



Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Historic Environment Action Plans

Area 11: Downland Hills










This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans.

The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics. These summaries are divided into two groups:

1. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by area
2. Summaries of the historic environment of the AONB by theme

These core documents are accompanied by documents which provide background information, supplementary information and detail on the methodologies used to create these documents.

A series of icons help you navigate this suite of documents:

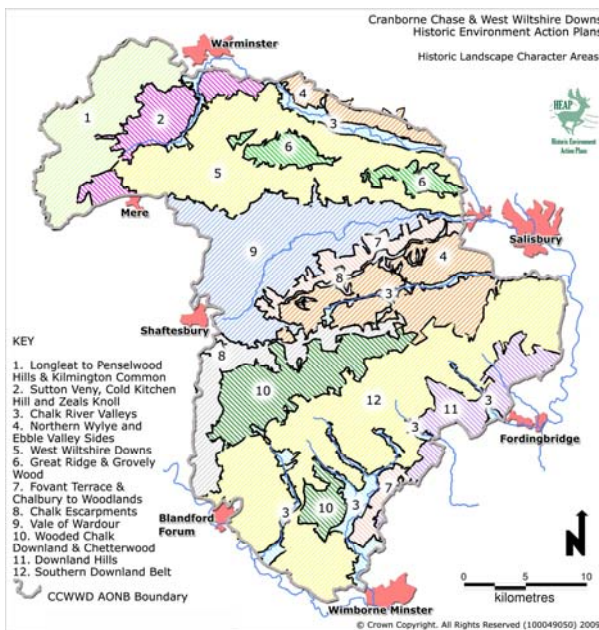
-  **Background** - Provides an introduction to the AONB Historic Environment Action Plans and provides background information on the history and archaeology of the landscape **(B1 to B10)**
-  **Area** - Summarises key characteristics of discrete geographical areas within the AONB, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each area and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(A1 to A12)**
-  **Theme** - Summarises key characteristics of historic environment themes, each document then sets out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of each theme and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance its characteristics **(T1 to T14)**
-  **Supplementary** - A series of documents which explore supplementary issues of relevance to the Historic Environment Action Plans **(S1 to S2)**
-  **Method** - Introduces the methodology behind the production of the Historic Environment Action Plans **(M1 to M3)**



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**Introducing the Historic Landscape Character Areas**



Twelve distinct Historic Landscape Character Areas have been identified in the AONB. The attributes used to identify the Historic Landscape Character Areas was based on information in the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation. The HLC provided two key pieces of information:

1. The present day historic landscape character present in the AONB.
2. The surviving evidence of the historical development of the area.

The following descriptions aim to provide an overview of each area

which encapsulates the main features of the Historic Environment present and include both the archaeological and historical, the very old and the more recent.

**M2**

The process through which the Historic Landscape Character Areas were identified, and mapped, and the sources of information used to create these descriptions is documented in the methodological statement 'Creating and Describing Historic Character Areas'.

**Location, Geology, Land Use and Topography**

Area 11 is in the southeast of the AONB to the west of Fordingbridge, cut by three chalk streams (see Area 3E and Area 3F; and Sweatford Water). The character of the area is critically related to the countless attributes in the neighbouring areas. The surrounding border landscapes right around the AONB are also obviously of huge

relevance. The northern edge of the area meets the southern downland belt (see Area 12). This is a landscape of gentle chalk slopes, shelving in places and becoming steeper to the west. Land cover is predominantly arable with some pasture on slopes leading towards the river valleys with some remnants of unimproved chalk grassland. There is a strong wooded character especially in the southern half of the area with scattered areas of woodland.

**Location Map**

AREA ELEVEN

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## Summary

### Summary of Key Characteristics

- *A mosaic of pre 1800 veteran woodland, pre 1800 fields and assarts interspersed with small parks.*
- *Ancient parish boundaries take an east west slice across the landscape.*
- *Concentration of Medieval deer parks.*
- *Concentration of historic parks and gardens.*
- *Roman villa at Rockbourne which is open to the public.*
- *Prehistoric monument complex at Damerham.*

### Summary of Statement of Significance

- *Significant survival of historic landscape types including pre 1800 fields and ancient woodlands, although the coherence of these features as a group is not as strong as in other areas*
- *Visible time depth present in the form of traces of older enclosure and medieval deer parks*
- *Significant aesthetic value to historic parks and gardens present*
- *Fairly significant historical and evidential value especially at Rockbourne Roman Villa and the new prehistoric sites at Damerham*

### Summary of Forces for Change

- Changes in Agriculture and Farming
- Changes in Settlement and Infrastructure Development
- Changes in the Natural Environment
- Changes in Climate
- Changes in Land Holdings



### Summary of State of the Historic Environment

- The coherence of the historic landscape characteristics of this area has declined over the last 100 years.
- However the area retains a strong sense of time depth and there are a range of pre 1800 landscape types present including pre 1800 enclosure and woodland.
- There is a lack of information on the extent of archaeological sites in woodland, under the plough and on the character of vernacular architecture which needs to be addressed.

### Summary of Historic Environment Actions

- *ACTION 1: Provide an AONB wide synthesis of the distinctive character of historic settlements.*
- *ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways*
- *ACTION 5: Reduce unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments*
- *ACTION 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads*
- *ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area*
- *ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings*
- *ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.*
- *ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.*
- *ACTION 17: Improve management of historic boundaries and ensure they are retained*
- *ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management*

### Linkages to other Historic Landscape Character Statements

This statement forms one of 12 Historic Landscape Character Area statements which cover the whole of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These are accompanied by AONB wide Historic Landscape Character Theme statements. These documents together build up a picture of the key characteristics of the Historic Environment of the AONB at a landscape scale.

Other Historic Landscape Character Areas adjacent to this area are:

A3

A7

A12

Area 3: Chalk River Valleys

Area 7: Parliamentary Patterns on the Fovant Terrace and between Chalbury and Woodlands

Area 12: Southern Downland Belt

Historic Landscape Character Themes (HLCT) of particular relevance to this area are:

T3

T4

T8

T10

T11

T13

Theme 3: Fields in the Landscape

Theme 4: Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

Theme 8: Landscapes of Prehistory

Theme 10: Routeways in the Landscape

Theme 11: Settlement in the Landscape

Theme 13: Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

## History and Context

This area is on the far eastern edge of the Medieval hunting area of the Cranborne Chase. The rights to hunt on the Chase first came into Crown hands during the reign of William I and during the Medieval period they passed between the Crown and magnates close to the Crown. During the whole of the Medieval period the Chase rights were imposed across the whole of the Chase bounds which placed restrictions on the amount of enclosure which could occur in this area.

The pre 1800 enclosures are probably derived from the piecemeal and ad hoc enclosure of formerly open land and the clearance of wooded areas. In general, they fossilise few traces of previous land uses suggesting their possible antiquity. They are also associated with a concentration of pre 1800 settlement, and old routeways. These are overlain by 19<sup>th</sup> century Parliamentary enclosure. These Parliamentary enclosures consolidated strips in the open fields into more compact units, and enclosed much of the remaining pasture commons or wastes. Parliamentary enclosures usually provided commoners with some other land in compensation for the loss of common rights, although often of poor quality and limited extent.

B2

*See Background Paper 2 for an overview of the archaeology and history of the AONB by time period.*

B6

See Background Paper 6 for an overview of the key historical figures associated with the AONB.

B7

See Background Paper 7 for an overview of Major historical events trends and fashions and their impact on the AONB.

## Key Secondary Sources

The main source of detail on the historic landscape is the AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation. The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation is the main source of information on the historic landscape of the AONB and is available at [www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk).

The main archaeological record for the area is the county based Historic Environment Record in Dorset and the Sites and Monuments Record in Wiltshire.

Information on the listed buildings in the area is available from English Heritage's Listed Buildings Online <http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk>.

Information on historic farm buildings in the area is only available at the scale of National Character Area as part of English Heritage's preliminary characterisation of historic farmsteads.

Rolland Gant's book *Dorset Villages* (1980) provides a useful potted history of the villages in this area in Dorset.

Nearly all parishes in the AONB have had parish histories created for them and these are available from the relevant county reference library.

Information on nationally important historic parks and gardens in the AONB are available from the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens.

Information on the Prehistoric sites found at Damerham can be found at [www.damerhamarchaeology.org](http://www.damerhamarchaeology.org). Excavations of a Bronze Age Round Barrow by Proudfoot in 1959 of a barrow at Edmondsham were published in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 13: 395-425

Information on the woodland in the area can be found in the AONB booklet 'A landscape view of trees and woodland' (2010).

B10

A full list of References is provided in Background Paper 10.

## Landscape Scale Characteristics and Components

### Ancient Boundaries and Land Ownership

- The ancient parish boundaries run northeast - southwest across this area. These parishes continue beyond the AONB's eastern border, providing each parish with a slice of heathland, woodland and fields.



- Crossed by the ancient shire boundary and is associated with a 'gate' place name.
- Grim's Dyke borders the north of area 11 and runs through it heading directly south to Whitsbury earthworks. Grim's Ditch has long been associated with land ownership, possibly representing a Bronze Age (Ranch Boundary). There are suggestions that these ranch boundaries continued into the Iron Age and it may prove that the land it enclosed formed the basis of the Rockbourne Villa Estate.

T1

See 'Ancient Boundaries and Landownership' for more information on this theme

### Farms and Farming in the Landscape

- A historic mixed pattern of arable and grassland.
- There is a fairly dense pattern of historic farm complexes on the edge of existing historic settlements. These were infilled by more isolated 19<sup>th</sup> century farms.
- There is a medium survival of pre 1750 farmstead buildings, but brick farm buildings dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century predominate.

T2

See "Farms and Farming" for more information on this theme.

### Fields in the Landscape

- There is a dense pattern of ancient prehistoric fields in evidence on the thin soils of the chalk hills, and evidence of Bronze Age field systems was uncovered on the site of the Ancient technology Centre in Cranborne.
- Pre 1800 fields are common but the landscape is a much more fragmented landscape with some 19<sup>th</sup> century fields which contain traces of earlier boundaries

T3

See 'Fields in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape

- Concentration of smaller parks and gardens including locally listed parks.
- The known archaeological record contains many records relating to boundary features, deer parks and features associated with historic parks and gardens.
- Concentration of Medieval deer parks on the edge of the Chase.

T4

See 'Historic Parks and Gardens in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Hunting Landscapes

- The area is on the edge of the Cranborne Chase, and on the edge of Alderholt Walk.

T5

See 'Hunting Landscapes' for more information on this theme.

**Industry in the Landscape**

- The Downland Hills have a long association with 'brick and tile' works, 'domestic, decorated and fancy' pottery wares, 'pipe making', extensive 'coppice working' (thatching spars, brooms, fencing and hurdling), and milling by wind and water.

T6

See 'Industry' in the Landscape for more information on this theme.

**Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence**

- N/A

T7

See 'Landscapes of Militarism, Commemoration & Defence' for more information on this theme.

**Landscapes of Prehistory**

- There are only a few Prehistoric find spots and sites recorded in the county of the SMR
- There are several round barrows and an Iron Age hillfort.
- This pattern has been dramatically changed by the recent discovery of a Prehistoric complex of monuments outside Damerham including two newly discovered Long Barrows.

T8

See 'Landscapes of Prehistory' for more information on this theme.

**Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century activity in the Landscape**

- N/A

**Open Land**

- Pockets of scrub and rough grazing survive.

T9

See 'Open Land' for more information on this theme.

**Routeways in the Landscape**

- Dense network of footpaths, including sunken lanes hedged on both sides.
- Crossed north east - south west by the old turnpike leading south from Salisbury avoiding the Cranborne Chase.

T10

See 'Routeways in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

**Settlement in the Landscape**

- The known archaeology in this area is dominated by Medieval and Post Medieval sites, including settlement.

- Nucleated pattern of pre 1800 settlement which has been infilled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Linear settlements on northern edge of Whitsbury and Rockbourne. These are interspersed with isolated 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings.
- Buildings are commonly red brick with white render, and cob also common. Many buildings are thatched.
- There are four Conservation Areas.



See 'Settlement in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Water in the Landscape

- The area contains small areas of water meadows which comprise a series of complex and sophisticated bedworks, which used a system of weirs, hatches, channels and drains to drown the meadows. The channels are especially noticeable in low light or when the meadows flood in winter.



See 'Water in the Landscape' for more information on this theme.

### Woodland and Trees in the Landscape

- One of the most wooded areas in the AONB. The area, in terms of its woodlands, exhibits a transition from the open downland in its northern half to the woodlands of the southern half. The larger woodlands of the Downland Hills are broad leaved and mixed and a large proportion (over 70%) were present prior to 1750.
- On the Downland Hills, particularly in the area to the north east of the Allen Valley in the vicinity of the Bokerley Dyke plantation, there has been noticeable woodland reduction during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The north western edge of the area has seen the creation of small linear blocks of woodland that are predominantly coniferous. The pattern of small irregular fields with interspersed copses in the area around Lopshill suggests that there was early piecemeal clearance of woodland in this area interspersed with common land.
- Sunken lanes with overhanging trees contribute to the wooded appearance of this character area.
- Bouldsbury Wood SSSI is perhaps the best example of the Medieval woodland of this area. A nationally important woodland complex consisting of a number of separate broadleaved woodlands, together with areas replanted with conifers.
- The area is exceptionally rich in veteran and ancient trees of all species.



See 'Woods and Trees in the Landscape' for more information about this theme'



## Statement of Significance

### Introduction

The area is highly significant both in terms of the presence of pre 1800 historic landscape character, the visibility of time depth in the landscape and the richness of the built and designed landscape.

### Coherence, Local Distinctiveness, Rarity, and Time Depth

The wider landscape character of this area is fairly coherent; and includes the relationship between pre 1800 fieldscapes, pockets of scrub and rough grazing, ancient woodland and historic routeways. This contributes to a strong feeling of local distinctiveness, but these patterns are not as coherent as in other areas of the landscape due to the presence of 19<sup>th</sup> century fields which have obscured early land uses.

The two designed landscapes in this area are visually dominant and coherent features which contribute immensely to the sense of place. These are associated with nationally important built heritage.

Rich pattern of locally distinctive vernacular architecture related to settlements which have maintained their historic form.

Fairly visible and generally clearly understandable time depth is present in this area, including traces of pre 1800 fields modified in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Patterns within the archaeological resource are generally less coherent, being hidden in woodland or visible only as crop marks.

### Typical Surviving Components of the Area

- Ancient parish and county boundary.
- Pre 1800 fields are common but the landscape is a much more fragmented landscape with some 19<sup>th</sup> century fields.
- Concentration of smaller parks and gardens.
- Pockets of scrub and rough grazing survive.
- Dense network of historic routeways.
- Nucleated pattern of pre 1800 settlement which has been infilled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- One of the most wooded areas in the AONB, including ancient woodland.

### Nationally Protected Heritage



See Background Paper 8 'Designated Heritage Assets' in the AONB for an introduction to nationally designated heritage.

There are a very low number and density of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (6) compared with other areas. The majority of these are located in the woodlands. There

are several hillforts, Roman sites including Rockbourne Roman villa, and linear ditches known as dykes.

There are 100 listed buildings, a medium number compared to other areas in the AONB. These are associated with the historic settlements and historic parks and gardens. There are 6 Grade II\* buildings including a church, farmhouse, barn and monument.

There are 2 Grade II registered parks and gardens. Breamore is an 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape park and Boveridge has late 19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century formal gardens.

There are four Conservation Areas.

### Archaeological Fieldwork in the AONB



See Background Paper 3 'History of Archaeological Discovery in the AONB' for more information on this topic.

Large scale excavation of the Rockbourne, or West Park, Roman Villa from 1942 onwards.

The most recently instigated research project in the AONB. 'The Damerham Archaeology Project' has stemmed from the discovery of two previously unknown Neolithic long barrows and other Prehistoric features in the parish of Damerham.

### Evidential Value

There has been no systematic study of archaeological fieldwork in this area. Where information is available the county Historical Environment Records amongst other sources indicate features including:

- Archaeological sites:
  - Seven Bronze Age round barrows
  - Medieval deer park
  - Roman villa
  - Undated circular features, linear features and enclosures
  - Extensive undated field systems

Sites under woodland and in pasture tend to exist as earthworks; many others only exist as cropmarks.

- There are 57 find spots.
- Living archaeology associated with ancient woodlands, ancient boundaries and Medieval deer parks including veteran trees and ancient pollards.
- Ancient routeways.
- Historic settlement pattern and rich architectural history including:
  - Great houses and their associated buildings.

- Vernacular architecture including cottages.
- Historic farmhouses and buildings.
- Historic churches and associated monuments.

The key to the unique historic landscape character of the area is the fragmented nature of the landscape with a notable contrast between areas of ancient woodland, open land and pre 1800 enclosure and areas of more regular 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure.

### Historical Value

#### *Illustrative Value*

Prehistoric monuments, and Iron Age hillforts existing as visible earthworks.

Rockbourne Roman Villa is a legible reminder of the legacy of Roman presence in Britain.

Highly legible post dissolution pattern of landownership can be used to illustrate the rise of the new peers, landed gentry and yeoman classes AD 1600-1800.

The great houses established in the centre of parkland can be used to illustrate the way landowners expressed their status and wealth between 1600 and 1900.

The lasting legacy of war graves and memorials provide a visible link to the First and Second World Wars.

#### *Associative Value*

The gardens at Boveridge House are associated with Thomas Mawson (1861-1933) British garden designer, and the planting scheme with Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932).

### Aesthetic Value

The aesthetic value of the landscape is derived from the juxtaposition between ancient land uses such as ancient woodland, pre 1800 fields, and ancient assarts and other features such as Medieval deer park pales.

The designed landscapes of Breamore and Boveridge have value in their formal design.

### Communal Value

The villages in this area are strong vibrant communities. A snapshot of heritage which is valued by local people can be seen from available local parish plans:

- Alderholt Parish Plan (Alderholt Parish Council 2006 *Alderholt Parish Plan* East Dorset District Council) highlights the importance of the Alderholt walk to the history of the parish and the influence of estate style emanating from Cranborne.



- Breamore Village Design Statement identifies the lack of 20<sup>th</sup> century change and the timeless quality as key characteristics of this village. Other important features identified by the villagers include the relationship between the key buildings in the village, the rural nature of the roads, the large number of timber framed buildings, historic farm buildings, large number of thatched buildings and original building features such as windows and the village stocks. (Breamore Parish Council 2000 *Breamore Village Design Statement* Breamore Parish Council).

## State of the Historic Environment

### Introduction

The coherence of the historic landscape characteristics of this area has declined over the last 100 years. However the area retains a strong sense of time depth and there are a range of pre 1800 landscape types present, including pre 1800 enclosure and woodland. There is a lack of information on the extent of archaeological sites in woodland, under the plough, and on the character of vernacular architecture which needs to be addressed.

### Current Knowledge

A few sites in the area have been subject to detailed archaeological survey and analysis but there are also, significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of this area:

- The extent of archaeological sites concealed within the areas of veteran woodland.
- There has not been a systematic assessment of aerial photographs of the area and it is therefore likely that other features remain to be discovered.
- Building records for the area are sparse, especially in relation to the character of historic farmsteads.
- There have not been any systematic surveys of the features associated with ancient county boundaries and ancient parish boundaries, or any studies of their interrelationships.

The AONB Historic Landscape Characterisation has revealed the character of the wider historic landscape, but further information is required on the history and development of the landscape prior to the creation of 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure.

The area is associated with a dense historic pattern of rights of ways but the historic characteristics of all the routeways have not been systematically recorded.

### Existing Levels of Protection and Heritage at Risk

Only one SAM is at high risk. The SAMs in this area are under threat from scrub and tree growth, and animal burrowing (English Heritage at Risk Register 2009). This is indicative of the risk to the wider known archaeological record.

The four conservation areas have Conservation Area Appraisals.

### Loss and Condition

Over the past 100 years there has been an erosion of historic landscape character as existing field patterns have been subdivided, especially in the northern part of the area. However pockets of pristine fields do survive. Some of these fields are in arable production with a potential impact on buried archaeology.

The central part of the area has seen considerable loss of woodland. There has also been some change in woodland composition to conifers, but this is much more restricted than in other areas.

The historic parks and gardens in the area are in good condition and in active management.

The state of the wider built heritage in the area is unknown, but as many of the known listed features are either in active management as part of designed landscapes or as residential dwellings, it can be postulated that the condition of most buildings is good. The main risk being to any redundant farm buildings; features not in active management, such as milestones; or to features with high maintenance costs, such as churches.



*See Background Paper 4 for an overview of the change in land use patterns in the AONB.*

### Coherence

The designed landscapes in this area are the most coherent, accessible and easily appreciated features in the area. The pre 1800 characteristics of the landscape are also very coherent in places including, pre 1800 fieldscapes, ancient woodland and remnants of historic land use such as common land or downland. The historic features of the built environment associated with historic settlements and designed landscapes are very visible. However important archaeological sites and features in the area are not so easily appreciated being associated with woodland, or being under the plough.

### Forces for Change

#### *Overview of the sensitivities of the landscape area to change*

The most elevated parts of this area are often highly visible from adjacent landscapes and exhibit a high density of sensitive landscape features. For these reasons they are highly sensitive to change. Elsewhere in the farmland landscape the sense of scale is variable and localised, with variations in landform and land cover, including enclosed landscapes in the valleys. Sensitivity to change in these areas is judged to be moderate-high.

For more information see “Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Landscape Sensitivity Study 2007”.

*Overview of forces for change operating on the historic environment*

## Theme 1: Agriculture and Farming

- Changes in stocking densities and grazing regimes have the potential to rapidly affect the appearance of this historic landscape. Small scale historic field patterns beyond downland areas could see changes in management and be merged. In addition archaeological monuments on surviving grassland need carefully planned grazing regimes if they are to remain free of scrub.
- Increased positive management of elements of the historic environment by landowners until 2013 as an increasing number of farmers enter agri-environment schemes for a 10 year period. Maintenance of current levels of agri-environment scheme monies would increase the numbers of land holdings undertaking positive management of historic environment assets. However the likely possibility of reduced levels of agri-environment money post 2013 could have a major impact on the positive management of archaeological sites and the wider historic landscape in the future.

## Theme 2: Climate Change

- Fewer frosts and drier summers, and the northward migration of pests and diseases, which may make it difficult to maintain traditional planting schemes in some historic gardens.
- Some historically authentic tree plantings may not be viable by the time they reach maturity.
- A possible increase in the frequency of extreme weather, or a change in its geographical distribution, which could pose an increased risk of damage to some historic landscapes and buildings as well as trees.
- An increased reliance on wood fuel might provide opportunities for the more active management of the woodland, thereby helping to protect archaeological remains; conversely increased woodland exploitation could intensify use of heavy machinery and increase woodland planting, providing a threat.
- Some micro-renewable energy solutions might be suitable to fit on historic buildings.
- Energy saving measures could detract from the historic character and fabric of buildings.

## Theme 4: Land Holdings in the AONB

- Erosion in the historic patterns of land holdings resulting from farm amalgamation and diversification and the further intensification of agriculture. Decrease in profitability of small land holdings could lead to neglect of small or marginal areas of the AONB. This would lead to the loss of key elements in the historic landscape, including fields, field boundaries, parish boundaries and trackways.
- Landscape scale legacy of the great estates remain visible. In some areas conservatism in land use practices is encouraged and tolerated by estates, through the use of covenants leading to the maintenance of historic landscape character.



**Theme 5: Natural Environment**

- Closer dialogue between historic and natural environment interests should lead to the design of initiatives that have mutual benefit. A better understanding of long term historical change may suggest potential for more innovative schemes that could include some reversion of intensively used land.

**Theme 7: Settlement and Infrastructure Development**

- Reuse of historic farmsteads provides increased opportunities for maintaining these structures that contribute much to the historic landscape character of the AONB as long as care is taken on the design of any conversions to retain original materials, openings and character. The creation of new farmyards with standardised farm buildings adjacent to the historic farmstead may lead to neglect of these historic assets or conversely to opportunities to ensure their future through well considered conversion.
- Continuance of the current road maintenance regime may lead to an increasing erosion of the historic character of rural roads. Alternatively the character of historic routeways could be improved through the implementation of rural roads protocol. The visual impact of overhead power lines on the historic landscape continues to be reduced by undergrounding.



*For more information see supplementary document "Forces for change operating on the historic environment of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB at a landscape scale and their past, current and future impacts".*

**Summary of Key Threats**

- Loss or damage to unknown archaeological and historical features in woodlands through forestry work and scrub encroachment.
- Loss or damage to buried archaeology through ploughing.
- Potential loss of historic farm buildings not in active management.
- Further loss of coherence of pre 1800 fieldscapes.

**Historic Environment Actions**

*See Background paper 9 for a full list of Historic Environment Actions.*

**ACTION 1: Provide an AONB wide synthesis of the distinctive character of historic settlements.**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** – Guiding change within the AONB's numerous historic villages is done best when there is an informed understanding of their particular development and character. Over half of the Conservation Areas in the AONB do not have a Conservation Area Appraisal, and there are only three Village Design Statements. Only one District has a design guide. This means that there is no easily available information source identifying the distinctive character of either individual settlements or the rural settlements of the AONB overall.

**The Potential Mechanism** – Characterisations of local settlements could be prepared to provide an accessible source of information on the historic characteristics of individual settlements and the range of characteristics found in the AONB's settlements as a whole to inform planning decisions and ensure that the distinctive character of the AONB settlements is conserved and enhanced.

### **ACTION 3: Identify and record components of historic highways**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The historic highways of the AONB are an under appreciated component of the environment of the AONB and there is no coherent approach to their management and maintenance. The forms of the numerous routeways that thread through the AONB's countryside, and the lines they take, reveal much about their complex history. They are often the means by which people still move around and appreciate the Area's landscape, but like all other parts they are subject to change and the erosion of character and fabric can lead to a loss of historic meaning. Although individual historic features associated with ancient highways, such as milestones, are recorded, the way that these features relate to each other, and the setting of the historic highways, is often ignored. This action would increase understanding, appreciation and knowledge of historic highways and by doing so ensure that their key features are retained and appropriately managed. This action is intended to draw attention to the issues at the same time as realising the potential of routeways to enhance people's enjoyment of the AONB.

**The Potential Mechanism** - attention could be focused initially on the droveways of the AONB as these represent some of the oldest routeways and are served by a good Rights of Way network. One possible Mechanism could be through the creation of self-guided trails.

### **ACTION 5: Reduce unintended/accidental damage to buried archaeology or extant monuments**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - Approximately 55% of the agricultural land in the AONB is cultivated. One result of this activity is the unintended damage and loss of buried archaeology. This is especially damaging in the AONB due to the complex archaeological remains which survived into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example prehistoric settlements set within extensive field systems. This damage can be mitigated against through advice to land owners delivered, in part, through agri-environment schemes. Another area where advice can be of assistance is in increasing awareness and appreciation of more recent components of the historic landscape such as historic field boundaries (see Action 17).

**The Potential Mechanism** - Examples from other areas in the country suggest that advice to landowners aimed at reducing damage is most effectively delivered by specialist advisors. Many local authorities maintain a Historic Environment Countryside Advisor Service (HECAS) to maximise the gain for the historic environment from the various schemes designed to support the environment and rural economy (Higher and Entry Level Environmental Stewardship, Woodland Grant Schemes the AONB's own Sustainability funding, etc). A HECAS officer can be crucial in transforming the potential of these schemes into reality and in so doing help a range of agencies achieve their wider aims with regard to managing and enhancing the historic

environment. In the CCWWD AONB it may be expected that a key role for a HECAS would be to provide targeted agri-environment advice aimed at reducing damage and loss of buried archaeology through ploughing.

#### **ACTION 6: Gain AONB wide coverage of mapping and interpretation of archaeological features from aerial photographs**

**The Threat and the Opportunity:** The buried or surviving archaeology of the AONB has never been systematically recorded from crop marks or earthworks displayed in aerial photographs. This means that there is potential for important archaeological sites to be damaged or inappropriately managed because they have not yet been recognised.

**The Potential Mechanism** - A mapping project for the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB could fill gaps in knowledge of plough damage sites, uncover new sites (through crop marks, earthwork patterns etc.), and spatially link known buried archaeology. The aim of English Heritage's National Mapping Programme (NMP) is to enhance the understanding of past human settlement, by providing primary information and synthesis for all archaeological sites and landscapes visible on aerial photographs, or other airborne remote sensed data.

#### **ACTION 10: Gain greater understanding of historic farm buildings and farmsteads**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - Historic farm buildings and farm complexes are a key feature of the locally distinctive vernacular architecture of the AONB. There is, however, a lack of information on the location and character of historic farm buildings in the AONB, including their types, ages, typical components, materials, the ways buildings and spaces like yards work together within farmsteads, and the ways they have changed in the last few decades.

**The Potential Mechanism** - The national farmstead characterisation work championed by English Heritage could be built on to fill gaps in our knowledge of historic farm buildings and thereby help to ensure that they are properly conserved and enhanced in the future, or to ensure that any reuse is undertaken sensitively and on the basis of full understanding of the original form and function of the structures and spaces. One approach would be to:

- Collate existing information and make it accessible
- Undertake additional research & survey

#### **ACTION 11: Enhance appreciation of the Prehistoric archaeology of the area**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - Although the Cranborne Chase is widely accepted in academic circles as containing internationally important complexes of Prehistoric archaeology, this is not widely appreciated by local people and visitors.

**The Potential Mechanism** - The lack of appreciation of the AONB's Prehistoric archaeology could be combated through the establishment of a series of self guided trails through which people could explore different aspects of the Prehistoric archaeology of the AONB.



**ACTION 12: Widen knowledge of ways and means of maintaining historic farm buildings**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The Historic Environment Action Plan Steering Group identified that although there had been some good examples of schemes which had reused historic farm buildings, while still maintaining their historic characteristics, these were not widely known.

**The Potential Mechanism** - Good examples of the maintenance and reuse of historic farm buildings could be celebrated and shared with Local Planning Authorities and land owners thereby helping to inspire the conservation and enhancement of other historic farm buildings and farmsteads.

**ACTION 15: Increase understanding of Medieval landscape elements of the AONB by academics, teachers and public.**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - There is perceived to be a lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the AONB's landscape: settlements, buildings, castles, fields, pastures, woodlands, roads, mills, hunting chase, parks, etc, all of which contribute greatly to the fabric and character of the AONB as it survives today.

**The Potential Mechanism** - The lack of appreciation of the Medieval components of the AONB landscape could be combated by a seminar and the creation of a research framework that encourages and sets out a range of achievable goals for further research in the area.

**ACTION 16: Make more widely available enhanced and targeted information on managing archaeology in woodland.**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - The Historic Environment Action Plan Steering Group felt that there was a lack of simple readily available information targeted at woodland owners to help them more effectively manage the heritage assets in their woodland. The use of the heavy machinery involved in woodland management and harvesting can be very damaging to archaeological remains and lack of awareness of issues amongst forestry operatives has so far been a major stumbling block.

**The Potential Mechanism** – Invest effort in improving working relationships between forestry operatives, managers and archaeologists. An information base could be created for forestry operatives to help them better conserve and enhance the archaeology of woodlands, including information on protected heritage, good practice, information sources and heritage grant schemes for woodland. This could be promoted through a training day.

**ACTION 17: Improve management of historic field boundaries and ensure they are retained**

**The Threat** - The historic fieldscapes of the AONB are key characteristics of the AONB landscape which are not at present subjected to integrated and holistic management. There has consequently been loss and gradual removal of the historic patterns of pre 1800 boundaries, including the distinctive pattern of small curving irregular fields

around the Donheads. Elsewhere older field boundaries have not been maintained and are either degrading or, if originally hedgerows are becoming overgrown.

**The Potential Mechanism** - This action would aim to halt the decline in the condition of particular field boundaries and the legibility of historic field patterns by providing training for agri-environment and other land management advisors. There is already much advice available on historic field boundary conservation (including implementation of the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations) and management, often generated via the HECAS officers mentioned under Action 5, but most of this is specific to the region's where it was generated. However, this material can be reviewed and tailored to suit the needs of the AONB once a clearer understanding has been gained of the character and needs of the field boundaries within the Area.

This material should then form the basis of training sessions for farmers and land managers working within the AONB. Involvement in such an initiative might be attractive to partners such as FWAG, the National Trust, Natural England and the local Wildlife Trusts.

#### **ACTION 19: Coordinate advice on historic parks and gardens management**

**The Threat and the Opportunity** - Historic parks and gardens are a key characteristic of the landscape of the AONB but some historic parks and gardens are under threat from lack of resources and inability to become involved in management schemes to conserve and enhance their key features.

**The Potential Mechanism** – An initial approach to this issue might be to provide the owners and managers of historic parks and gardens with advice and a readily accessible source of information on achievable best practice. Such material is available elsewhere in southern England (often generated by HECAS officers and usually based on carefully constructed Conservation Management Plans). This could be reviewed and tailored to the needs of the AONB as a whole and to particular parks and gardens as required. Registered Parks and Gardens and those that contain assets subject to other forms of designation (Scheduling, Listing, SSSIs, etc) should ideally be subjected to the preparation of a fully and carefully considered management plan.

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Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



## Historic Environment Action Plans

[www.historiclandscape.co.uk](http://www.historiclandscape.co.uk)

This document forms part of a suite of documents which together comprise the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB Historic Environment Action Plans, or HEAPs for short. The HEAPs provide a summary of the key characteristics of the historic environment of the AONB at a landscape scale, they then set out the significance, condition and forces for change affecting the historic fabric and character of this special landscape and identify proactive actions to conserve and enhance these special characteristics.



**AONB Office,  
4 Castle Street,  
Cranborne,  
BH21 5PZ  
Tel: 01725 517417  
email: [info@cranbornechase.org.uk](mailto:info@cranbornechase.org.uk)**

**[www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk](http://www.ccwwdaonb.org.uk)**