Biodiversity Assets Evidence Report

for Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan

Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

March 2023

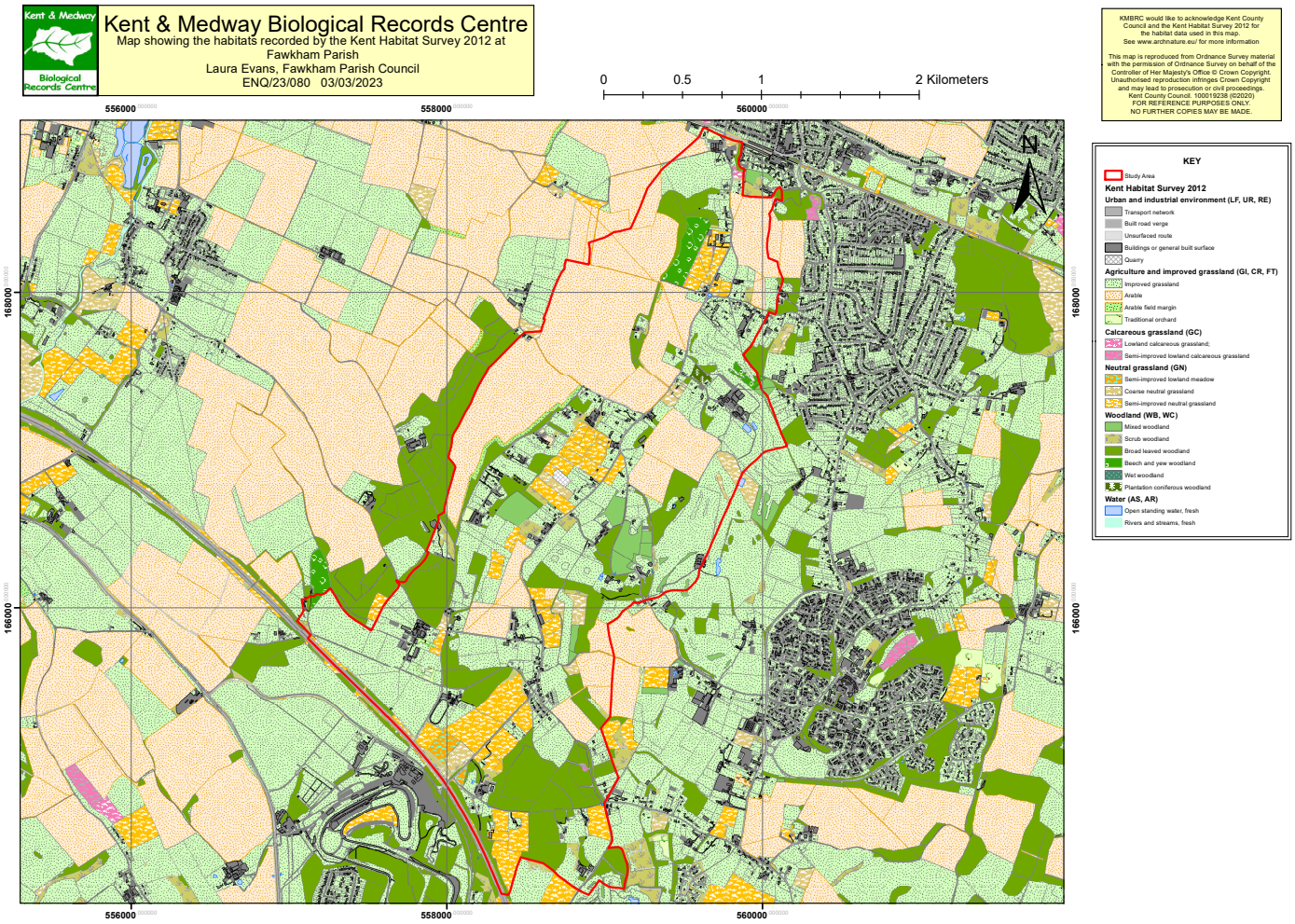
Biodiversity Assets Evidence Base Paper for Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the biodiversity assets found within Fawkham Parish, including both designated and non-designated sites.

Fawkham is a rural parish covering some 664 hectares. It contains a variety of habitats, as shown in Map 1:

MAP 1: FAWKHAM HABITATS



As can be seen from Map 1, very little of the Parish is developed, with arable land, woodland, improved grassland and semi-improved neutral grassland the predominant habitats. Fawkham Parish contains seven of the eight terrestrial priority habitats on which Kent Nature Partnership states efforts should be specifically focused[1].

Whilst the Parish has no SSSIs or sites of international importance for biodiversity, nearly 10% of the Parish is covered by four designated Local Wildlife Sites, compared to 7% across Kent as a whole. Almost 13% is covered by Ancient Woodland (woods that have existed continuously since at least 1600) and in total over 22% of the Parish is covered by woodland, compared with 12% of

[1] Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2019-2044

Kent as whole. The Local Wildlife Sites, Ancient Woodland and other woodland, and Tree Preservation Orders are shown on Map 2: Fawkham Parish Environmental Assets, with further details at Appendix 1.

There are 13 areas with UK BAP Priority Habitat status, covering 1.4% of the Parish. These are shown on Map 3 and detailed in Appendix 2. Four areas of Other Grasslands of Importance, which cover 0.41% of the parish, are also shown on Map 3.

Hedgerows are a distinctive rural feature in Fawkham, and the Parish's hedgerows are shown on Map 4. 'Important' hedgerows, as defined in the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (detailed in Appendix 3), have been identified by the Steering Group, and these are shown on Map 5. Surveys of some hedgerows have been undertaken and details are shown in Appendix 4.

These assets are each described in detail in the body of the report which follows. Many of these assets also have broader value in the landscape and as part of outdoor recreation opportunities and so also appear in the Landscape and Open Spaces evidence.

Data on species recorded by the Kent and Medway Biological Record Centre (KMBRC) has been obtained, and shows Fawkham to have a diverse range of species, including a third of the UK BAP priority mammals (hedgehog, brown hare, dormouse, noctule bat, long-eared brown bat and soprano pipistrelle). Records also exist for 50% of the UK BAP priority Herptile species (reptiles and amphibians). Fawkham has records of several UK BAP priority bird species, including skylark, linnet, house sparrow, starling and herring gull. In terms of vascular plants, Fawkham's records include 32 Kent rare or scarce species. Eight of these vascular plants are UK BAP priority species, including including Pheasant's Eye, White Helleborine, Man Orchid and Eyebright.

Overall, the Parish has approximately 5% of the 387 UK BAP priority species noted by the Kent Nature Partnership as being recorded (but not necessarily still present) in the county.[2] There are also many records of species on the Kent Rare and Scare Inventory including fungi, butterflies moths and other insects.

The Parish's natural assets are highly valued by residents, as demonstrated in the village survey of 2019, in which the countryside and natural surroundings were the most frequently named benefits of living in the Parish. Wildlife and woodland were also frequently cited as benefits.

Enhancement Opportunities

The forthcoming creation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent[3] may present further opportunities for the biodiversity assets of the Parish to be further protected or enhanced. As described above, Fawkham Parish has many areas of woodland and some areas of calcareous grassland BAP habitats and some 'other grasslands of importance'. Map 4 illustrates how the hedgerows act as connections between these habitats and prevent areas of woodland from being isolated: all areas of ancient woodland in the Parish are connected to other areas by hedgerows and/or other woodland, creating wildlife corridors. A wildlife corridor provides habitat connectivity to enable wildlife populations to move between otherwise isolated places for living, breeding, foraging and feeding.

The formal identification of a local ecological network or corridor, mapped by a project with assistance from KCC/Kent Wildlife Trust/Kent Nature Partnership/ The Woodland Trust, will be explored. Policies may then be developed, identifying appropriate levels of protection and opportunities to create, restore or enhance habitats and/or improve connectivity.

[2] Data provided by KMBRC 3/2023 cross-referenced to the list of UK priority species within the KNP Biodiversity Strategy 2019-2044

[3] This Strategy will form part of the Government's 25 year Environment Plan, enacted by the Environment Act 2021

Kent County Council has identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas across the county, as shown at Appendix 5. The biodiversity assets within Fawkham Parish may represent an important corridor between two of these areas, where there is currently a gap: the Medway Gap & North Kent Downs and the Thames-side Green Corridors, and recognition of their role as such by KCC will be explored.

The recent report from the Kent Nature Partnership: *State of Nature in Kent*, states "*The greatest pressure faced by Kent's wildlife comes from significant and unprecedented levels of growth. The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework identifies some 178,600 additional homes and 396,300 additional people by 2031 (24% and 23% growth respectively). This, along with the supporting infrastructure required – transport, education, health and social care, utilities and community facilities - all require land and resources*[4].

Whilst development within the Parish is expected to be limited over the Plan period, the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) to arise from development presents opportunities to enhance or expand the Parish's biodiversity assets: the Kent Nature Partnership is proposing a county-wide approach of a 20% minimum BNG to be adopted by all LPAs, and that the principles of nature recovery networks are incorporated into local policy[5]. SDC's emerging Local Plan is proposing to adopt a policy which seeks to achieve 20% BNG from new development[6].

In addition, the Government's 25 year Environment Plan includes a range of funding schemes to reward environmental land management:

- Countryside Stewardship
- Sustainable Farming Initiative
- Local Nature Recovery
- Landscape Recovery

Local land owners will be encouraged to participate in these schemes, once they launch in 2024.[7]

---

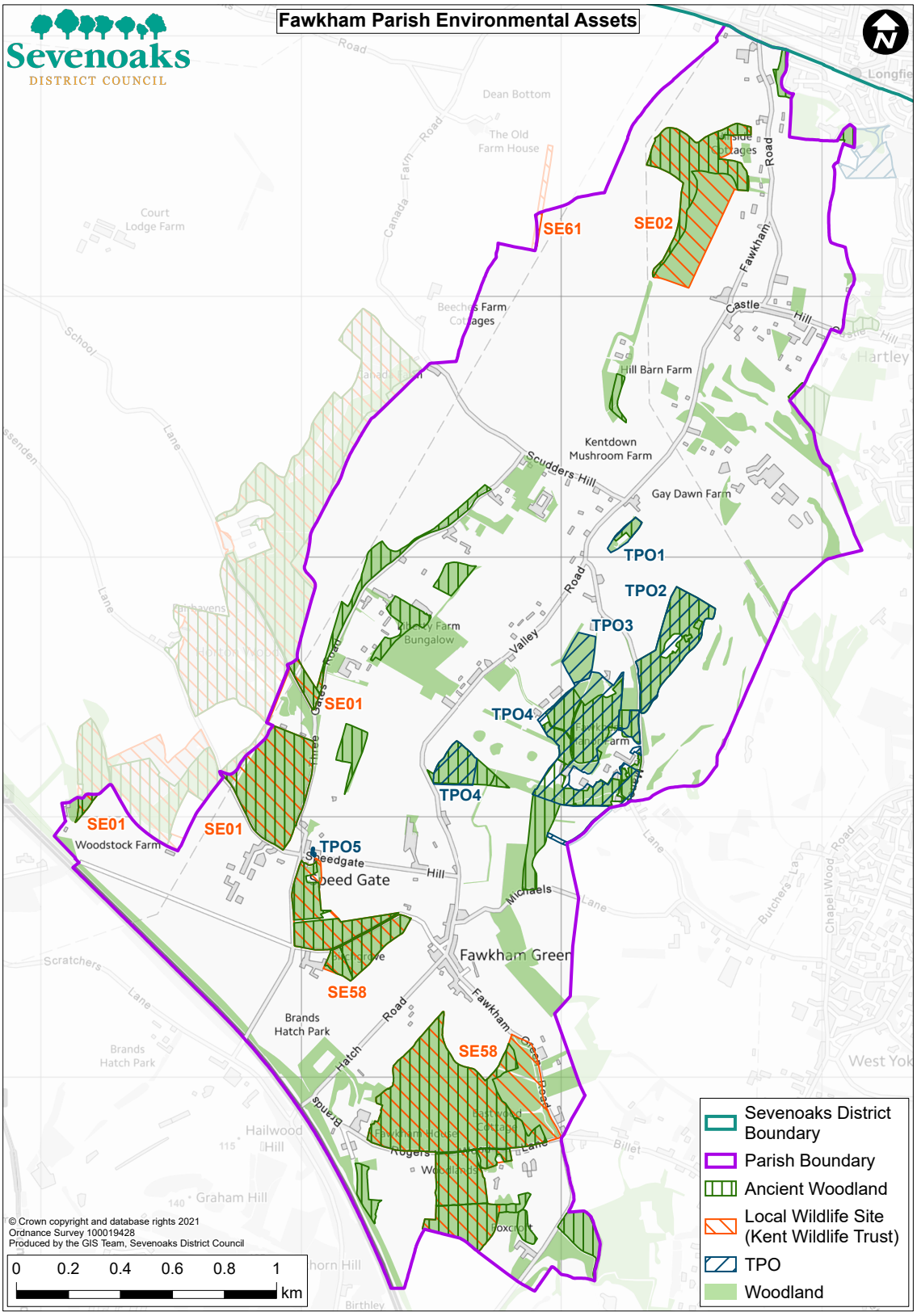
[4] Kent Nature Partnership: State of Nature in Kent 2021 report, published July 2022 (kentnature.org.uk)

[5] ibid, Chapter 2

[6] Plan 2040 A New Local Plan for Sevenoaks District, Regulation 18 consultation 2022, Policy BW2

[7] Countryside Stewardship grants are already available. https://www.gov.uk/guidance/countryside-stewardship-get-funding-to-protect-and-improve-the-land-you-manage

MAP 2 - FAWKHAM PARISH ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS



Key:

Local Wildlife Sites:
SE01 - Horton Wood
SE02 - Churchdown Wood
SE58 - Saxten's Wood
SE61 - Field Edge near Fawkham

Tree Preservation Orders :
TPO1 - Sand school south of Scudders, Valley Road
TPO2 - Eureka Sun Club, Manor Lane
TPO3 - The Spinney, Manor Lane
TPO4 - Fawkham Manor, Manor Lane

Local Wildlife Sites

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are sites with 'substantive nature conservation value'. Found on both public and private land, they are defined areas, identified and deleted for their nature conservation value, based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species. Many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under the county or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP)[8].

Collectively they play a critical role in the conservation of the UK's natural heritage by providing essential wildlife refuges in their own right and by acting as stepping stones, corridors and buffer zones to link and protect other site networks and the open spaces of our towns and countryside[9].

Local Wildlife Sites are designated in a process independent of the Neighbourhood Plan. Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) manages the Local Wildlife Sites system in Kent, with the Kent Nature Partnership Board, advised by its Management Working Group, making the final decision on the criteria by which sites should be chosen, and on the selection of individual sites. This Group includes representatives from wildlife bodies, local authorities, and organisations representing land-owners and farmers.

Within Kent the primary purposes of the Local Wildlife Sites system are:

- To help secure the protection of nationally and locally threatened habitats and species, particularly where these are identified in the England and Kent Biodiversity Strategies.
- To clearly identify sites of substantive nature conservation value that should be protected from damaging development.
- To provide a framework for the targeting of management work, advice, grant aid and other activities in order to secure the effective conservation of the most important features of Kent's biodiversity.
- To provide a clearer understanding of the nature and importance of Kent's wildlife habitats and the ways in which these change over time.[10]

The sites are surveyed on regular basis by KWT, subject to permission from the landowner.

Fawkham's Local Wildlife Sites

Fawkham Parish contains four of the 460 Local Wildlife Sites across Kent:

- Saxten's Wood - SE58
- Churchdown Woods - SE02
- Horton Woods (part of) - SE01
- Field edge near Fawkham (part of) - SE61

These are shown on Map 1: Fawkham Parish Environmental Assets.

Nearly 10% of the Parish is covered by LWS designations (9.62%). This compares to 7% across Kent as a whole.[11]

---

[8]The Wildlife Trusts: Protected areas (wildlifetrusts.org.uk)

[9] ibid

[10] Local Wildlife Sites in Kent: Criteria for Selection and Delineation, August 2015. Kent Wildlife Trust

[11] Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2019 to 2044

A short description of each LWS is shown below; the full designations for each LWS have been obtained from Kent Wildlife Trust.[12]

- **Saxten's Wood - SE58**

This LWS comprises two blocks of ancient woodland, in two separate areas:

- At the southern end of the Parish is a block comprising Saxten's, Cage's and Rogers Woods. Saxten's and Cage's are contiguous, with Roger's Wood separated from Cage's Wood by a narrow lane.

- The second block is 0.5km to the north west: Wilmay Copse and Choak's Wood, separated from each other by the narrow, quiet lane of Sun Hill.

Saxten's and Cage's Woods within the southern block have a combined size of 22.96 hectares. They were acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1993, with financial assistance including a substantial amount from a local fundraising appeal following concern from Parishioners that the woods were under threat. This site has Class II status for nature conservation and is particularly important for its dormice. It is a valued and well loved piece of the Kent landscape[13].

The Woodland Trust describes these woods as follows:

"Saxten's & Cage's are predominately ancient woodland, with the exception of the eastern side which is secondary woodland planted by the Woodland Trust in 1993. Saxten's & Cage's were probably once managed as separate woods, but they are continuous with each other and have little obvious distinction between them, although a Public Right of Way defines the boundary between the two.

"Much of Saxten's & Cage's was formerly managed for its hazel and ash coppice products with beech and oak standards, but active coppice management had ceased by the early 1950s. During the Second World War, almost 4.5ha of Cage's Wood on the eastern edge was grubbed out and farmed. The area was returned back to woodland by the Woodland Trust in 1993 when it was re-planted with site native broadleaved trees.

"The upper storey canopy comprises mature ash, beech and oak standards with rare to occasional veteran ash and beech pollards. Some old mature cherries are also present and small- leaved lime occurs sporadically. Hazel coppice along with hawthorn is dominant in the shrub layer although holly and yew are also present.

"Extensive drifts of bluebells, wood anemone and dogs mercury are spread throughout the wood especially where light levels are favourable. The ground flora throughout is dominated by bramble, with bluebell, wood anemone and wood spurge in the plateau areas. Where the soils are more calcareous, spurge laurel, stinking iris, and sweet woodruff occur. Primrose and moschatel are common on the damper rides, and dogs mercury dominates the lower ground. At least 22 ancient woodland indicator plant species are present. The wood holds a reasonably good bryophyte flora, including both acid-loving and lime-loving species.

"The wood can best be described as a lowland beech-ash wood, which can be classified further into 3 National Vegetation Classification (NVC) stand types reflecting variations in soil types: W14 beech - bramble woodland, W12 beech -wood anemone woodland, and W8 ash - field maple - wood anemone woodland".[14]

---

[12] The terms of supply do not allow the designation schedules to be made available here

[13] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/saxtens-cages/

[14] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/48592/4572-saxtens-and-cages.pdf

The Woodland Trust has a management plan for Saxten's & Cage's (which also includes Wilmay Copse) which is formally reviewed every 5 years; the latest plan covers the period 2019-2024. In summary, areas of ancient and secondary woodland will mostly be left to develop under the influences of natural processes, except where intervention is required to address issues caused by pests and diseases and to control invasive non-native species. The over-mature coppice which has not been worked for over 60 years has largely become integrated into the high forest canopy and will not be actively coppiced in a rotational coppice regime but left to mature and collapse allowing natural regeneration and the high forest life cycle to take over. The loss of ash from the canopy caused by ash dieback will temporarily increase deadwood across the site and open up gaps in an otherwise closed canopy. Species such as hornbeam, oak, beech, ash and birch are likely to fill these gaps[15].

Intervention to protect ancient woodland features such as woodland specialist ground flora, precursor and veteran trees, deadwood, and archaeological features may be required from time to time; particularly to control any incursion by invasive non-native species such as rhododendron and laurel. Currently invasive species are not causing a significant issue and only occur rarely in localised areas adjacent to property boundaries[16].The wide ride habitat established in Saxten's and Cage's which supports calcareous loving grassland and shrub species will continue to be managed on a short rotation (8-10 years) that will create a woodland edge habitat and protect and enhance the biodiversity of this habitat[17].

Whilst trees showing tolerance to ash dieback will be retained as a seed source to create future resistant generations of ash, ride-side management will remove dangerous ash trees. Some thinning of collapsing, over-mature coppice adjacent to paths may also be required. This work will widen rides, enhancing the biodiversity and visual interest of the woods.[18]

Saxten's and Cage's Woods

The second block of woodland in this LWS is made up of Wilmay Copse and Choak's Wood.

Wilmay Copse is an ancient woodland of 4.71 hectares in the south-east of the Parish; situated on a plateau overlooking the Fawkham Valley "it is an important feature of the local downland landscape"[19]. It is managed by the Woodland Trust, which acquired it in 1986, with public access

[15] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/48592/4572-saxtens-and-cages.pdf

[16] ibid

[17] ibid

[18] ibid

[19] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/wilmay-copse/

via three entrances and a network of paths and rich flora throughout including spurge laurel, bluebells and dog mercury indicative of Ancient Woodland[20].

This small woodland is very similar to Saxten's & Cage's, being ancient woodland and a mixture of two NVC classifications: W12 beech wood anemone woodland, and W8 ash - field maple wood anemone woodland. The wood supports over mature coppice of hornbeam with beech, ash, oak and field maple which has not been cut since the Second World War, and some very tall, mature cherry. The ancient beech coppice stools are especially large and contain interesting deadwood habitats. There is also a stand of almost pure hornbeam coppice which is resulting in heavy shading and restricting the development of the ground flora. Elsewhere bluebells, wood anemone and dogs mercury thrive.[21]

A former paddock in the south-west was planted by the Woodland Trust in 1986 with a mixture of native broadleaved trees. Historically this paddock had been wooded and is shown as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.[22]

Wilmay Copse is a very quiet site due to its small size and fairly remote location.[23]

Ash dieback (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus) is likely to have a significant impact on the population of ash trees within both Saxten's & Cage's and Wilmay Copse over the next decade.[24]

Wilmay Copse

Choak's Wood

Choak's Wood is privately owned and ancient woodland. It is not publicly accessible, although it is bounded on three sides by Sun Hill, Three Gates Road and Speedgate Hill, and is visible from these highways and from a PROW which runs across the field on its fourth boundary.

- **Churchdown Wood - SE02**

This LWS is an area of woodland approximately 12 hectares in size, around half of which is ancient woodland and the remainder more recent beech plantation. Numerous ancient woodland indicator species are present, including bluebell, wood anemone and dog's mercury. Several orchids can be found. One is a UK BAP species identified as being the most threatened and

---

[20] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/wilmay-copse/

[21] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/48592/4572-saxtens-and-cages.pdf

[22] ibid

[23] ibid

[24] ibid

requiring conservation action[25], of which 116 plants were observed in 2021. At least one protected mammal species can be found.

The site is privately owned (in at least two ownerships) and was first notified as a LWS in 2006. Several PROWs cross/adjoin the site, which are well-used by the public for walks. The site appears to be well managed.

The landowner of the majority of the site has begun to implement a twenty year management plan by thinning the beech plantation, with the aim that the woodland will form a mosaic of uneven aged and mixed species. The management plan states it will have a positive effect in terms of silviculture and biodiversity as well as improving resilience to climate change, pests and diseases.

Churchdown Wood

- **Horton Wood (part of) - SE02**

This LWS is a large area of ancient woodland of 69.75 hectares, a small part of which is within the Parish. The wood forms much of the western boundary of the Parish.

The part within Fawkham is not publicly accessible (a byway runs through another part); it is bounded by Three Gates Road and Mussenden Lane within the Parish.

Horton Wood

[25] List of UK BAP Priority Vascular Plant Species, JNCC 2007

Horton Wood is mostly hornbeam, with many ancient woodland indicator plants. Across the whole LWS over twenty-eight ancient woodland vascular plant indicator species have been recorded

At least one protected mammal species can be found and at least two red list birds have been observed. At least forty-two species of bryophytes are recorded, plus common fungi and epiphytes.

This site is privately owned and was first notified as a LWS in 1986.

- **Field Edge near Fawkham (part of) - SE61**

This LWS runs alongside a grassy bank within an agricultural field and is just under 2 hectares in size. The site was first notified as a LWS in 1995.

The site contains a variety of arable weeds including several species which are rare both on a national level and/or county level, including one extremely rare plant, Adonis annua or Pheasant's Eye, listed as a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, an endangered Red List species and included as a species "of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity" under Section 41 (England) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006[26]. This plant was observed on the site in 2021. The State of Nature in Kent 2021 lists this species as one of the five wildflowers associated with farming showing the greatest losses in Kent[27].

The site is privately owned and managed as an arable field, and forms part of a larger agricultural holding. It is crossed by a PROW.

Field edge near Fawkham

[26] https://www.plantlife.org.uk/application/files/3415/3932/9507/Adonis_annua_-_Pheasants_eye.pdf

[27] Moyse (2011) within the State of Nature in Kent 2021 report, Kent Nature Partnership

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woodland is any area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes:

- ancient semi-natural woodland - mainly made up of trees and shrubs native to the site, usually arising from natural regeneration
- plantations on ancient woodland sites - replanted with conifer or broadleaved trees that retain ancient woodland features, such as undisturbed soil, ground flora and fungi

They have equal protection in the National Planning Policy Framework.[28]

Ancient Woodland takes hundreds of years to establish and is defined as an irreplaceable habitat. It is a valuable natural asset important for:

- wildlife (which include rare and threatened species)
- soils
- carbon capture and storage
- contributing to the seed bank and genetic diversity
- recreation, health and wellbeing
- cultural, historical and landscape value.

Fawkham's Ancient Woodland

These are shown on Map 2.

12.73% of Fawkham Parish is covered with designated Ancient Woodland, compared to 11% of the Sevenoaks District as a whole (and the UK average of 2%).

Fawkham Parish contains 16 separate areas of Ancient Woodland. Ancient woodlands which are part of Local Wildlife Sites and/or covered by Tree Preservation Orders are described in detail in those sections of this report.

The remaining areas of Ancient Woodland are as follows:

- To the east of Salts Farm (unnamed)
- To the south of Hill Barn Farm (unnamed)
- A narrow strip along the western side of Three Gates Road (unnamed), contiguous with Horton Wood LWS
- Loaves Wood, north of Michaels Lane, which adjoins Parkfield Wood
- Parefield Wood, to the east of Three Gates Road
- Grove Wood (remains of), to the east of Three Gates Road
- Hopkins Spring Wood, to the east of Three Gates Road
- Part of Roger's Wood which is contiguous with that included in the LWS of Saxten's Wood
- Billet Wood, to the east of Fawkham Green Road, part of which is within the Parish
- Gallows Wood, to the south of Rogers Wood Lane, part of which is within the Parish.

[28] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions

Other Woodland and Tree Preservation Orders

Other Woodland

Fawkham Parish contains several further areas of woodland, in addition to the Ancient Woodland, as can be seen on Map 2. Some of this woodland is contiguous with Ancient Woodland, some appears on the 1831 tithe map, and so is at least nearly two hundred years old, and some is relatively recently planted.

In total, including Ancient Woodland, 22.3% of Fawkham Parish is covered by woods. This compares to 13% nationally and 12% in Kent[29].

Some are lowland mixed deciduous and Yew which is included as a priority habitat in the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045, in which they are described as “particularly distinctive in Kent” which “is likely to be particularly vulnerable to the projected changes in rainfall and temperature in the south east of England”.

The woodland to the east of Cross House is a larch conifer wood understood to have been planted in the 1950s.

To the east of Fawkham Green on the higher valley sides lies Shortledge Wood.

Areas of woodland occur as part of both Redlibbets golf course and Corinthian golf course, with some parts being relicts of Pennis Wood, an ancient woodland.

Fawkham Primary School owns four hectares of woodland adjacent to the school site, some of which is used as a resource by the school for forest school classes. This is contiguous with Parefield Wood to the north-west, but not all of the woodland appears on the 1831 tithe map. It includes an ancient yew tree.

Ancient yew tree in Fawkham Primary’s woodland

[29] Kent Habitat Survey 2012

Fawkham's Tree Preservation Orders

A Tree Preservation Order is an order made by a local planning authority in England to protect specific trees, groups of trees or woodlands in the interests of amenity[30].

Five Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been made within the Parish, which cover 3.41% of it.

The largest area covered is an extensive area of woodland around Fawkham Manor which includes Parkfield Wood and Hatchfield Wood, both Ancient Woodland (labelled TPO4 on Map 2) and also a further area of woodland at The Spinney (TPO3). Separated by Manor Lane from this is the remaining area of the Ancient Woodland Pennis Wood (covered by TPO2). A naturist club has been operating within this Ancient Woodland for over 50 years, causing some harm through clearance for buildings, a swimming pool and hardstanding.

The other TPOs cover a small area of Ancient Woodland (unnamed on the tithe map but known as Scudders Shaw), mostly hornbeam, beech and hazel) to the south of the listed building Scudders on Valley Road, and specified trees within the curtilage of the property "The Cedars" on Speedgate Hill, which include flowering cherries.

The areas of other woodland and TPOs are also shown on Map 2 above, with full details of the TPOs given in Appendix 1.

Ancient and veteran trees

Ancient and veteran trees can be individual trees or groups of trees within wood pastures, historic parkland, hedgerows, orchards, parks or other areas. They are often found outside ancient woodlands. They are also irreplaceable habitats[31].

Ancient trees

An ancient tree is exceptionally valuable. Very few trees of any species become ancient. Attributes can include its:

- great age
- size
- condition
- biodiversity value as a result of significant wood decay and the habitat created from the ageing process
- cultural and heritage value

Veteran trees

A veteran tree may not be very old, but it has significant decay features, such as branch death and hollowing. These features contribute to its exceptional biodiversity, cultural and heritage value.

The age at which a tree becomes ancient or veteran will vary by species because each species ages at a different rate.

Numerous Ancient and Veteran trees have been identified within Saxten Woods and Wilmay Copse (managed by the Woodland Trust); only two others have been identified elsewhere in the Parish. These can be found on the Woodlands Trust Ancient Tree Inventory[32]. A project will be considered to identify further ancient and veteran trees within the Parish.

---

[30] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tree-preservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas

[31] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions#ancient-and-veteran-trees

[32] https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Biodiversity Priority Habitats

UK BAP priority habitats cover a wide range of semi-natural habitat types, and were identified by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)[33].

Fawkham's BAP Priority Habitats

There are 13 areas with UK BAP priority habitat status within the parish, identified in the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 undertaken by Kent County Council. These are shown on Map 3.

These are:

- **Calcareous grasslands (GC)**

  Fawkham Parish has four areas of calcareous grasslands, also known as chalk grassland, all in the north of the parish.

  Calcareous grasslands are found on alkaline substrates, particularly those over chalk bedrock or ragstone. They are associated with thin, infertile soils prone to drought, and have plant species that have adapted to these conditions. Kent supports around 5% of the UK's chalk grassland habitat. The swards support a very rich flora, including some nationally scarce and rare plants, as well as specialist invertebrates. The plant communities are vulnerable to ploughing and increased soil fertility[34].

  This habitat is frequently associated with scrub, which contributes to the overall diversity, but where there is a reduction in grazing or management the scrub can become dominant, shading out and degrading the calcareous grassland[35].

  Most of the species-rich calcareous grasslands in Kent are now confined to the steeper slopes of the North Downs, where ploughing and improvement have not been possible or economically viable, with 80% found within the Kent Downs AONB.[36] Fawkham Parish lies just outside this AONB.

  Further potential areas of calcareous grassland were identified during the Landscape Character Assessment and will be investigated further as a separate project. Opportunities to create and/or restore grasslands as part of biodiversity net gain through development may arise within the Parish. Landowners should be encouraged to manage suitable grassland areas as meadows, with a traditional hay cut, to encourage wildflowers.

- **Traditional Orchards (FT)**

  Fawkham has four areas of traditional orchard at the sites of former farms: two areas are apple orchards, one is cherry and one is unspecified.

---

[33] https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap-priority-habitats/

[34] https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/95114/Kent-Habitat-Survey-2012-section-5-results-and-habitat-distribution-by-districts.pdf

[35] ibid

[36] ibid

Since 1950s the overall area of orchards in England has declined by 63%[37] and Kent's remaining source is nationally important, comprising around 10% of the traditional orchard area in England[38].

Traditional orchards have only been recognised for their importance as habitats for wildlife relatively recently; the UK BAP designation for this habitat dates to 2007. The Kent Biodiversity Habitat has targets to maintain, restore and create Traditional Orchards by 2025. Opportunities to enhance the existing traditional orchards, identify any further ones, and to create new orchards, could be explored.

- **Broadleaved Mixed and Yew Woodland (WB)**

The parish has three areas of identified Broadleaved Mixed and Yew Woodland, comprising the Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) at Churchdown Wood, areas of woodland at Corinthian/Fawkham Valley golf course (including some adjoining ancient woodland) and at Horton Wood.

This broad habitat type refers to all broadleaved and yew woodland where the tree cover exceeds 20%, and to mixed broadleaved and coniferous stands which have more than 80% cover of broadleaved and yew trees[39].

Much of this woodland [in Kent] has been lost through clear-fell and plantation planting.[40]

Beech is sensitive to drought and is likely to be particularly vulnerable to the projected changes in rainfall and temperature in the south-east of England, with beech and yew woodland on free-draining calcareous soils being most at risk. To build resilience, an increase of 30% is desirable by 2025 through a combination of restoration of conifer plantations on ancient woodland sites and new woodland creation. There are likely to be opportunities for woodland creation and restoration as part of the environmental net gain principle taken forward through development[41].

Opportunities to create and/or restore woodland through development within the Parish may arise.

Further details of the BAP Priority Habitats can be found at Appendix 2.

---

[37] Natural England Commissioned Report : Traditional Orchard Project in England, 2011

[38] Plan Tree: KCC's Tree Establishment Strategy 2022-2032

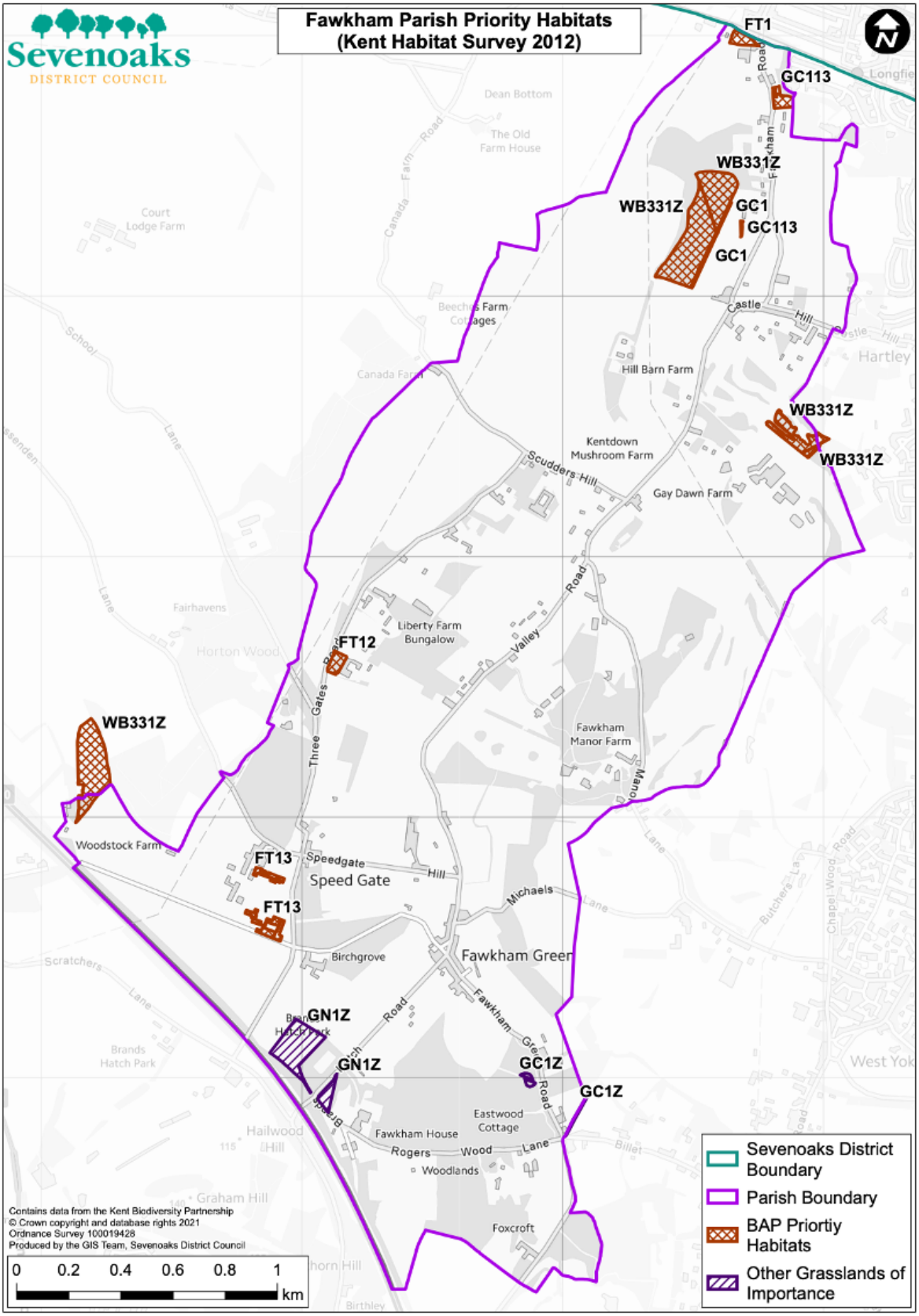
[39] Kent Habitat Survey 2012, 5.1.5.1

[40] Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045

[41] ibid

MAP 3: UK BAP PRIORITY HABITATS

KEY
GC = Calcareous Grassland
GN = Neutral Grassland
FT = Traditional Orchard
WB = Broadleaved Mixed and Yew Woodland
Please see Appendix 2 for further details



Other Grasslands of Importance

Other Grasslands of Importance are grasslands which did not meet the JNCC definition to be classed as BAP priority habitat, but with appropriate management are capable of being restored to BAP habitats[42]. These were identified through the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 undertaken by Kent County Council.

Fawkham's Other Grassland of Importance

There are four areas of Other Grasslands of Importance which are are shown on Map 3. All four are located in the south of the Parish, and equate to 0.41% of the parish.

Two are areas of calcareous grassland, as described in the Biodiversity Priority Habitats section above, and two are areas of neutral grassland. The neutral grassland category encompasses all grassland communities found on neutral soils, including areas of grazing marsh, coarse or rank grassland often associated with unmanaged areas, and other grasslands that show varying levels of improvement. The latter grasslands range from species-poor swards with limited value to wildlife, to those that are very species rich that can be classed as UK BAP priority habitat[43].

The Kent Biodiversity Strategy includes neural grassland as a priority habitat, and aims to create a further 25 hectares and restore 100 hectares by 2025.

[42] https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/planning-and-land/kent-landscape-information-system/resources/klis-habitat-survey-data-resources

[43] https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/95114/Kent-Habitat-Survey-2012-section-5-results-and-habitat-distribution-by-districts.pdf

Hedgerows

A hedgerow can be defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less than 20m wide[44].

Hedgerows are included as one of eight priority terrestrial habitats in the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045 which states they: *Provide food and shelter for many species and act as essential corridors along which wildlife can travel*. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more) of at least one woody UK native species are considered a priority habitat.[45]

From 1990 onwards the decrease in managed hedgerows in Kent has been predominantly through inappropriate management rather than actual hedgerow removal[46]. The Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy has a target to restore 2250km and plant 2250km of species rich hedgerow by 2025, predominantly via agri-environment schemes. At the time of writing, there are only limited details on how these schemes will work in practice, following the passage of the new Agriculture and Environment Bills, which follow from the UK's departure from the European Union.[47]

Hedgerows provide habitats, cover and food for many wildlife species, particularly birds, reptiles and small mammals, and 130 BAP priority species are associated with hedgerows. Hedgerows can also act as wildlife corridors for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals such as the Common Dormouse, enabling them to move between habitat areas. They are the main habitat for at least 47 species of conservation concern in the UK, including 13 globally threatened or rapidly declining ones.[48]

Studies from UK BAP in 2007 determined that 42% of Kent's remaining hedgerows *may* be Species Rich and Ancient.[49]

Fawkham Parish's hedgerows

The many hedgerows in Fawkham Parish are a distinctive rural feature. They can be found along the sides of lanes and public footpaths, and around gardens and fields, and are visible from many public highways/footpaths and viewpoints. The Parish's hedgerows are shown on Map 4.

In addition to their biodiversity value, Fawkham's hedgerows have amenity and aesthetic value, adding to the landscape character of the Parish. A profusion of hawthorn and blackthorn blossom can be enjoyed in the spring in Fawkham, wild dog roses bloom in summer, while sloe berries on blackthorn, berries on hawthorn and rosehips are abundant in autumn.

The hedges also help to slow or stop floodwater and flints from pouring off the valley side fields into lanes, as described in the Flooding and Water Quality Evidence Report, and help to combat air and water pollutants.

There is a mixture in size, age and condition of hedgerows throughout Fawkham Parish. Many of the hedgerows are believed to be several hundreds of years old and species rich.

---

[44] UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008. JNCC

[45] ibid

[46] Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy 2020 to 2045

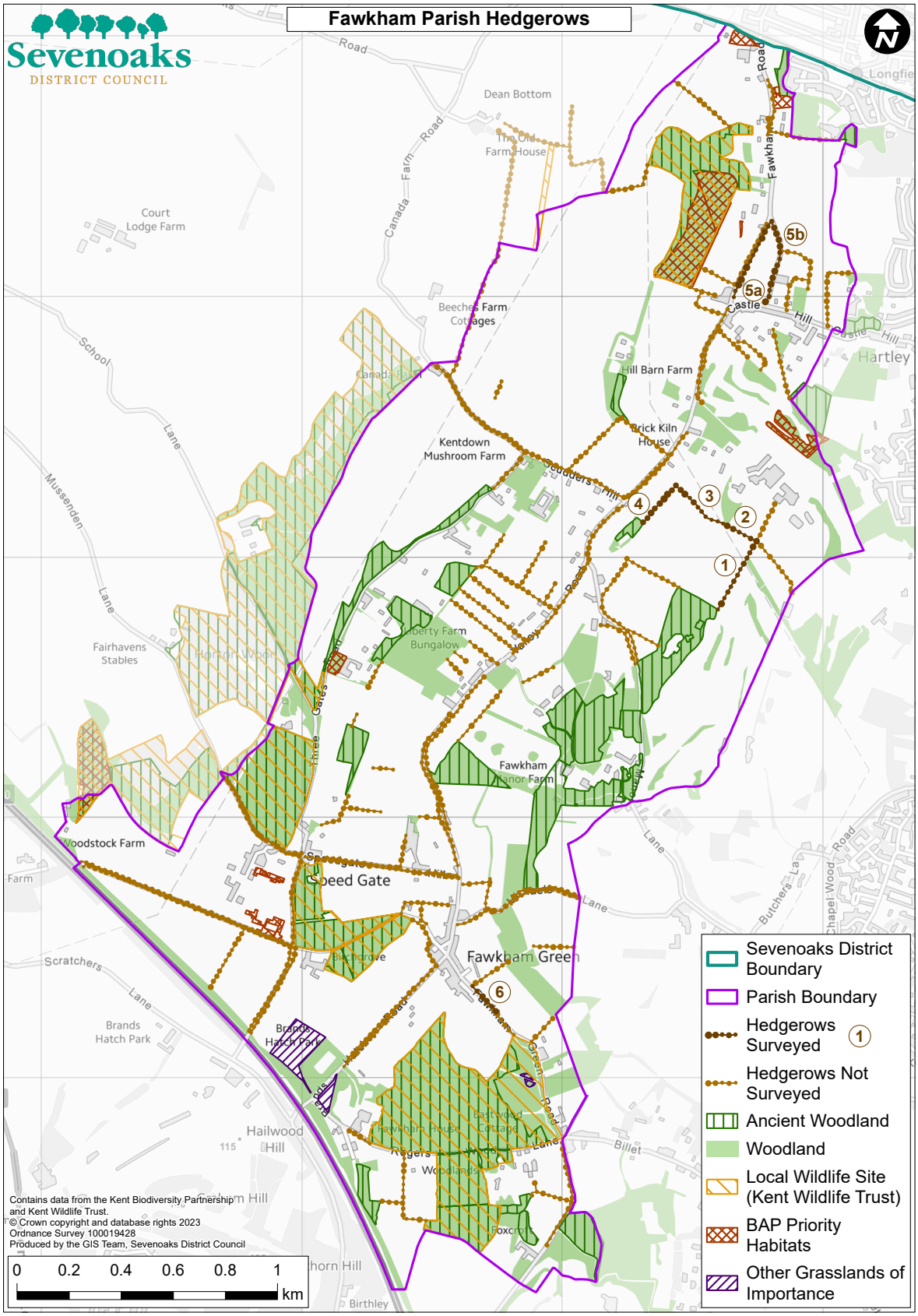
[47] ibid

[48] Field Studies Council Guide to Hedgerows, 2019

[49] Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2045, p.20

Several are relicts of Ancient Woodland which now edge fields cleared for agriculture, and many connect with other hedgerows and into shaws or blocks of woodland.

MAP 4: HEDGEROWS



- **'Important' Hedgerows**

A hedgerow is protected under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, meaning it is protected from removal apart from under specific circumstances, if it meets the following criteria for length, location and 'importance'.

Length: a hedgerow is protected if it is more than 20m long with gaps of 20m or less in its length, or less than 20m long, but meets another hedge at each end.

Location: a hedgerow is protected if it is on or next to a variety of land types, including:

- land used for agriculture or forestry
- land used for breeding or keeping horses, ponies or donkeys

A hedgerow is not protected if it is in, or marks the boundary of, a private garden.

'Importance': in accordance with the regulations, a hedgerow is considered important, and is protected, if it is at least 30 years old and meets at least one a number of criteria related to either archaeology and history or wildlife and landscape.

Further details of the Act are contained in Appendix 3.

Map 5 shows hedgerows identified as 'important' under the terms of the Act by the Steering Group, after seeking advice from SDC's Tree Officer, Kent Wildlife Trust, CPRE Kent, KCC's Ecology Unit and KCC's Senior Archaeological Officer within the Heritage Conservation team.

The most relevant criterion for the Parish is that a hedgerow *is part of a field system or looks to be related to any building or other feature associated with the field system that existed before 1845.* A map was prepared of Fawkham Parish in 1831, which was used for the apportionment of the rent charge in lieu of tithes following the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836[50]. This tithe map shows the field system, and therefore the field boundaries, which existed before 1845. The detail of the Regulations requires that the map used to determine important hedgerows needs to be recorded in a document held at the relevant date at a Record Office, the relevant date being March 1997. It has been confirmed by the Medway Archive Centre, which is a Record Office for the purposes of the Regulations, that the tithe map was held there at the relevant date. KCC's Senior Archaeological Officer has advised that the KCC Heritage Team policy is that: *it is reasonable to assume that the field boundaries in Kent which existed at the beginning of the 19th century are pre-enclosure in terms of the hedgerow regulations.*

The 1831 tithe map was been compared with the map showing hedgerows currently in the Parish to identify those which meet the criteria for length, location and 'importance'. In addition, the OS Field Drawing of Eynsford, which includes Fawkham, was also referred to: this was prepared in 1798. The OS Field Drawings have been held by the British Library since 1956, and so was held at the relevant date; they are available online[51]. The Field Drawing was used to identify 'important' hedgerows in the southern most and northern most parts of the Parish; these areas were part of West Kingsdown Parish and Longfield Parish, respectively, at the time the tithe map was prepared, and so were not included within in it.

The Parish contains several hedgerows which appear on the tithe map and/or the OS Field Drawing which are now marking the boundary of a private garden, but which would otherwise be considered 'important'.

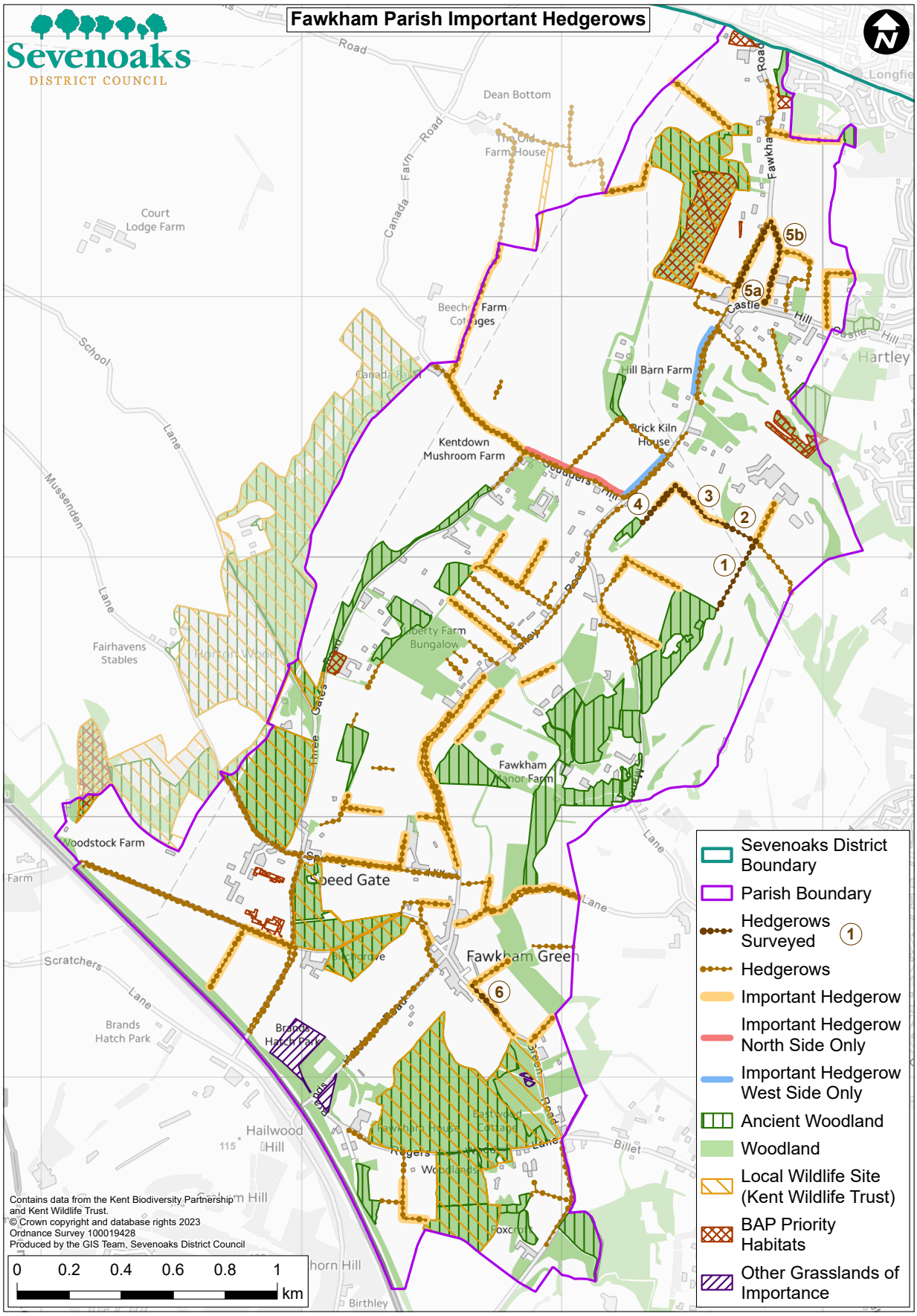
Sevenoaks District Council, as the LPA, are requested to agree to the determination of the hedgerows shown in Map 4 as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

---

[50] A copy of this map can be found in the Fawkham: The Story of a Kentish Village, W.F. Proudfoot, and at the Medway Archive Centre

[51] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ordnance_Survey_Drawings_-_Eynsford_(OSD_98).jpg

MAP 5: 'IMPORTANT' HEDGEROWS



- **Hedgerow Woody Species Survey**

A number of hedgerows may also meet an 'importance' criterion under the Wildlife and Landscape grouping, although further detailed surveys would be required which, in some cases, would require access consent from the landowner. Initial surveys were undertaken by volunteers of a number of publicly accessible hedgerows, shown on Map 3, the results of which are summarised below:

- Hedgerow 1 contained nine woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Hedgerow Act: dogwood, elder, elm, field maple, hawthorn, rose, rowan, wild plum/cherry plum, whitebeam. Whitebeam is rare in the wild[52].
- Hedgerow 2 contained eight woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: ash, blackthorn, elm, field maple, hawthorn, oak, rose, spindle. Sycamore was also present.
- Hedgerow 3 included eight woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: ash, blackthorn, elm, field maple, hawthorn, rose, spindle, wild cherry plum. A standard Turkey oak tree was also present.
- Hedgerow 4 contained 10 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: ash, buckthorn, elder, elm, field maple, hawthorn, hazel, holly, rose, spindle.
- Hedgerow 5a included seven woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: dogwood, elm, hawthorn, hazel, rose, wayfaring Tree, wild privet.
- Hedgerow 5b included eight woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elm, field maple, hazel.
- Hedgerow 6 contained the following four woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act: ash, elm, hawthorn, hazel.

Spindle is considered to be characteristic of an old hedgerow[53]. Spindle is present in hedges 2, 3 and 4 above.

The presence of poor colonisers such as field maple, hazel, dogwood and spindle often indicate older hedges[54]. Field maple is found in hedges 1-5 above; hazel in hedges 4, 5a, 5b and 6; dogwood in hedge 1, 5a and 5b; and spindle in 2, 3 and 4.

These species indicate that these hedgerows are likely to be several hundreds of years old.

Full details of the survey can be found at Appendix 4.

- **Wildlife Corridors**

As detailed above, Fawkham Parish has many areas of woodland and some areas of calcareous grassland BAP habitats and some 'other grasslands of importance'. Map 4 illustrates how the hedgerows act as connections between these habitats. From this it can be seen that the hedgerows prevent the areas of woodland from being isolated: all areas of ancient woodland in the Parish are connected to other areas by hedgerows and/or other woodland which can act as wildlife corridors. In terms of biodiversity, hedgerows are the veins of the countryside, connecting up disjointed and isolated pockets into a network for insects and the creatures that feed upon them: amphibia, reptiles, birds and mammals including badgers, bats, hedgehogs and dormice. They form a critical part of nature recovery networks in any rural locality and can provide some protection from agricultural fields sprayed with pesticides and herbicides.

Kent County Council has a Pollinator Action Plan. This states: *the most significant cause of pollinator decline, and the one which Kent's Plan Bee can most immediately address, is the loss and degradation of habitats…Many wildflower-rich habitats are now small areas separated by*

---

[52](https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/whitebeam/

[53]https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/parks-gardens-and-landscapes/hedges/

[54] https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/farmland/hedgerow

hostile (to pollinators) land uses, making it difficult for insects to move around our landscapes.[55] The network of hedgerows with Fawkham Parish plays an important role in connecting habitats for pollinators.

KCC's action plan within their Tree Establishment Strategy includes work with individual farmers, land owners and managers to reinstate and expand the county's hedgerow network, to benefit landscape and wildlife.[56] Opportunities to encourage landowners within Fawkham Parish to participate in this scheme should be sought.

Opportunities to expand or enhance the network of hedgerows, for example, via biodiversity net gain requirements of development or through Environment Plan schemes, will also be explored.

Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

March 2023

[55] https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/103905/Kents-Plan-Bee.pdf

[56] KCC Plan Tree 2022-2032

Appendix 1: Tree preservation orders

Label	Name	ADDRESS	COMMENTS	SITUATION
TPO1	TPO No: 23 of 1993	Sand School South Of Scudders Valley Road Fawkham	Mixed deciduous woodland	East of Valley Road, south of Scudders
TPO2	TPO No: 5 of 1971	Eureka Sun Club Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	The several trees of whatever species standing in the area numbered A01 on the map. Remaining part of Pennis Wood.	East of Manor Road, adjacent to Redlibbets golf course
TPO3	TPO No: 19 of 1991	The Spinney Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8NB	Dense woodland containing Sweet Chestnut, Beech, Lime, Sycamore, Pine, Yew etc.	Between Valley Road and Manor Lane, off Fawkham Manor Farm Road
TPO4	TPO No: 6 of 1960	Fawkham Manor Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	The several Wych Elm, Oak and hedge Maple trees standing in a belt along the south and eastern boundaries of a field and numbered A02 on the map.	Between Valley Road and Manor Lane, off Fawkham Manor Farm Road
TPO4	TPO No: 6 of 1960	Fawkham Manor Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	The several trees of Oak, fir, Silver Birch and Chestnut standing near the roadside and numbered A01 on the plan. Known an Hatchfield Wood	Adjacent to the east side of Valley Road, south of the school
TPO4	TPO No: 6 of 1960	Fawkham Manor Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	Mixed trees consisting mainly of Beech, Oak, Fir. Indian Cedar, Silver Birch, Yew and Chestnut trees. Known as Parkfield Wood.	Parkfield Wood, lying to the north, west and south of Fawkham Manor, Fawkham.
TPO4	TPO No: 6 of 1960	Fawkham Manor Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	Mixed trees, consisting mainly of Ash, Beech, Oak and Maple trees	Part of Ordnance Survey parcel No. 7, at the western end of Hatchfield wood, Near Fawkham Valley Road, Fawkham.
TPO4	TPO No: 6 of 1960	Fawkham Manor Manor Lane Fawkham DA3 8ND	Mixed trees consisting mainly of Beech, Oak, Fir, Silver Birch and Chestnut trees.	North/east of Fawkham Manor, Fawkham.
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Flowering Cherries.	North side of Speedgate Hill
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Flowering Cherries.	Ditto

Label	Name	ADDRESS	COMMENTS	SITUATION
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Flowering Cherries.	Ditto
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Flowering Cherries.	Ditto
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Willow.	Ditto
TPO5	TPO No: 8 of 1977	The Cedars Speedgate Hill Fawkham DA3 8NJ	Pine.	Ditto

Appendix 2: Further details of UK BAP Priority Habitats

Habitat code	Habitat Description	BAP
FT1	Traditional orchard	1
GC113	Rank calcareous grassland	1
WB331Z	Other lowland beech and yew woodland	1
GC1	Lowland calcareous grassland	1
GC1	Lowland calcareous grassland	1
WB331Z	Other lowland beech and yew woodland	1
WB331Z	Other lowland beech and yew woodland	1
GC1	Lowland calcareous grassland	1
GC113	Rank calcareous grassland	1
GC1	Lowland calcareous grassland	1
WB331Z	Other lowland beech and yew woodland	1
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
FT12	Traditional cherry orchard	1
WB331Z	Other lowland beech and yew woodland	1
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
GN1Z	Other lowland meadows	2
GC1Z	Other lowland calcareous grassland	2
GN1Z	Other lowland meadows	2
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
FT13	Traditional apple orchard	1
GC1Z	Other lowland calcareous grassland	2
GC1Z	Other lowland calcareous grassland	2

Appendix 3: The Hedgerow Regulations 1997[57]

A hedgerow is protected under The Hedgerow Regulations 1997, meaning it cannot be removed, if it meets the following criteria for length, location and 'importance'.

Length: a hedgerow is protected if it is more than 20m long with gaps of 20m or less in its length or less than 20m long, but meets another hedge at each end.

Location: a hedgerow is protected if it is on or next to:

- land used for agriculture or forestry
- land used for breeding or keeping horses, ponies or donkeys
- common land
- a village green
- a site of special scientific interest
- a protected European site such as a special area of conservation or special protection area
- a local or national nature reserve
- land belonging to the state.

A hedgerow is not protected if it is in, or marks the boundary of, a private garden.

'Importance': in accordance with the regulations, a hedgerow is considered important, and is protected, if it is at least 30 years old and meets at least one of a number of criteria grouped under Archaeology and History or Wildlife and Landscape. The Archaeology and History grouping is:

- marks all or part of a parish boundary that existed before 1850
- contains an archaeological feature such as a scheduled monument
- is completely or partly in or next to an archaeological site listed on a Historic Environment Record
- marks the boundary of an estate or manor or looks to be related to any building or other feature that is part of the estate or manor that existed before 1600
- is part of a field system or looks to be related to any building or other feature associated with the field system that existed before 1845
- contains protected species listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- contains species that are endangered, vulnerable and rare and identified in the British Red Data books.
- includes at least 5 woody species and associated features as specified in Schedule 1, Part II Criteria, paragraph 7(1) of the Hedgerow Regulations.

The Wildlife and Landscape criteria are complex, involving the presence of specific woody species and/or woodland species and/or protected birds, animals or plants and/or features such as banks and standard trees and/or connections with other hedgerows, ponds, woodland; the criteria are altered if the hedgerow is adjacent to a footpath, bridleway, road used as a public path or byway open to all traffic.

[57] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/schedule/1/made

Appendix 4: Fawkham Parish Hedgerow Survey

Selected hedgerows in the Parish were surveyed in Autumn 2021 to ascertain which woody species they contain. The following hedges were surveyed, at the locations noted on Map 3. These hedgerows were selected as they are accessible/visible to survey from PROWs, publicly accessible land or public highways.

1. **Hedgerow alongside to PROW SD163 separating an agricultural field from Redlibbets golf course**

- This hedge runs along the valley ridge for approx 300m in a roughly north-south direction. The southern end is contiguous with the ancient woodland of Pennis Wood. The northern end adjoins a further hedgerow with a 90 degree turn to the west.
- The following 9 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present: dogwood, elder, elm, field maple, hawthorn, rose, rowan, wild plum/cherry plum, whitebeam.
- Whitebeam - three trees were found to be present, each coppiced a number of years ago. Whitebeam is rare in the wild[58], and a request for TPOs should be considered for these.
- This hedgerow has not been cut recently and is around 4m in height, with some standard trees, including an old, possibly veteran, oak. It has four gaps: three very small, and one larger but less than 20m in length.
- The information above on the variety and types of woody species found, coupled with a study of the tithe map of 1831 and the OS Field Drawing of 1798, indicates this hedgerow is a remnant of the Ancient Woodland Pennis Wood.

Hedgerow 1

2. **Hedgerow leading west from 1. above, marking the boundary of an agricultural field**

- This section of hedge is approximately 150m in length from the point at which it adjoins the hedge above and runs alongside PROW SD163 until that path turns to the right and leads via an ancient Holloway to Pennis House.
- The following 8 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present in this section: ash, blackthorn, elm, field maple, hawthorn, oak, rose, spindle. Sycamore was also present.
- This hedgerow has not been cut recently and is around 3m in height with some standard trees. It has one small gap, infilled with wire.

[58] https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/whitebeam/

- The information above on the variety and types of woody species found, coupled with a study of the tithe map of 1831 and the OS Field Drawing of 1798, indicates this hedgerow is a remnant of the Ancient Woodland Pennis Wood.

Hedgerow 2

3. **Hedgerow leading west from 2. above, marking the boundary of an agricultural field**

- This section continues along the field edge beyond the PROW for c150m. Observations were made using binoculars and long-lens camera from SD163 and SD223 at either end of the section.
- The following 8 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present in this section: ash, blackthorn, elm, field maple, hawthorn, rose, spindle, wild cherry plum. A standard Turkey oak tree was also present.
- This hedgerow has not been cut recently and is around 3m in height some standard trees.

Hedgerow 3

4. **Hedgerow leading south from that at 3 above, marking the boundary of an agricultural field and, in some places, making the boundaries of gardens on the other side**

- This hedgerow is approximately 200m in length and runs south from hedgerow 3 above.
- It joins an area of ancient woodland at its southern end.
- Observations were made using binoculars and long-lens camera from SD223.
- The following 10 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present in this section: ash, buckthorn, elder, elm, field maple, hawthorn, hazel, holly, rose, spindle.
- This hedgerow has not been cut recently and is around 3-4m in height with many of the bushes grown into standard trees. It has one gap of approx 5m where it adjoins hedgerow 2, recently created to allow access for development in the area to its west. A further section approximately 30m in length has been recently removed and replaced with close-boarded fencing 2m in height.
- There is evidence of badgers' presence in the field bound by hedgerows 1-4, and setts exist within some of the hedgerows. Sky larks are also present in the field, and woodcock, red legged partridge, fieldfare, redwing and other farmland birds have been sighted in the last five to ten years.

Hedgerow 4

5. **Hedgerow surrounding Church Meadow**

- This hedgerow is in two sections and runs around two of the three sides of Church Meadow next to St.Mary's Church. One section runs alongside Valley Road (5a) and the other alongside Steephill (5b).

Hedgerow 5a

- 5a - The following 7 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present in the section alongside Valley Road, which is around 180 metres in length: dogwood, elm, hawthorn, hazel, rose, wayfaring tree, wild privet.
- The hedge is in good condition. It is continuous with only one gap of less than 2m. The road face is cut each year. Height is around 3m. Some previously standard trees were pollarded at low level several years ago and this section of 4-5m is a little thinner.

Hedgerow 5b

- 5b - The following 8 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present in the section alongside Steephill, which is around 300 metres in length: ash, blackthorn, buckthorn, dogwood, elm, field maple, hazel, rose, plus one unidentified.
- The road facing side of the hedge is cut each year, and is lower in height on that side due to the site topography, being around 2.5m. On the meadow side, the hedge is taller. It is in two ownerships. The southern part has 3 or 4 standard trees which are above the telegraph poles, and is becoming a double row hedge with blackthorn and elm growing on the meadow side. The northern part is of lower height, at 3-4m. It is continuous apart from just before it joins 5a, where there is a gap of around 10m.

Analysis of Hedgerows 1 - 5

Hedgerows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5a and 5b are likely to be several hundreds of years old. The presence of spindle is considered to be characteristic of an old hedgerow[59] and an indicator of ancient woodland.[60] Spindle is found in hedgerows 2, 3 and 4.

The presence of poor colonisers such as field maple, hazel, dogwood and spindle often indicate older hedges[61]. Field maple is found in hedges 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5a, hazel in hedges 4, 5a and 5b, dogwood in hedges 1, 5a and 5b and spindle in hedges 2, 3 and 4.

Hedgerows 1-4 bound an agricultural field which was previously part of Scudders Farm, with the farmhouse, Scudders, built in the 17th century. They adjoin two parcels of ancient woodland and the field itself was probably cleared from these woods hundreds of years ago. Hedgerows 3 and 4 are in the locations of field boundaries shown in the 1831 tithe map of the parish; hedgerows 1 and 2 appear to be relicts of Pennis Wood.

---

[59] https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/parks-gardens-and-landscapes/hedges/

[60]https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/british-trees/a-z-of-british-trees/spindle/)

[61] https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/habitats/farmland/hedgerow

Hedgerows 5a and 5b are in close proximity to a Norman Church and to the site of a medieval manor house. Hedgerow 5b is in the location of a field boundary shown in the 1831 tithe map and the OS Field Drawing of 1798 of the parish; part of 5a is also appears to be in the position of a field boundary shown on those maps, although a new section of Valley Road was subsequently created to the east of the church.

6. **Hedgerow along Fawkham Green Road, south east of Small Grains**

- This hedgerow borders an agricultural field and is approximately 200m in length, of which 30m was surveyed
- The following 4 woody species listed in Schedule 3 of the Act were seen to be present: ash, elm, hawthorn, hazel, plus possibly a wild cherry.
- The hedgerow is shrubby with standard trees on Fawkham Green Road. It connects to another hedgerow bordering Small Grains.
- The section from Small Grains to the field entrance gate is sprayed with herbicide by local government contractors, at least once a year. This means it is unlikely there will be a reliable sample of ground flora indicator species present roadside in that segment in spring/summer observations.
- The hedgerow shape is a mix of intensively managed and tall and leggy. The integrity of the hedgerow is gappy and possibly over-thinned, possibly with the use of heavy machinery used on the inside edge of the hedge (not surveyed from the field side), as well as what appears to be annual or bi-annual flailing observed on the outside. Cars have been pulling into areas of the hedgerow from the road in places, possibly to pass. The tops of the taller trees are up into the telephone wires above. Some dead, or dying trees, appear weighted by heavy ivy growth and are at risk of falling into the road.
- There are several large gaps in the hedgerow surveyed, one being approximately 6m in length. These gaps have not been replanted and instead have been either filled with wooden posts with barbed wire, or left as gaps in the hedgerow.
- A song thrush has occasionally been observed in the Small Grains end of this section of the hedgerow, by the resident of the property opposite, and was recorded singing there in summer 2021. One skylark was also heard over the field in summer 2021. On the day of the survey, four buzzards were circling in the sky above the adjoining agricultural field and dozens of bees were observed feeding upon a large area of ivy flowers in the segment of hedgerow surveyed.

This hedgerow appears on the OS Field Drawing of 1798.

Hedgerow 6

Appendix 5: Kent Biodiversity Improvement Areas