally sustainable farming, forestry, rural economy sectors and a healthy Chilterns AONB

Enjoyment & Understanding

- Secure national recognition and greater resources for the wealth of accessible recreational opportunities the Chilterns countryside offers to residents and visitors
- Ensure more high-quality opportunities for outdoor recreation, life-long learning and volunteering for all
- Ensure more people can enjoy healthier and happier lives by enjoying the Chilterns
- Make more people aware of what makes the Chilterns special and encourage them to help care for it and contribute to its protection. Inspire young people to build a lasting interest in the Chilterns
- Encourage greater use of the Chilterns countryside by those from surrounding urban communities who currently have little connection with the AONB

Social & Economic Wellbeing

- Increase the economic and social wellbeing of local communities and businesses by supporting the development of the visitor economy and improving community facilities

- Ensure that the Chilterns AONB is recognised and valued by residents, visitors and the health sector for the contribution it makes to peoples' physical and mental health, offering connection with nature and a wide variety of recreational opportunities
- Ensure that the natural capital of the Chilterns and its contribution to society is understood and valued by all decision makers and used to lever funding
- Ensure that businesses and communities in and around the AONB value its special qualities, support initiatives and help raise the profile of the area

Development

- Ensure planning decisions put the conservation and enhancement of the AONB first
- Ensure that where development happens, it leaves the AONB better than it was before – richer in wildlife, quieter, darker at night, designed to have a low impact on the environment, and beautiful to look at and enjoy
- Embrace opportunities to restore natural beauty on sites currently degraded by unsympathetic development, infrastructure or dereliction

HOW CAN YOU HELP *Care for the Chilterns?*

We are asking everyone who cares for the Chilterns AONB – residents, visitors, nature lovers, farmers and businesses – to help achieve the ambitions in this Plan. As an individual you can ...

VOLUNTEER for the CCB or the wildlife and conservation charities working in the Chilterns



REDUCE your **ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT** by saving water, recycling and car-sharing

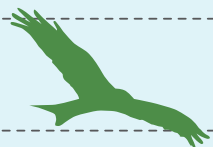


Ask your employer to offer employee **VOLUNTEERING IN THE CHILTERNS**

DONATE TO LOCAL WILDLIFE and conservation charities caring for Chilterns habitats and nature



Please do not feed the **RED KITES**



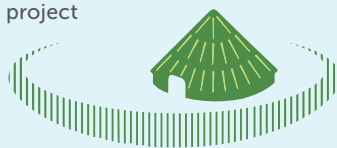
TAKE TWO – each time you take a walk in the Chilterns, pick up and **DISPOSE** of two pieces of **RUBBISH**, however small. If we all did it, it would make a huge difference!



MAKE YOUR GARDEN POLLINATOR FRIENDLY and plant native shrubs and flowers to help them: create a 'Say no to the mow' patch. Let the grass and wildflowers hidden in your grass grow up and provide food for bees and butterflies



Get involved with the **BEACONS OF THE PAST HILLFORTS** project or the **CHALK CHERRIES & CHAIRS** Landscape Partnership project



Buy local – **SUPPORT LOCAL PRODUCERS** and **FARMERS**, and cut down on intensively-farmed meat



Read the **CHILTERNS DESIGN GUIDE** if you're thinking about undertaking a home improvement project



Use your **RIGHTS OF WAY** (footpaths, cycleways and bridleways) and let your local Rights of Way officer know if you find a problem

