

## Landscape

Forming part of the North Kent Plain and lying upon the fine loam soils found between the London Clay underlying the Greater Thames Estuary to the north and the North Downs chalk to the south, these areas are some of the most productive agricultural areas in Kent. The area, formed by a belt either side of Watling Street, has been historically famous for its fruit, especially cherries and apples. Plums, pears and soft fruits are also present. Poly tunnels have become a characteristic feature throughout the fruit belt, used to protect and enhance the development of produce such as soft fruits. Some orchards still comprise large trees with grazing sheep and blossom in spring, strongly identifiable with the 'Garden of England'. Fruit belt areas are indicative of the traditional landscapes and ways of working that was once widespread across north Kent and, alongside the growing of hops, they are important in terms of historical reference. However, many traditional orchards been replaced with dwarf stock that is in turn being turned over to arable crops. Some became overgrown, whilst others have been sold to individuals who graze horses instead of sheep. Large areas of former fruit production are now used for arable crops, perhaps with shelterbelts or hedgerow lanes the only sign of the former land use. In some areas the orchards have changed to arable altogether and the shelterbelts largely gone. Poplar or alder dominated shelter belts are particularly characteristic of these landscapes. The regular patterns and rectangular shapes of the fields typical of this area

are more usually defined by changes in crop type, rather than by hedgerows marking the field boundaries. Within this landscape, the few small woodland blocks and copses that do exist add a vertical element and thus variety, to the horticultural scene. Occasionally, large veteran trees stand in historic parkland or in fields as reminders of former parkland. The repeated felling and regrowth of the coppice cycle has characterised some woodlands for centuries and are strongly representative of cultural and economic activity.

## Biodiversity

Whilst the predominant land use is intensive arable farming and horticulture, on heavier clay soils small woodlands can be found throughout the farmland. Providing blocks of habitat opportunity, much of the woodland is ancient. However the generally intensive agricultural landscape restricts opportunities for wildlife, and there is a lack of ecologically designated sites.

The intensive nature of the land use here is reflected in the lack of Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA) coverage in these areas. However, one should not assume from this that there is no opportunity to improve the biodiversity resource at a local level. Indeed, a number of BAP habitats associated with lowland farming are prevalent here, such as traditional orchards, hedgerows and arable field margins. The latter two habitat types provide not only valuable refuges for wildlife, but also important linear linkage ('corridors') between larger

patches of habitat such as woodland and grassland.

Old orchards that are not intensively managed provide a similar habitat to parkland and wood pasture in as much as they consist of mature and over-mature trees set among grassland. Therefore they can support species reliant on both old trees (including dead wood) and open pasture, in particular birds, lichens and invertebrates such as the noble chafer beetle. The conservation of traditional orchards is a priority at both national and county level as reflected in the UK BAP and the Kent BAP. Swale is thought to have over 450 hectares of old traditional orchard giving it the highest concentration of such habitat in Kent (refer to Figure 9 in Introduction section). Most of this is located within the Fruit Belt Landscape Types described in this section. In addition to the priority to conserve remaining traditional orchards, opportunities to create new community orchards and the planting of traditional fruit trees within development schemes should also be pursued to compensate for past and future losses elsewhere.

Appropriately managed arable habitats are becoming increasingly important for certain open farmland species, including brown hare and farmland birds such as skylark, tree sparrow and turtle dove. Where arable land incorporates patches of set-aside, spring-sown crops, arable weeds, species-rich hedgerows, grass leys and/or wide field margins, such species can flourish. However, some of these management practices have waned over recent decades leading to declines in these key species.

The Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England can help arable and orchard farmland to incorporate valuable habitat features and management practices through targeted funding and advice.

## Climate Change

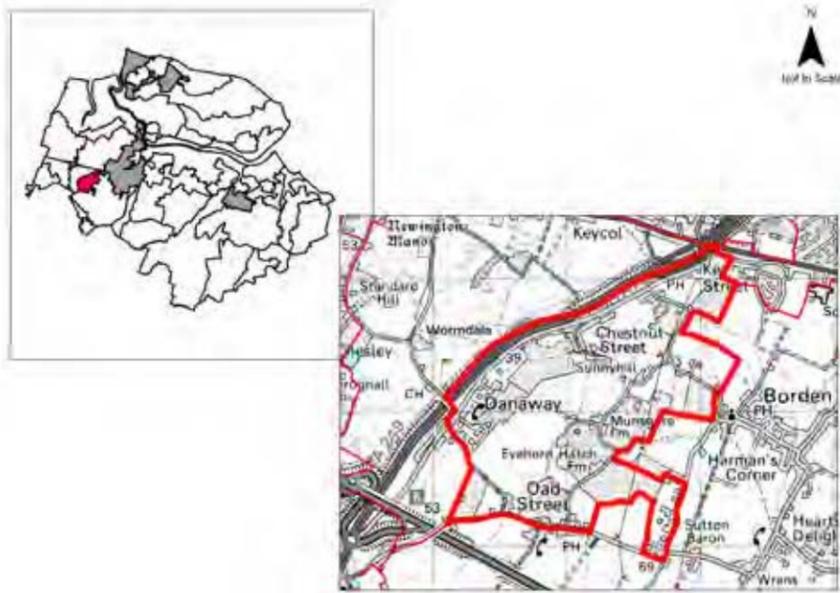
With a current lack of detailed studies, it is difficult to predict how this area's characteristic habitats will respond to climate change, but species composition within habitats is highly likely to alter. For example, in woods, shallow-rooted beech trees may suffer from drier soils but small leaved lime reproduction may increase in response to warmer temperatures. Veteran trees are a key concern for this area as the increase in storm-force winds may fell these important habitat features. In the area's parklands, this could lead to a significant loss of biodiversity, in particular bats, lichens and notable invertebrates of standing dead wood. Therefore, the planting and conservation of future veteran trees and old orchards together with linkage of hedges and woodland habitats are all important measures for retaining characteristic wildlife communities.

In these farmland landscape types, the economic response to climate change of the agricultural sector may have a greater effect on habitat quality and distribution than the direct climatic effects themselves. Warmer temperatures and drier summers, plus changing world markets may lead to a shift to land uses which can take advantage of such conditions. New horticultural techniques may also form part of an adaptive response that could impact biodiversity in these landscapes. The challenge will be to ensure that such changes are aligned with mechanisms to preserve and connect important farmland habitats.

## Fruit Belt Landscapes Guidelines

- Appropriate proposals that would enable fruit and hop production to continue should be promoted.
- The conservation of the strong pattern of existing woodlands, hedgerows and shelterbelts and remaining hop gardens and orchards is important in maintaining the traditional landscape pattern and habitat connectivity.
- Whilst polytunnels form part of the character of the fruit belt landscape, they can be visually intrusive. Avoid situating polytunnels in visually prominent locations.
- Conserve old orchards as a distinctive landscape feature, and for their nature conservation interest.
- Encourage the planting of new community orchards around settlements, within large housing development schemes and on land of currently low biodiversity value to form part of the green infrastructure provision for strategic development schemes in the fruit belt. Such orchard planting would provide landscape, biodiversity and cultural benefits in addition to recreation and access opportunities, which would constitute locally relevant examples of the multi-functional green infrastructure that is advised by the South East Green Infrastructure Framework.

# 19. Borden Mixed Farmlands



## Key Characteristics

- Rolling topography with mixed geology of chalk, head and clay-with-flints
- Enclosed rural landscape, with valleys, fragmented over-mature hedgerows, small pockets of isolated woodland, mature and remnant orchard
- Intimate small-scale fields, in places enlarged for cereal crops
- Urbanised ribbon development along western boundary
- Traditional land uses indicated by now isolated mature shelterbelts and oasts

## Landscape Description

This rural landscape is situated between the A2 and M2, south west of Sittingbourne, with the A249 along its western boundary. The mixed geology is typical of the North Downs dip slope, with chalk on the higher ground and head and clay-with-flints on the lower lying slopes. Although it cannot be described as rare, this is an interesting landscape with an intimate character unlike the surrounding areas. The fields are generally small-scale and irregular in shape and land use is mixed with many mature and remnant orchards separated by fields enlarged for cereal production.

It is an intimate, rolling landscape with two valleys, where views are foreshortened by the topography and vegetation. Mature hedgerows enclose the narrow, twisting, occasionally sunken lanes. Small isolated broadleaf woodlands of oak, ash and hazel are scattered across the western slopes. Traditionally this would have been an area almost entirely used for the production of fruit. Whilst working orchards are still a feature, many have been lost or are in decline and where located on steeper areas the plots have been subdivided for use as grazing land for horses.



The A249 valley has a mix of ribbon and sporadic development, sometimes on the valley side, mixed with scrub, woodland and pastures. The greatest concentration of housing is found at Chestnut Street. This is a loosely knit ribbon development fronting onto the old Sittingbourne to Maidstone Road. It is now by-passed by the A249 dual carriageway. Chestnut Street

is recorded in the Patent Rolls of 1256 as The Chastynners, meaning "the place where chestnuts grow". Hasted, writing in the 18th century, referred to the large tract of chestnut woods, which then stretched from Oad Street to the Detling Road. These woods have now largely disappeared.

The outstanding feature of Chestnut Street is a group of medieval timber framed houses, which epitomise the best of the Kentish vernacular. Dating from the 15th and 16th centuries they are exposed timber framed buildings infilled with white painted plaster. Some renovations appear to be currently under way. Development on the opposite side of the road dates from the 19th century, with infilling and rebuilding in recent years. It is these buildings rather than the historic buildings that are most prominent in the street scene. The steep slopes and dense vegetation found to the rear of these properties isolates Chestnut Street from the rest of the Borden Mixed Farmlands.



The hillside rising behind the buildings in Chestnut Street to Chestnut Wood is a distinctive feature. The woodland itself is interesting as next to it is one of the few remaining, if not the last, working chestnut paling works that uses the adjacent woodland. This provides a direct relationship between the management of the wood and the economic use of the woodland. On the more open ground behind the A249 valley, a large equine establishment, with its network of post, rail and white tape edges to paddocks, dominates.

Elsewhere the small villages and scattered cottages retain a strong rural character. Fine examples of vernacular architecture are seen throughout and of particular interest are those within the hamlet of Oad Street. Here the oldest building is The Plestor, dating from 14th century and is an early aisled hall house. Other properties facing onto the road front are more modest, date from the 1700s and are mainly built in brick with occasional white painted weatherboard. Elsewhere other vernacular buildings include a small flint built school at Borden, weatherboard clad barns and oasts.

## Condition: Moderate

Borden Mixed Farmlands are in moderate condition. Whilst the undulating topography and mature vegetation, help to screen the landscape, visually this area cannot be described as unified. The fragmentation and removal of hedgerows and replacement in some places with post and wire fencing has reduced the sense of completeness. The influence of Sittingbourne's urban fringe is particularly noticeable towards Chestnut Street, partly exacerbated by the scale of the A249 in this area.

Many of the orchards have become over-mature and many are now used for grazing ponies. Where this is the case, stable blocks and the occasional caravan have been introduced and orchards have been subdivided by post and wire fencing into smaller paddocks.

The ecological integrity of this area is fairly good, despite loss of hedgerows. Non-intensively managed orchards provide valuable mixed habitats, as do remnant shelterbelts and grasslands with mixed management regimes. Isolated woodlands and scrub provide other significant areas for biodiversity.

The impact of built development has been more significant in some areas than others, particularly towards the urban edge of Sittingbourne. Today notable examples of modern development have been built using local vernacular building materials of brick and flint. However, during the 20th century mixed building styles created urban sprawl along the Maidstone Road south of Chestnut Street. Fortunately within the more rural parts of this area, the traditional character has largely been retained and notable historic buildings well maintained.

## Guidelines: Conserve and Create

Within this area actions should encourage the conservation of existing traditional features and the creation of elements to strengthen the character of the area.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and for commercial and equestrian.
- Conserve the intimate and rolling landscape character of valleys and hillsides, together with its hedgerows, pockets of isolated woodland, mature and remnant orchard and the area's narrow, enclosed, hedge lined and banked lanes. Look for opportunities to create such features and to additionally create links between existing hedgerows, windbreaks and woodlands.
- Conserve remnant areas of woodland on the hillside valley along the A249 and create stronger woodland blocks through managing, restoring and extending areas of woodland.
- Avoid inappropriate large-scale or obtrusive elements on visually sensitive open areas and valley sides.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick walls, chestnut paling/diamond spile fences, picket fencing or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles, occasional slate and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow (for newer buildings) stock brick.

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive area, where the topography and tree cover restrict views across and out of the area. However, the recent decline in land use has eroded the distinctive character of the area and weakened its sense of place. This is also true of the building practices of the last century. The urban edge of Sittingbourne is locally visible and here, the integrity and setting of some rural settlements is sensitive.



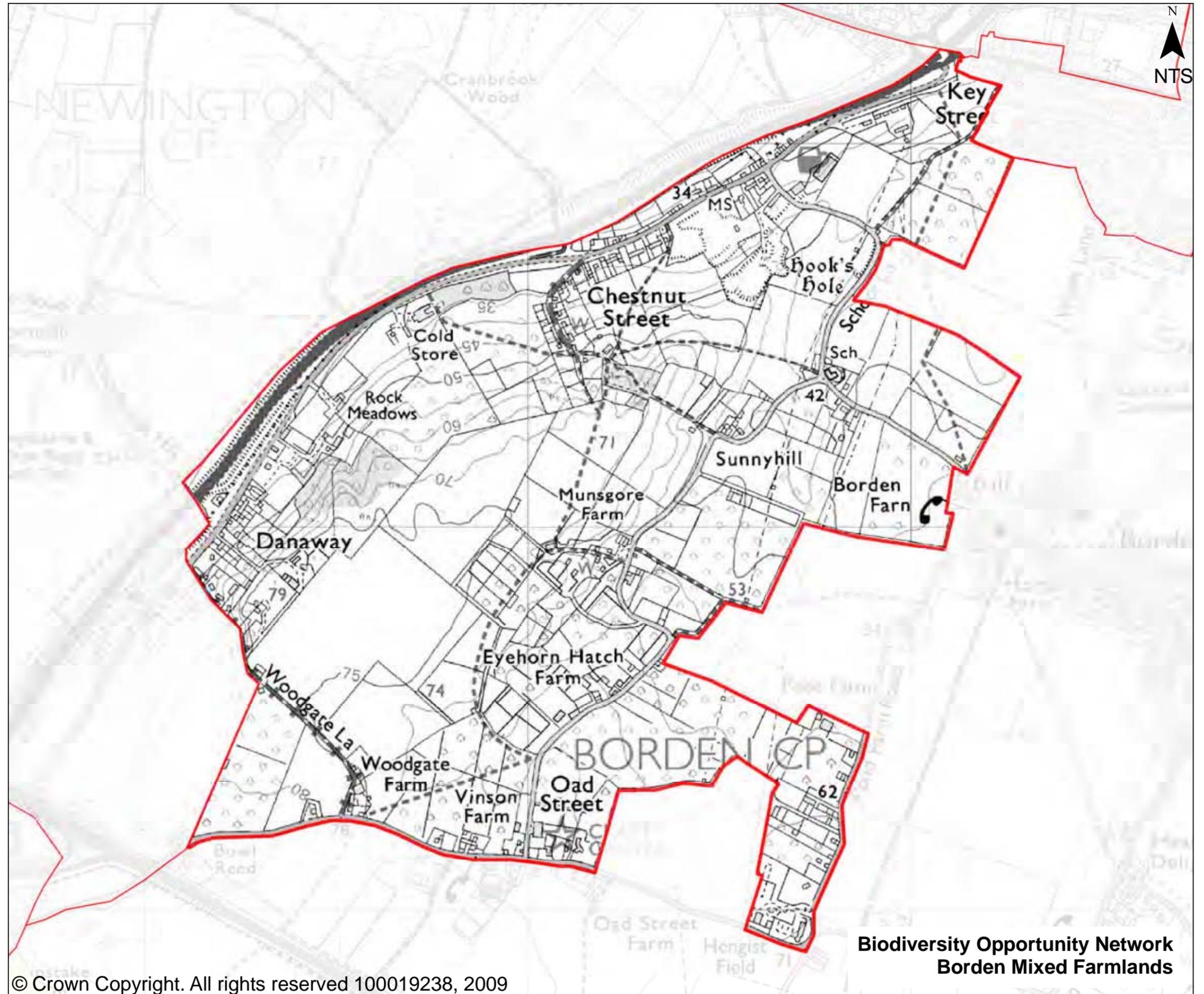
For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, pedunculate oak, blackthorn, dog rose, elder, holly, field maple, crab apple, bullace, damson and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, ash, sweet chestnut coppice, wild cherry, field maple, hazel and hawthorn. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees, occasional yew and beech hedging. Shelterbelts - Poplar. Other - fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
		Sensitivity		

# 19. Borden Mixed Farmlands

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

The Borden Mixed Farmlands does not fall within the strategic BOA habitat network. However, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.

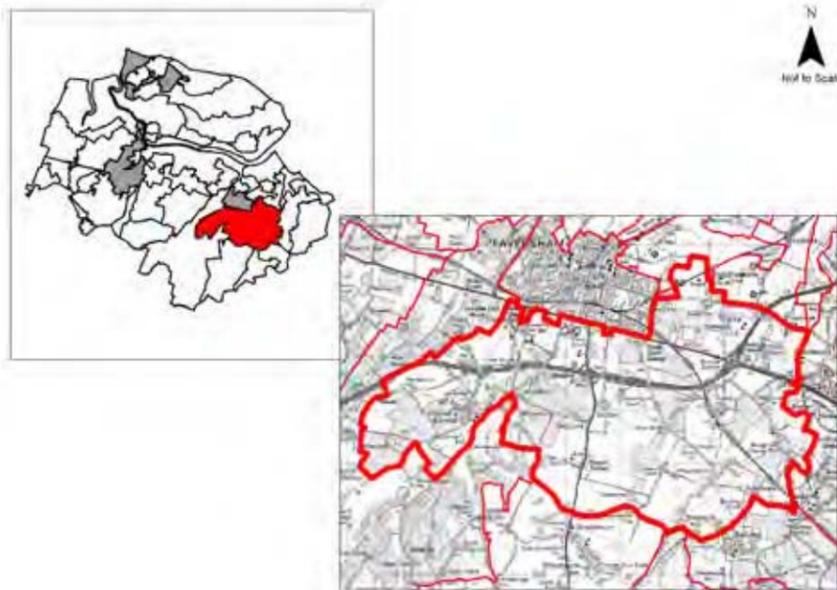


**Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network**

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites

## 20. Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt



### Landscape Description

To the south east and south west, the landscape is nationally designated as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt extends from the southern boundary of Faversham to the foot of the North Downs dip slope. The area is characterised by its gently undulating landscape that steadily climbs southwards. The mixed geology has led to varied modern farming practices. Traditional fruit and hop production is now less common, with arable being the primary land use. Around Faversham the soils are largely a mixture of head brickearth, Thanet beds drift and chalk. On the lower dip slopes the soils become clay-with-flints and chalk. As would be expected, fruit production tends to be on the more fertile soils and arable areas on the poorer chalk and clay areas.

Landscape structure can be described as generally strong and intact. Although it contains no significant areas of woodland, a number of smaller oak and ash woodland shaws are scattered across the area. Many mature specimen trees are associated with farms and villages, whilst shelterbelts are used to enclose former and existing hop gardens and orchards. Historically the large open fields are part of an open field system that was never enclosed. The field pattern may therefore be described as generally intact, mixed, with irregular small to large-scale fields. Consequently intermittent long views are visible from high open areas, but are enclosed elsewhere. At Whitehill the landscape is more enclosed where two dry valleys converge. Here the land cover comprises orchards and parkland on the sloping ground. Across the area,



mature mixed native hedgerows are common but do become fragmented in places and supplemented with post and wire fencing.

Transport networks are varied. Cutting from east to west across the centre of the area is the M2. This is generally in cutting and therefore makes little impression on the wider landscape. Even at the A2/ M2 junction, where the road is raised above the surrounding landscape, tree screening significantly softens and integrates this large intersection. The A2 follows the southern boundary of Faversham town and the A251 to Ashford, runs north south from the A2. Elsewhere narrow lanes and wider B roads wiggle through complex traditional landscapes and through historic villages. Elsewhere they cut directly across more open areas. Many of these lanes are of historic origin, with some formerly used as drovers' roads.

Settlement includes small historic villages and many scattered isolated farms. Traditional buildings abound with cottages and farmhouses dating from the 15th to 20th century. Oasts are another traditional feature, but many have been lost as a result of disuse. In places formerly derelict oast houses have been converted to residential dwellings. A number of traditional farm buildings have gone or are under threat as a result of conglomeration of some farmsteads. Churches are built in flint and houses generally in the brick that has been extracted locally for centuries. The urban edge of Faversham is generally well defined and, whilst some urban influences have spread south of the A2, there is a particularly quick transition between the urban and rural areas along the east and south eastern urban boundaries.

In summary it is a tranquil landscape with a strong traditional character. It contains many fine historic properties and ancient lanes. It is also a valuable landscape in terms of biodiversity due to the varied habitats and wildlife corridors that exist here.

### Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landscape that steadily climbs southwards
- Mixed geology of head brickearth, Thanet beds drift, clay-with-flints and chalk
- Small to medium-scale orchards and large open arable fields
- Woodland shaws and new plantation
- Mature fragmented hedgerows supplemented with post and wire fencing
- Many fine historic buildings in local vernacular style
- Motorways, A and B roads, narrow winding lanes. Many lanes of historic interest including former drovers' routes and the A251, a former turnpike road

### Condition: Good

The Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt is in good condition. Land use is a mixture of fruit orchards, some of which are non-intensive, and larger scale arable fields. Mature hedgerows, poplar windbreaks, woodland shaws and mature specimen trees associated with settlement as well as newly planted areas of woodland, all provide a unified landscape structure. In places hedgerows have become fragmented and supplemented with post and wire fencing but generally they are strong and in good condition. Important wildlife habitats include all of the above and the open farmland that is a home to skylarks. A small section of the Abbey Fields LWS is situated to the north of the area and this site is notable for its scrubland and grassland birds and invertebrate assemblage.



This landscape contains few visual detractors, but some derelict buildings, farm buildings and poorly constructed stable blocks are occasionally seen. On the whole consistently high quality traditional buildings are found scattered throughout the area. Modern development is limited in extent and well integrated. There are some incongruous features where the land use or pattern have been changed such as Farming World at Nash Court and the golf course south of Boughton.

### Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt encourage the conservation and reinforcement of the landscape and built form.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and on landmark buildings.
- Refer to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 (First Revision 2009) for policies relating to the management of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB.
- Actions within this character area should be undertaken in accordance with the Core Strategy Natural Assets Policy which aims to conserve and enhance the AONB.
- Conserve the largely rural setting of the small market town of Faversham and St Mary's Church.
- Conserve the rectilinear landscape pattern and look for opportunities to reinforce the continuity of hedgerows, shaws and shelterbelts, whilst maintaining the openness of areas that have never been enclosed and conserving the intimate, orchard covered and enclosed landscape character around the valley forms at Whitehill and Plumford.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries – local red or yellow stock brick, estate iron railings, red brick and flint or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and

### Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. In general term visibility is moderate; however, this varies from high on the elevated open fields where there are views of Faversham, to low on the enclosed lower slopes, valleys and areas of orchard and hops. Mature hedgerows and shelterbelts are characteristic and emphasise the field pattern.

Historic farming practices are reflected in the landscape structure and built form, although this has been somewhat eroded with late 20th century expansion of farmsteads and loss of many traditional farm buildings. On the whole the quality of the built environment is high, with many properties retaining a distinct vernacular style.

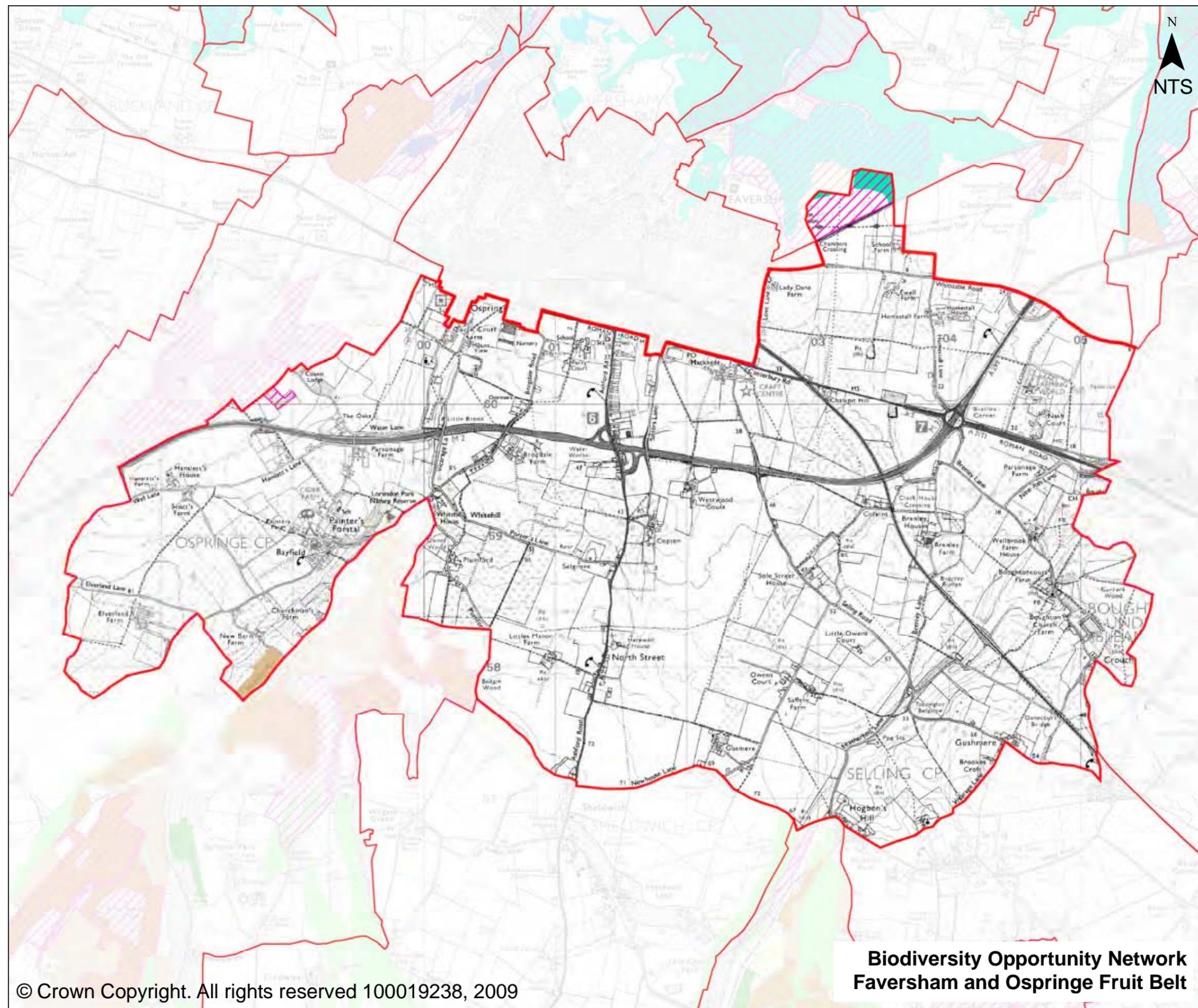
occasional thatch or slate and corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, flint, red or yellow stock brick and white/rendered painted brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, elder, damson and dogwood, for mixed woodland, shaws or other planting - pedunculate oak, ash, hornbeam, hazel, field maple and wild cherry. Additionally, within developed areas – pedunculate oak, ash, horse chestnut, older fruit tree varieties and beech, box, holly or yew hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar or alder. Other - fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
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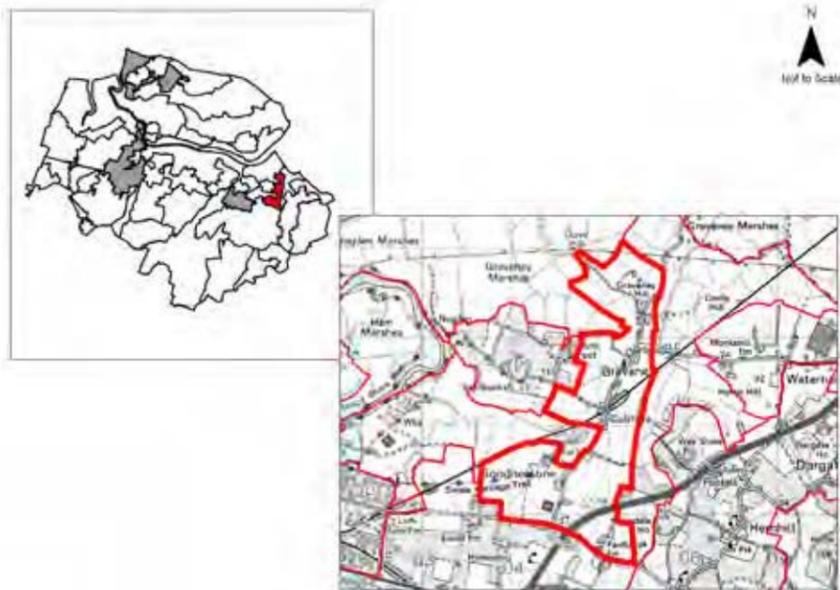
## 20. Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt falls outside of the strategic BOA network. However, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



# 21. Graveney Arable Farmlands



## Landscape Description

Graveney Arable Farmlands describes the area that stretches south in a narrow corridor from Cleve Marshes to Goodnestone. It is an area of mixed geology, containing fertile drift soils including Thanet, Woolwich and Oldhaven beds, and also large outcrops of heavy London clay as well as head brickearth. The topography is gently undulating, rising from 5 to 15m with localised areas of higher ground, such as at Cleve Hill, which forms a modest raised backdrop to the marshes to the north. The recent development of a large substation for an offshore windfarm at Cleve Hill forms a distinct and visually prominent feature within the landscape.

The land is managed for the production of arable crops and fields have generally been enlarged to accommodate this practice. On the edge of settlements many fields have been subdivided to accommodate horse pasture and other rural fringe activities such as playing fields. Many internal hedgerows have been lost and remaining corridors are generally limited to road verges and enlarged external boundaries. Post and wire fencing becomes common in the more remote northern areas. Elm dominates roadside hedgerows, but these become increasingly fragmented towards the north.

As well as arable, this landscape is also used for the production of fruit. Traditional over-mature orchards are falling into decline, but cherries are still sold in the area. Elsewhere poly-tunnels have been erected for the production of strawberries in the fields around Graveney. Unlike other fruit producing areas, there is no strong boundary pattern of shelterbelts here.

The area is easily accessed via the B road that runs north south from the Graveney Marsh coastline to the A299 junction. This is a straight road along which are intermittently scattered small villages, groups of cottages, farms and large houses. Much of the building stock is of traditional vernacular style, built in weatherboard and brick, whilst oasts have been restored as family homes. Elsewhere, mid to late 20th century housing has been built in mixed style and this includes uncharacteristic semi-permanent chalets. However,

on the western periphery of the area the field surrounded church and historic buildings at Goodnestone Court provide distinctive elements.



The railway runs across this landscape but is in cutting and therefore has little impact of the landscape. The embankments contain mature scrub and are useful wildlife corridors. Elsewhere woodland and scrub are limited to isolated narrow strips of mixed deciduous species along field boundaries.

## Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating landscape, with localised higher ground
- Complex geology of fertile well drained drift soils, heavy clay and brickearth
- Mixed field pattern of large and small-scale
- Open arable farmland with isolated mature orchards and soft fruit
- Rural fringe activities such as horse pasture
- Many internal field boundaries lost
- Fragmented mature hedgerows along lanes supplemented with post and wire
- Train line, B roads and narrow country lanes
- Views enclosed by vegetation and built development, but wide from within fields and where hedgerows fragmented

## Condition: Poor

Improved access, modern built form including the large and visually prominent sub station at Cleve Hill and changes in farming practice have transformed the character of this once remote and isolated landscape, to one which is now generally in poor condition. Despite this, large open fields form a coherent landscape pattern and visual detractors are limited to modern chalet style houses, occasional modern farm buildings in poor condition and the poor and insensitive renovation of Graveney Church.

Functional integrity is weak. Ecological interest has been reduced with the removal of many hedgerows and the natural fragmentation of what remains. Blocks of woodland are extremely limited in extent and scale. The railway line significantly contributes to biodiversity in the area.

Cultural integrity has been reduced with the loss of traditional landscape elements such as hedgerows, woodlands, orchards and shelterbelts as a result of agricultural intensification. Many fine traditional properties have been well maintained and mature vegetation including specimen trees, significantly enhance the environment, 20th century residential development has not always been well considered. Whilst some have been built in more traditional brick and tile, little has been done however to integrate this type of development into the surrounding landscape.



## Guidelines: Restore and Create

The Graveney Arable Farmlands are in need of restoration and where possible additional landscape elements created.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes, landmark buildings, particularly for oasts and churches and commercial and equestrian.
- Conserve the remaining landscape structure of trees, scrub, hedgerows and orchard and look for opportunities to restore and improve landscape structure through the establishment and maintenance of hedgerows along roadsides, the integration of new and existing development into the landscape using woodland blocks and hedgerows and the linking of existing isolated woodlands and hedgerows.
- Avoid proposals that would be unduly prominent on high or open ground, and have particular regard to sensitive views from the marshes to the north.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick, estate iron railings, red brick and flint or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional thatch or slate and corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, mathematical tiles, red (predominantly) or yellow stock brick and white/rendered painted brick,

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive landscape where the landform and field boundaries make for a relatively open environment. Views are sometimes contained by fragmented mature hedgerows, gentle topography and development, but have generally been widened by loss of hedgerows and long views of the marsh to the north and Faversham to the west are often available from higher ground. Many traditional features that once contributed to the distinctiveness of this landscape have been lost.

timber and plaster. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, elder, field maple, blackthorn, dog rose, dogwood, oak and ash, for mixed woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, ash, willow, wild cherry, hazel and field maple. Additionally, within developed areas – pedunculate oak, ash, older fruit tree varieties. Shelterbelts – poplar. Other – occasional orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
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# 21. Graveney Arable Farmlands

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

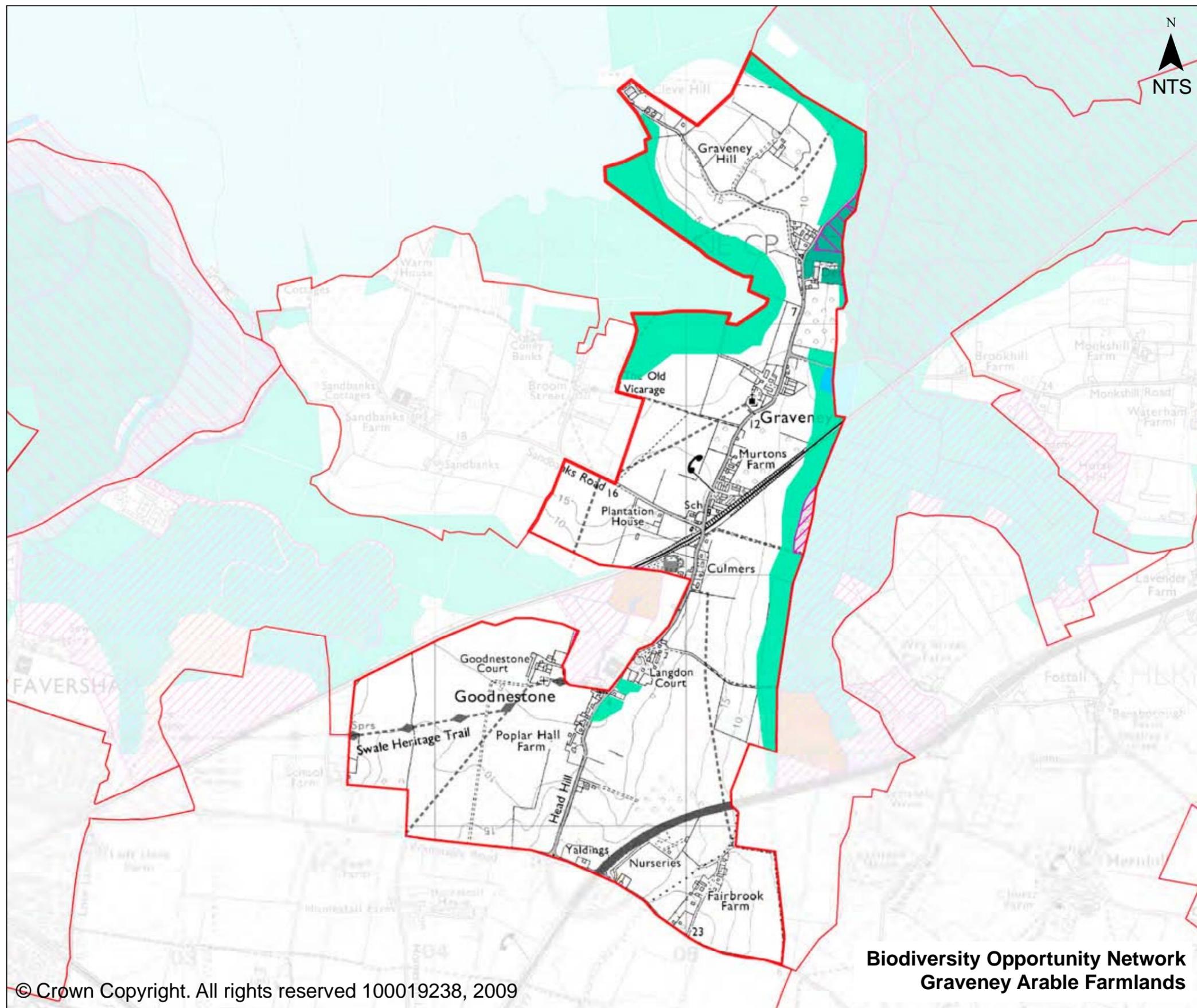
The strategic habitat network in Graveney Arable Farmlands is to be found on the eastern and north-west periphery. Here there is some potential for grazing marsh and intertidal habitat in the low-lying parts of fields. Elsewhere on the higher ground, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



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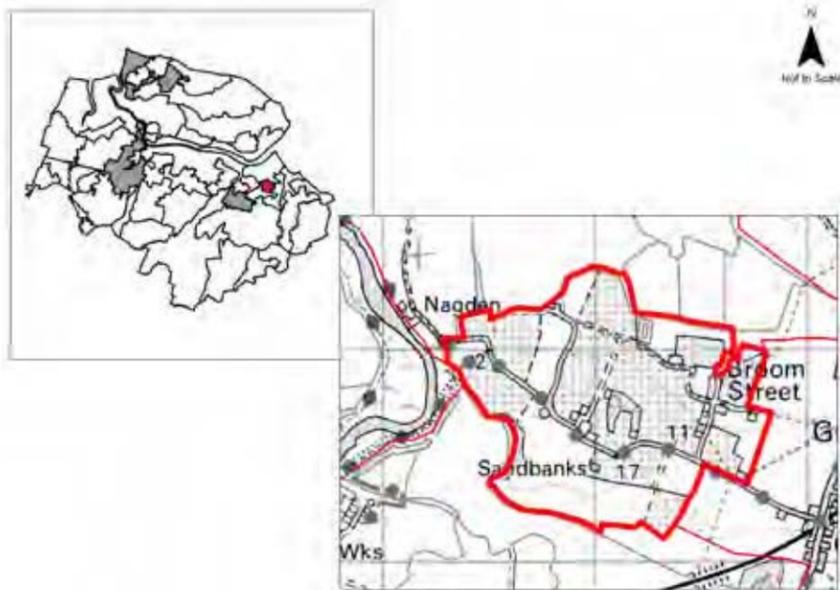
- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
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- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



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**Biodiversity Opportunity Network  
Graveney Arable Farmlands**

## 22. Graveney Fruit Farms



### Key Characteristics

- Traditional Kentish landscape of orchards and enclosed fruit fields
- An area of high ground, with mixed geology of fertile drift deposits and London clay
- Strong pattern of enclosure created by the shelterbelts and mature hedgerows
- Small isolated mixed deciduous woodland shaws
- Narrow lanes with few passing places enclosed by windbreaks and hedgerows
- Settlement is small-scale and limited to a small hamlet, scattered cottages and farmsteads
- Many well maintained traditional buildings in vernacular style

### Landscape Description



Roads are limited to narrow winding lanes, in places sunken and lined by mature hedgerows and shelterbelts. The settlement pattern comprises scattered cottages and farmsteads, a parsonage and the tiny hamlet of Broom Street. Many fine buildings add to the intrinsic traditional agricultural character. They vary in scale but are largely in vernacular materials and building style. Oast houses are indicative of a once thriving hop growing area. Weatherboarded barns set in enclosed farmyards; red brick cottages and the elegant parsonage are all set within well maintained plots. Some mid 20th century cottages have been built for farm workers, but they are limited in extent and have little visual impact.

Graveney Fruit Farms is an enclosed and intimate landscape used for the production of soft and top fruit. It rises above the surrounding low-lying levels to a height of 20m. The complex geology includes deep, rich, well drained drift soils and small peripheral areas of heavy London clay. Farming practices have largely been transformed in adjacent character areas, which means that this is now a noticeably isolated traditional landscape.

The fertile soils support a mosaic of productive orchards and soft fruit fields. There is a strong but irregular medium to small-scale field pattern enforced by windbreaks and native hedgerows. The uniform rows of orchard trees emphasise this pattern. Small isolated woodlands are also scattered across the area and add to the sense of enclosure.



### Condition: Good

This area is in very good condition. Small strips of woodland occasionally interrupt the otherwise strong unity of fruit fields and orchards. There are few detracting features other than isolated modern residential dwellings and occasional inappropriate use of coniferous trees as shelterbelts.

Small woodlands, mature intact hedgerows and the network of mature windbreaks, provide good ecological networks in this intensively farmed landscape. The orchards are generally intensively managed which limits their value for wildlife. The area's cultural heritage is clearly visible in the numerous traditional buildings, which are generally in very good condition. More recent buildings built in the mid 20th century make no reference to the local vernacular.



### Sensitivity: Moderate

This is an area of moderate sensitivity. It retains a very distinct character with traditional elements such as shelterbelts and historic buildings. The field pattern is essentially historic although there has been the conversion from hop growing to fruit. The strong vegetative pattern encloses the landscape and thus reduces its visibility. However, it is on elevated ground and any changes in farming practice that resulted in the loss of trees or hedgerows would visibly increase the sensitivity of the landscape.

This is a landscape so directly related to its land use that it is extremely vulnerable to changes to the agri-economy that might change land management.

### Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Graveney Fruit Farms aim to conserve and reinforce the existing landscape pattern.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes.
- Conserve the enclosed, isolated and intimate landscape character formed by its scattered settlement pattern, the mosaic of orchards, soft fruit and small woodlands within a strong pattern of small to medium fields framed by hedgerows and shelterbelts and crossed by sheltered lanes. Look for opportunities to reinforce the structure of the landscape with shelterbelts (including the replacement of coniferous windbreaks) and hedgerows.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick, estate iron railings or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional slate or corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls - weatherboarding, red (predominantly) or yellow stock brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, blackthorn,

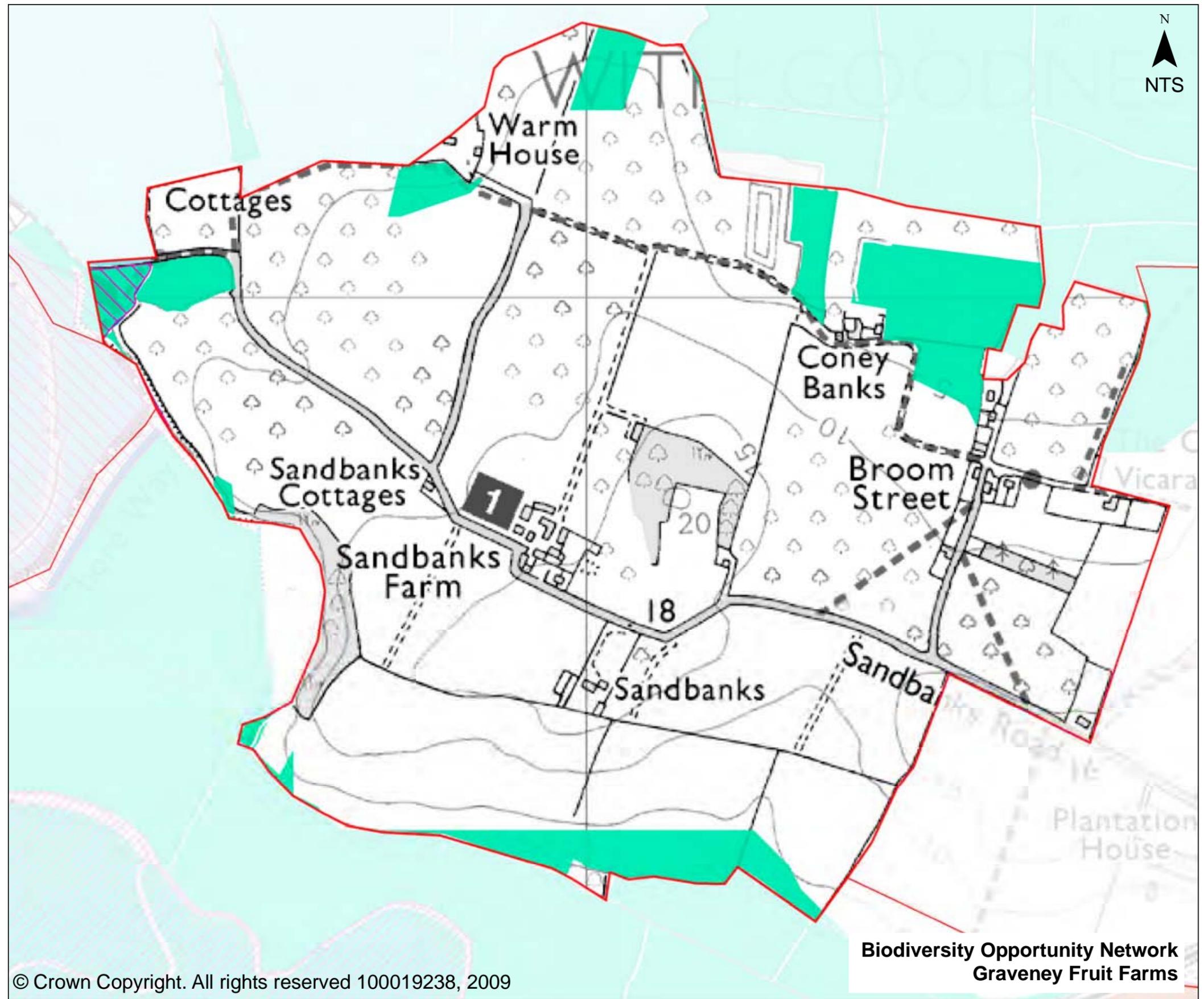
dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson, field maple and dogwood. Additionally, within developed areas – silver birch, willow, hawthorn, blackthorn, or older fruit tree varieties and hawthorn as hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar, willow, or alder.

	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
Condition	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
		Sensitivity		

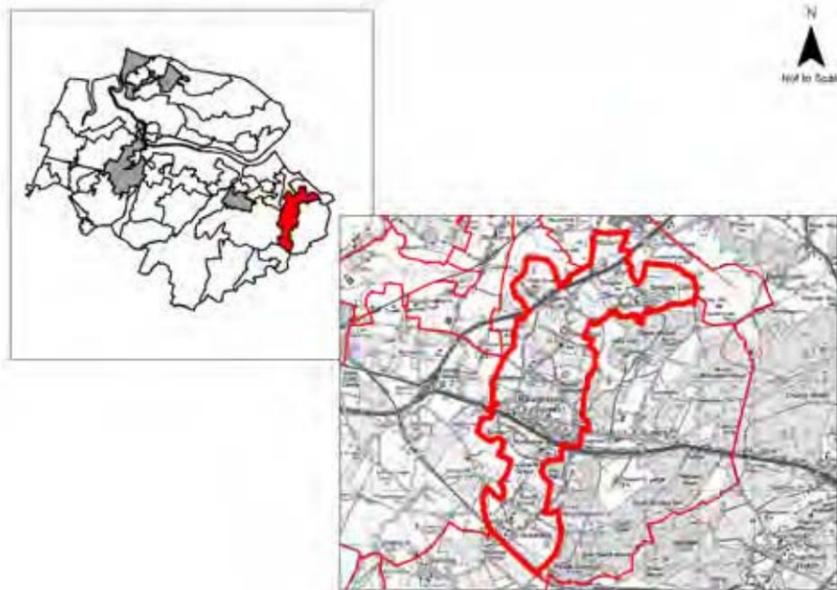
## 22. Graveney Fruit Farms

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

On the periphery of this character area are small areas of potential grazing marsh and/or intertidal habitat. Elsewhere, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



## 23. Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt



### Landscape Description

This is a distinctive, small-scale, enclosed landscape situated



in the vicinity of Hernhill and Boughton under Blean, west of the Blean Woodland complex. Predominantly a fruit producing area, it also contains isolated hop gardens and small arable fields.

It is an area of mixed geology that includes numerous fertile drift soils, which are deep, well drained and support a mosaic of productive orchards and some hops covering the distinctly folded topography. A strong but irregular field pattern, of small to medium-scale, is emphasised by the poplar windbreaks and mature hedgerows of mixed native species. This pattern is exaggerated by the uniform rows of orchard trees.

Small sections of neighbouring Local Wildlife Sites extend into the margins of this character area. This includes a small part of the Graveney Dykes and Pastures LWS to the north-west and a small area of the Blean Woods South LWS south of Boughton.

There are extensive views northward towards the marshes and beyond from certain vantage points, whilst the Blean Woods form a backdrop to the area and enclose it to the south. At the fringes of the area, where it abuts marshland and tree cover, a strong sense of place is formed.

Transport routes include major trunk roads, the A2 and A299, B roads and narrow lanes. The A roads do not significantly detract from the overall character as they tend to be well screened.

The Canterbury to Faversham rail link and Selling Station mark the southern boundary of this area. Settlement pattern comprises the large linear village of Boughton, which now extends into Horslees.



Recent housing development along Boughton is increasing the density of development. Elsewhere scattered small-scale nucleated villages are set around lane junctions, Hernhill, for example, represents the textbook Kentish village. These are generally unspoilt and very rural in character. Scattered farmsteads and clusters of cottages, as well as large historic country houses also feature. All settlements are distinct in their strong local character and have fine historic centres.

Buildings are irregularly grouped and vary in scale and character. Commonly observed distinct vernacular building styles include timber frame, weatherboard, brick and tile hung and can be dated from 14th century to modern day. Oasts are a common feature, some large and some small, some reclaimed and converted to residential or commercial premises and some derelict. Churches are typically constructed of local flint. The church at Hernhill provides a local landmark, visible across a fairly wide area. Whilst use of local vernacular materials and building styles is abundant throughout the area, many of the houses within the larger settlements are indistinct, modern houses of inappropriate style. These have to a small degree diluted the otherwise very strong character.

The house and gardens at Mount Ephraim originally date from the early 1700s and were rebuilt and extended in 1880. The gardens are renowned for their park-like grounds and scattered exotic trees and shrubs, with later terracing, balustrades and topiary in a more formal Edwardian style.

The overall picture is one of typical traditional Kentish countryside, undulating fields with an abundance of orchards, some hop production, and scattered traditional settlements.



### Key Characteristics

- Traditional rolling Kentish landscape of orchards, overshadowed by Blean Woods
- Good quality, well drained, deep loam soils
- Predominantly fruit production with occasional arable and hop gardens
- Small to medium-scale field pattern, with strong network of shelterbelts, hedgerows and scattered woodlands
- Well-managed landscape intensively farmed
- Strongly Kentish form and character
- Traditional vernacular buildings. Large oast houses. Large country houses
- Mount Ephraim with its house and fine gardens

### Condition: Good

This fruit belt area is in very good condition. Infrequently arable fields and small areas of woodland fragment the unity of the orchards and hop gardens. Post and wire fencing occasionally features where horse grazing has replaced more traditional land uses. Modern residential estate development has not always taken account of the traditional character of the settlements in which they have been built. More recently local vernacular style is beginning to feature in early 21st century housing.

Small belts of woodland, mature intact hedgerows of mixed native species and orchard windbreaks are well linked and thus provide good ecological networks in this otherwise intensely farmed landscape. Elsewhere mature standard oaks are scattered across open fields. However, the landscape is so directly related to its land use that the area is particularly sensitive to changes in farming practice.

Many traditional buildings indicate the rich cultural heritage of this landscape. From the large manor houses to the oast houses, many examples of traditional historic architecture are found here and are largely in good condition.

### Sensitivity: High

This is a very distinct landscape containing a strong network of shelterbelts, orchards, hop gardens and many traditional buildings. The field pattern is historic although there has been a shift from large-scale hop production to fruit.

Despite the rolling topography and many high points, the numerous shelterbelts, orchards, hedges and woodlands all contribute to the landscape's moderate visibility. Settlements and planting associated with major trunk roads and lane sides further contribute to this enclosure. Any changes in management that would result in loss of vegetative cover would increase visibility of the landscape. Thus the landscape may be considered highly sensitive to changes in farming practice which have occurred since 2005.



### Guidelines: Conserve

The traditional landscape character and built environment of Hernhill and Boughton under Blean should be conserved.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes, landmark buildings and historic parkland.
- Conserve the intimate landscape character formed by the small-medium-scale field pattern with a strong network of shelterbelts and hedgerows, together with woodland, orchard and hop cover. Additionally, look for opportunities, in localised denuded areas, to reinstate such features.
- Conserve the distinctive landscape character formed at the boundaries with other character areas, such as where orchard and pasture meet, or form, the setting to the Blean wood complex, or where rising ground immediately adjoins the Graveney Dykes.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red (almost predominantly) stock brick walls, estate iron railings, chestnut diamond spile or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional thatch or slate and corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls – weatherboarding, tile hanging, timber frame and plaster infill, flint, red or yellow stock brick and white/

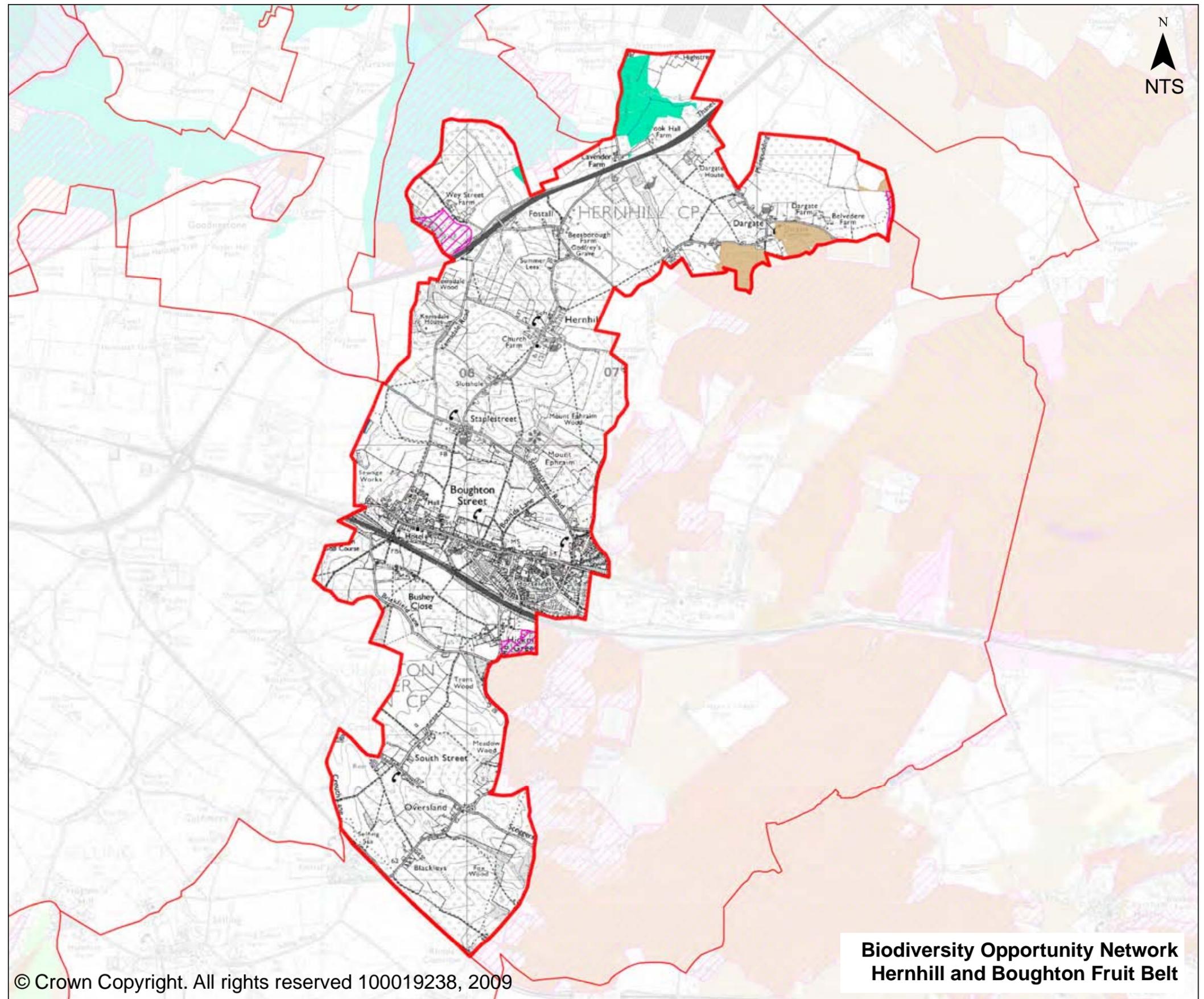
rendered painted brick, some stone and flint. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, field maple, dog rose and dogwood. For mixed-woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, hornbeam, hazel and birch, scattered oak standards in open fields. Additionally, within developed areas – yew, older fruit tree varieties and beech, box, privet, holly or yew hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar. Other – mixed fruit orchard, hop gardens.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
Sensitivity				

## 23. Hernhill and Boughton Fruit Belt

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

The biodiversity opportunity network is limited in this character area and falls mainly in the north of the area. Near Dargate, there are two patches of woodland opportunity which would extend part of the Blean woodland network to the east. At Waterham to the north there is some opportunity to extend the grazing marsh and/or intertidal network. Elsewhere general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



# 24. Iwade Arable Farmlands



## Landscape Description

Iwade Arable Farmlands are very gently undulating rural landscapes that have been formed from the underlying geology of London clay and Bagshot beds. To the south the more fertile soils of the Thanet and Woolwich beds, head and head gravel are present. Traditionally these would have supported fruit production. However today cereal crops have mainly replaced the orchards and indeed this is the case throughout the area. The large number of natural watercourses that feed the land improves the fertility of the vicinity.

The medium and large-scale fields provide for long views across the open arable landscape.

Nestled within this landscape are isolated farmsteads and cottages. Most of the buildings are of mixed style and materials, built in the mid to late 20th century. There are however some interesting historic properties, including the grade II listed Sole Place and the grade I listed church both at Bobbing. Further west Great Norwood is believed to be the historic site of Great Norwood Castle. The moat of this fortified house still exists and the present farm buildings are grade II listed. The village of Iwade has undergone considerable expansion, which has changed the character of this small marsh side settlement to a suburban village. Recent high density housing is clearly evident in views across the surrounding open arable landscape.



## Key Characteristics

- Mixed geology, clay and fertile drift soils
- Cereal production has replaced traditional orchards
- Medium to large-scale fields
- Fragmentation and extensive loss of hedgerows
- Hawes and Wardwell Woods are larger woodlands on a prominent hillside near the coast
- Valley and hill setting to village of Newington with landmark Church
- Isolated farmsteads and cottages
- Isolated historic properties. Elsewhere mixed 20th century development
- Intrusive overhead power lines
- Major trunk road, rail link and enclosed, winding country lanes

Several major transport routes cut through the area. These include the busy A2, which forms the southern boundary, the A249 and the Sittingbourne to Rainham rail link. The recent Sheppey Crossing is visible from the eastern part of the area. In spite of the intrusive effects of these heavily trafficked routes, many parts of this character area retain a sense of isolation and tranquillity. In part this is due to the topography and also to the fragmented landscape elements of mature hedgerows, shelterbelts and woodlands that are scattered across the area.

Hawes and Wardwell Woods form one of the few wooded areas. This ancient woodland and designated Local Wildlife Site perched on a hill dominates this part of the area, emphasised by its location close to the low-lying coastal areas to the north. To the south, the woodland looks over a valley, framing and providing a setting for the village of Newington, with its Parish Church in the foreground providing a landmark in the rural landscape.

Close to the A249, its impact on the landscape is profound. Many parts are raised on embankment above the surrounding fields, with little screening to soften the impact of this ever-busy route. The railway, by contrast, is in cutting and provides an important wildlife corridor. Elsewhere the lanes are narrow, winding and enclosed.

## Condition: Poor

Iwade Arable Farmlands are in poor condition overall, largely as a result of the effects of agricultural intensification. The condition has deteriorated since the 2005 assessment because of the further encroachment of Iwade on the landscape and large scale commercial development along the A249. Many fields have been enlarged and internal field boundaries lost as well as those which border some roads. Remnant orchards, scattered poplar and alder shelterbelts and fragmented hedgerows provide reference to the historic landscape pattern. The few remaining areas of woodland still present in the south also help reinforce the areas of habitat and are in good condition. Hawes and Wardwell woods are locally designated for their nature conservation value.

Unfortunately long views include the two overhead cable routes, which are prominent and intrusive elements that cut across the land from the south and west and exit in the north

Despite traditional elements such as areas of woodland and churches, the busy A249, recent large scale commercial development and the continued expansion of the settlement of Iwade have had a major impact on the landscape, reducing the rural tranquillity of the land in the immediate vicinity. Fly tipping and barriers set across entrances to arable fields downgrade the aesthetic quality of certain rural areas. Residential ribbon development has been allowed to develop in diverse styles, leading to areas of incoherent character. Rarely are properties in traditional vernacular style, but occasional important examples are present and in good condition.

## Guidelines: Restore and Create

Guidelines for the Iwade Arable Farmlands focus on restoring the rural environment whilst creating a landscape structure that will improve the area's strength of character.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and for landmark buildings.
- Restore the remaining landscape structure of woodland, hedgerow, remnant (or former) orchard, ditches and shelterbelts by looking for opportunities to create such features to restore a strong landscape structure. Undertake targeted enclosures of open landscapes, screen plant and soften major transport routes and development using woodland blocks, shelterbelts and hedgerows.
- Conserve the distinctive landscape character of the valley and hills, covered by woodland, trees, pasture/grassland and orchards, which form the eastern and northern landscape setting of the village of Newington.
- Consider the visual prominence of high ground at Callum Hill in any development proposals, in terms of sensitive views from the marshes to the north.
- Replace obtrusive physical barriers with more traditional forms of gating and fencing.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - hedgerow, yellow and (some red) stock brick within villages, occasional railing and chestnut paling, for roofs – Kent-peg tiles

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive area. Intermittent, long views are afforded across this landscape of large arable fields. However the gently undulating topography dispersed tree cover and broken hedgerows, help to provide a general sense of enclosure. Ironically poor views of adjacent landscapes are exacerbated by the elevated position afforded from the embankments of the A249.

Many of the historic features associated with this landscape have been removed with agricultural intensification. However, scattered historic buildings, orchards and windbreaks do still exist as a legacy of past activities.



(occasionally decorative banded) and occasional slate, corrugated iron sheets on rural outbuildings, for building walls - yellow and red (in older areas) stock brick, decorative banded tile hanging, some render and tarred weatherboarding on rural outbuildings. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, field maple and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, hornbeam, ash, hazel and field maple, additionally at lower levels, birch. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees. Shelterbelts – poplar or alder.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
<b>Sensitivity</b>				

# 24. Iwade Arable Farmlands

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

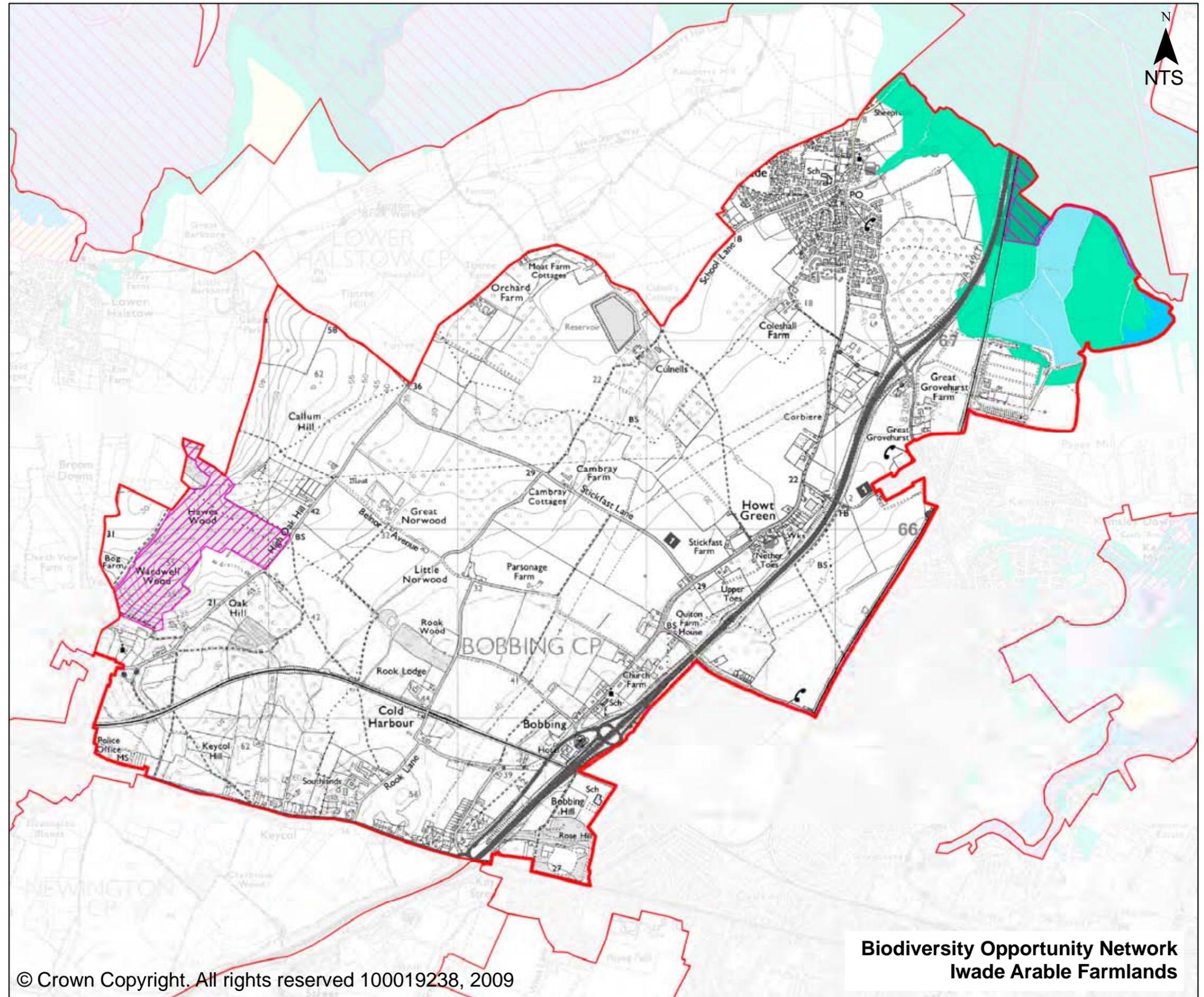
Iwade Arable Farmlands' Biodiversity Network Opportunity lies to the north-east at the edge of the marshland. Here there is opportunity to extend the existing areas of wetland habitat (including grazing marsh) or intertidal habitat. Elsewhere, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England. There may also be opportunity to buffer and extend the woodland LWS on the slopes to the west of the area.



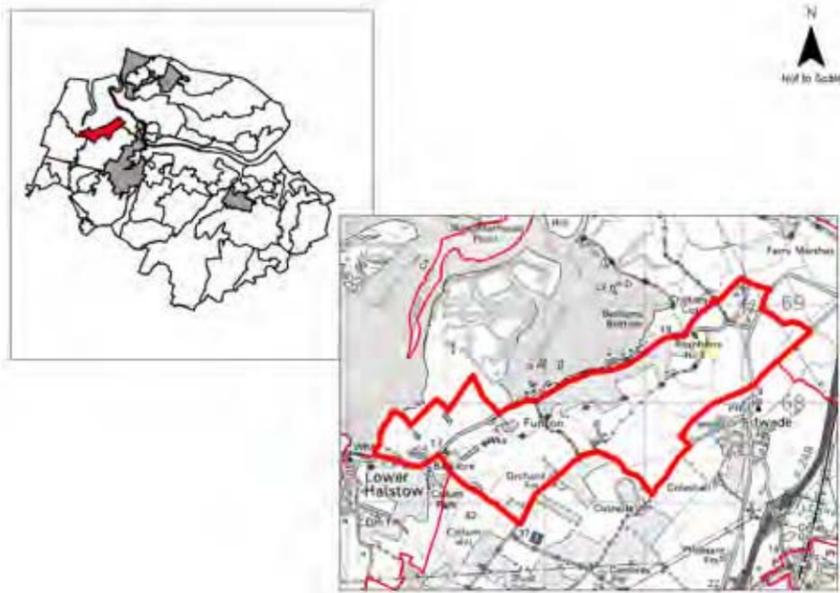
**Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network**

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



## 25. Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands



### Landscape Description

These farmlands extend from the edge of the Chetney Marshes to Lower Halstow. Here there is a complex mixture of truly rural landscapes. It contains isolated farms and cottages and small-scale industrial works at Bedlams Bottom. At its north-eastern periphery, there is small-scale urban and industrial development and motorsport activity. The recent Sheppey Crossing is visible from the eastern part of the area.

Just behind Bedlams Bottom, on slightly elevated ground, open pasture rolls down towards the marsh. Coastal exposure and lack of tree or hedgerow cover contribute to a somewhat windswept and denuded character. From this point the land rises steeply away from the foreshore to form a ridge that runs from north of Iwade and south of Lower Halstow and includes the locally high point of Tiptree Hill (55m). This high ground affords spectacular views to north and east over the Swale and the River Medway. From the coast road there are also good views across the estuary, whilst the rising ground behind provides a strong visual contrast. The geology is predominantly London clay with swathes of head brickearth and Woolwich beds around Lower Halstow and adjacent to the shoreline at Bedlams Bottom. Brickearth has been extracted from the area for

building purposes and there is a large works and disused pits scattered across the rising ground north east of Lower Halstow.

Cultural features are relatively few, although the rotting hulks of coastal craft in the adjacent mud are reminders of past commercial activity. More notable is the Second World War heavy anti-aircraft battery at Marshside – a Scheduled Monument.

Along the narrow lanes that cut along the coastline and over the ridge, scattered mature standard oaks grow within fragmented over-mature roadside hedges. A number of isolated mature oaks and specimen pines stand majestically within the open pastures of the higher ground, with shelterbelts marking roadsides, sloping boundaries and parts of the ridge top itself. Adjacent to Bedlams Bottom, where the more fertile soils appear, a small area of orchards and associated windbreaks are a peculiar and distinctive feature within a landscape largely used for grazing and a clue to the traditional land use of fruit production. Some remnant orchards remain, and are grazed by sheep.



### Key Characteristics

- Mixed geology of London clay with outcrops of head brickearth and Woolwich beds, steeply rising to the south
- Mixed agricultural land use with small-scale fields of pasture and localised orchards
- Contrast between abutting marshland and farmland with hillside and ridge backdrop
- Narrow lanes with impressive estuary views
- Weak landscape structure with scattered mature standard trees and fragmented over-mature roadside hedges
- Settlement limited to isolated cottages, fixed mobile homes and isolated farms. Small-scale industrial works

### Condition: Moderate

Overall the area is in moderate condition. There are localised areas in poorer condition, notably the activities at Marshside, whilst, in places, unsympathetic materials are used to fence in livestock or surround residential dwellings. Sheets of corrugated iron, used to supplement post and wire fencing, locally interrupt the stunning long views of the natural landscape of the neighbouring marshes. Fly tipping on the coast road is also a distraction.

The quality of the landscape immediately surrounding many of the buildings frequently been eroded. Most buildings are of a mixed quality and style, having been built in the latter half of the 20th century. Occasionally a more traditional isolated farmstead is built in local vernacular style out of locally extracted brick.

### Sensitivity: High

The area borrows a considerable degree of its sense of place from the neighbouring marshlands and coast. These provide a unique setting to an otherwise small-scale rural landscape.

The areas of farmland adjacent to the marshes contain intermittent tree cover, but this is relatively sparse and hedgerows are fragmented. These fields and orchards are host to marshland birds at high tide. Views into this area from the waterways and from the Isle of Grain means that the undeveloped pastures leading up to the ridge top are highly visually sensitive to development. Remnant orchards that form a unique and distinct landscape feature close to open water are especially sensitive to change.



### Guidelines: Conserve and Restore

The landscape in this area should be conserved and elements restored to develop its strength of character.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes.
- Conserve the remaining landscape structure of enclosed small-scale fields, hedges, localised orchards, scattered trees and shelterbelts. Look for opportunities to establish this structure in denuded areas to additionally reduce coastal exposure.
- Conserve the strong sense of place where Raspberry Hill, orchards and associated windbreaks meet the shoreline.
- Reduce the intrusive influence of smaller scale urban or industrial elements by introducing appropriate planting such as already present, for example dense thorn scrub.
- Conserve the distinctive landscape character and contrast provided where large-scale marshland landscapes abut smaller scale arable/horticultural land, including the hillside backdrop, ridge top, narrow lanes and estuary views.
- Avoid proposals that would be unduly prominent on high or open ground, and have particular regard to sensitive views from the marshes to the north.

- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles, for building walls – red (for older buildings), yellow/orange (Funton) stock brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, blackthorn, field maple, pedunculate oak standards. Mixed woodland generally not present. Shelterbelts - poplar. Other - fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
Sensitivity				

## 25. Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

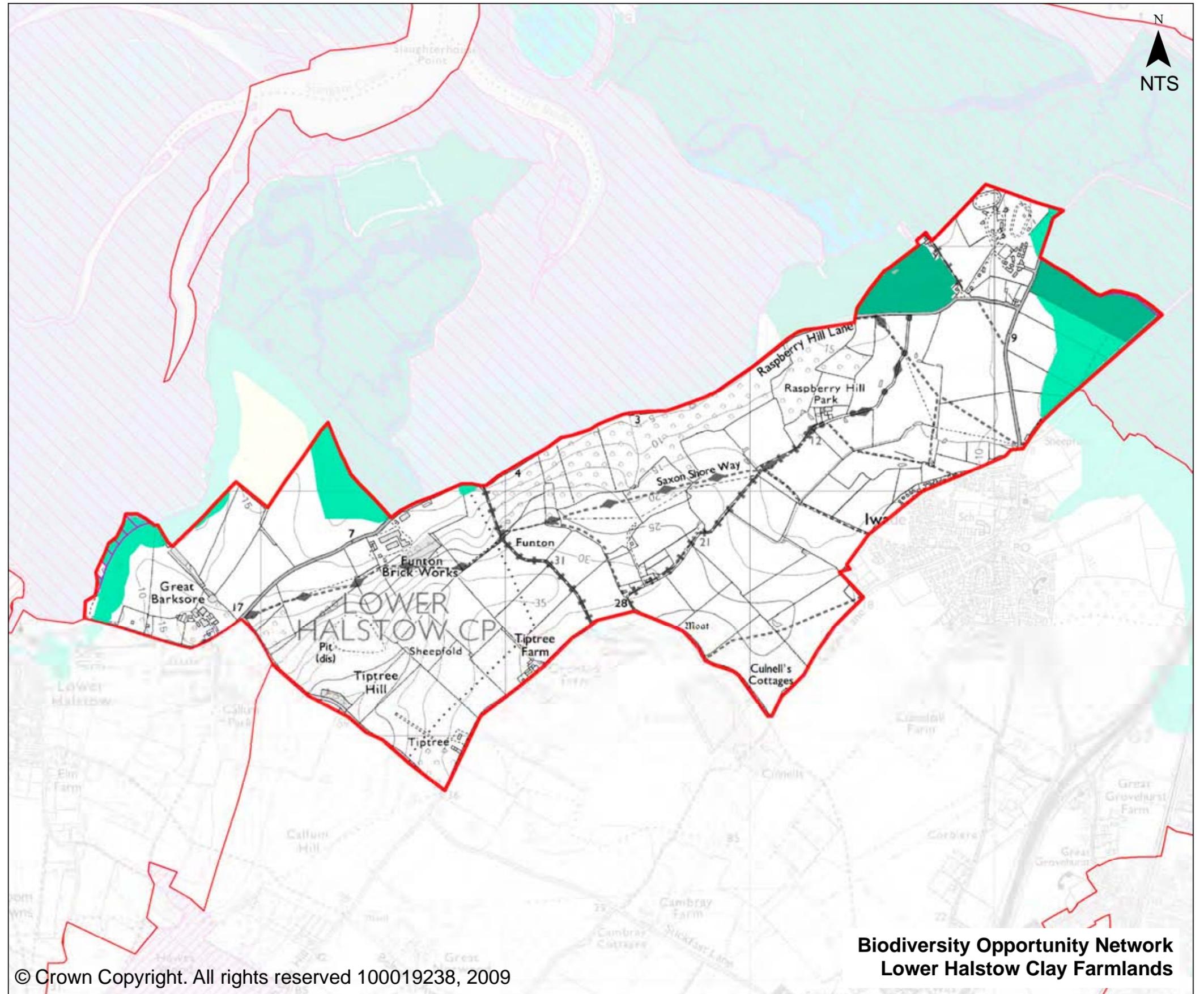
Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands contains grazing marsh / intertidal habitat network opportunity on the low ground to the east and west of the area reflecting the presence of neighbouring marshland landscapes. Elsewhere, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



#### Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

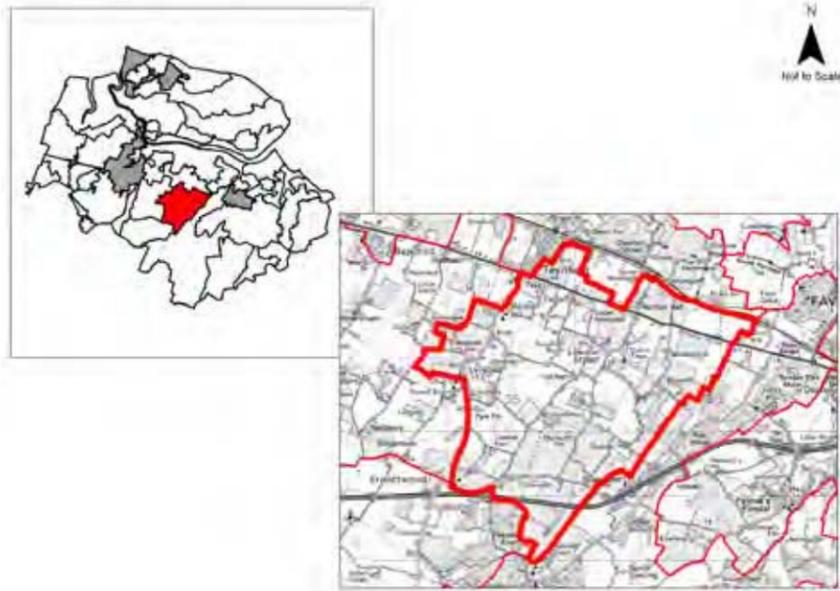
- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



**Biodiversity Opportunity Network  
Lower Halstow Clay Farmlands**

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## 26. Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands



### Landscape Description



South of the M2, the landscape is nationally designated as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands have a very gently undulating topography that gradually rises southwards towards

the northern fringes of the North Down dip slope. To the west, the landscape drops steeply into the dry chalk Lyn Valley. The valley runs from south east of Lynsted village northward to the Swale, through the Teynham Fruit Belt. It is believed that the Lyn watercourse was at one time navigable up to Lynsted village and the valley therefore has historic significance.

The complex geology includes extensive areas of fertile deposits of Thanet and Bagshot beds and smaller areas of chalk and associated head deposits. Further south, the heavier clay-with-flints associated with the dip slope, become increasingly common.

This landscape continues to be used for intensive fruit production, as well as under horticultural use. In the past orchards were more extensive, however, acres of well managed fruit fields still exist and are an important link with the past. Notably there are still traditionally managed orchards, such as the cherries at Park Farm. The orchards are attractive and well cared for with mature shelterbelts and hedgerows along lanes and field boundaries. Some mature oaks occur within native hedgerows. Unique features, such as the eastward approach to St. Mary's Church at Norton, via a rough track through the orchards and fields, appears to have been passed by time.

Woodlands are limited to small isolated remnant areas at field boundaries and lane sides. They are deciduous and generally also contain chestnut coppice, a typical traditional practice of this region. Toll Wood close to Lynsted is ancient semi-natural woodland.

### Key Characteristics

- Gently undulating topography with steep sided dry chalk valley
- Complex geology of fertile drift deposits, chalk and clay-with-flints
- Small isolated historic villages and farmsteads, medieval houses, twentieth century infill housing
- Characteristic development pattern "one building deep" alongside lanes and roads
- Small to medium-scale irregular field pattern
- Many well managed orchards, with strong shelterbelts and hedgerows
- Open areas of sheep grazing and historic parkland
- Narrow winding lanes and major roads
- Views generally enclosed with some long views to the north from high point opened up for sheep grazing

The landscape is small to medium-scale and largely enclosed by the mature vegetation described above. However, where orchards have been cleared to make way for sheep pasture, the landscape has a characteristic exposed and remote atmosphere. From such high points views of the Swale and Sheppey can be magnificent.

This area has a remote isolated feeling, despite the fact that the A2 and M2 corridors cut across the northern and southern boundaries respectively. Once away from the immediate vicinity of these roads the landscape becomes instantly tranquil and enclosed. Many narrow lanes wind through the landscape linking the scattered settlements and isolated farms.

The richness of the land has led to the characteristic development pattern "one building deep" alongside lanes and roads. This leads to comparatively small plot sizes for most homes in relation to the fields and orchards that surround them.

There are a wealth of historic buildings within this area and include a number of important medieval hall houses, parklands dating from the 1500s and historic farms. A number of historic farm buildings are redundant and falling into disrepair. Local vernacular building styles are commonplace with fine examples such as the listed timber framed hall of Provender, oasts, brick and flint as well as brick and tile-hung properties. The church at Norton provides evidence of local historic interest, connecting the Black Prince and the Russian Royal family with Provender. In addition to the historic buildings, modern infill housing has taken place, but this has been small-scale, is generally well sited within the landscape and well screened. Large agricultural sheds have had some impact on the traditional character of the area.

### Condition: Good

This is an extremely interesting area, which has retained much of its traditional character and contains many fine historic buildings. The landscape is considered to be in very good condition. There is a coherent visual pattern of shelterbelts, hedgerows and orchards, despite some loss in parts. Minor visual detractors include polytunnels, piles of storage boxes for fruit and the supplementation in areas of hedgerows with inappropriate fencing such as chestnut pale.

Ecologically the landscape is strong, with a number of semi-natural habitats including woodland, which is still managed in a traditional manner, churchyards, medieval parkland and mature hedgerows of mixed native species. Other valuable wildlife corridors include the shelterbelts and large gardens associated with some of the larger historic properties.

The landscape has suffered some loss in terms of cultural integrity, where orchards have been replaced and larger areas of woodland lost. Some of the historic properties are falling into decline but most are in good condition. Also whilst few in number modern infill housing and large-scale agricultural sheds do have an impact on the character of localised areas.

### Sensitivity: Moderate

Overall this is identified as a moderately sensitive area. The unspoilt rural pastoral character is particularly strong with good links to its past. Many features provide it with a truly unique sense of place, which would make it particularly sensitive to change. Despite this, the gentle topography and sense of enclosure provided by the mature tree lined lanes and orchards, give a good deal of visual screening. In certain places views are more open and here the landscape can be considered to be more sensitive.



### Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

The distinctive character of the Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands should be conserved and reinforced.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and on landmark buildings, especially churches.
- Refer to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 (First Revision 2009) for policies relating to the management of the Kent Downs AONB.
- Conserve the rural setting of the Kent Downs AONB.
- Actions within this character area should be undertaken in accordance with the Core Strategy Natural Assets Policy which aims to conserve and enhance the AONB.
- Conserve the distinctive, tranquil and enclosed character of the area with its undulating topography, chalk valley, parkland, orchards and narrow lanes. Additionally, look for opportunities to reinforce the landscape structure with shelterbelts and hedgerows and encourage the integration into the landscape of existing agricultural and commercial buildings and new development by use of shelterbelts and hedgerows.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick or (occasional) flint walls, fuse-brick (in more suburban areas), estate iron railings (white or black), or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional slate or thatch, and for building walls –

weatherboarding (often white), timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick and (occasional) flint, ragstone and white painted brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson, dogwood and pedunculate oak, for tree planting – alder, ash, beech, common whitebeam, field maple, hornbeam, lime, pedunculate and sessile oak, rowan, silver birch, wayfaring tree, wild cherry and yew. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees, beech, box, holly or yew hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar or alder. Other - orchards and mixed fruit.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
Sensitivity				

## 26. Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

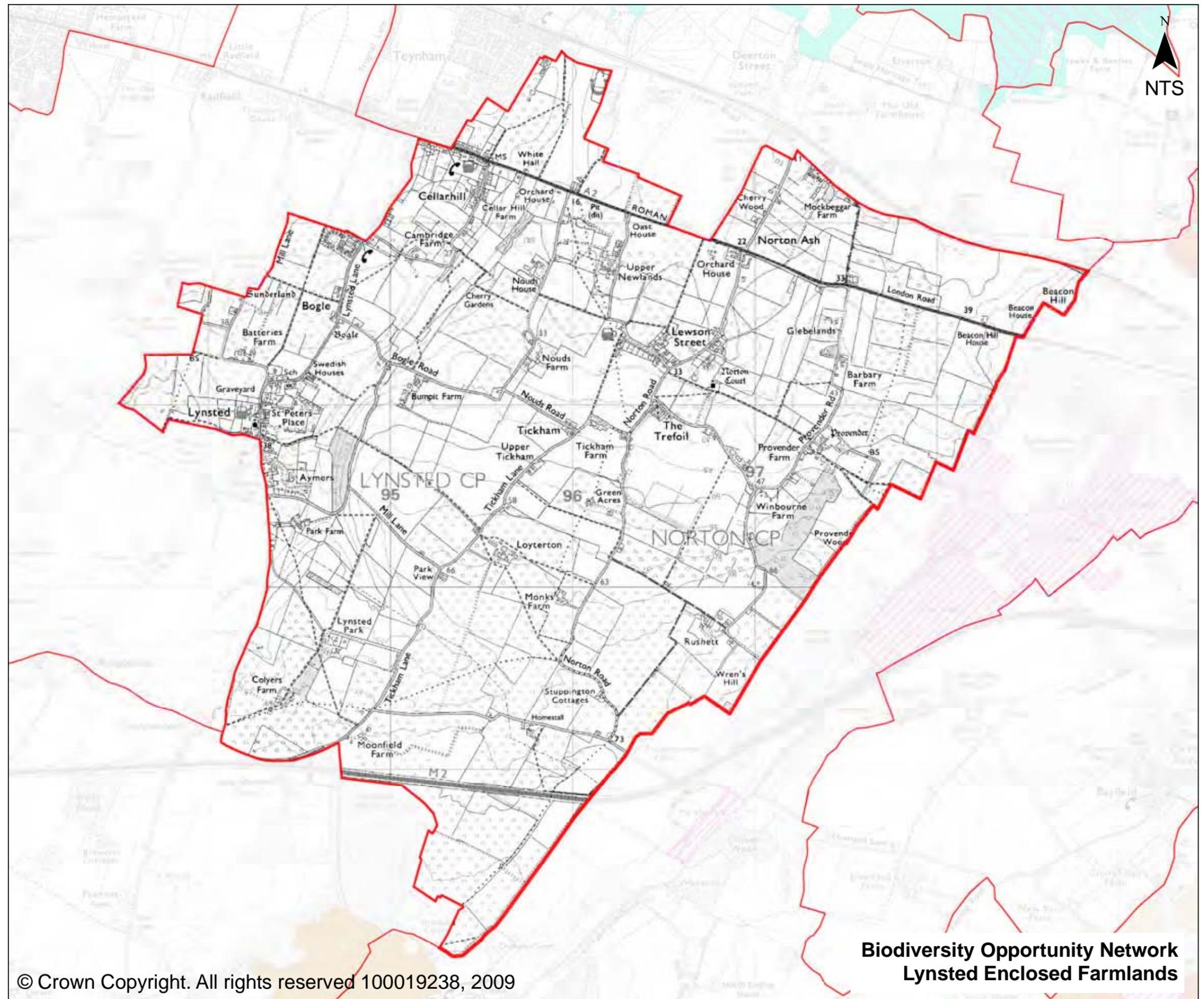
Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands falls outside of the strategic habitat network reflecting the intensive farming in the area. Despite this, existing woodlands should be conserved and sensitively managed as part of a wider woodland network. Elsewhere, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



#### Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network

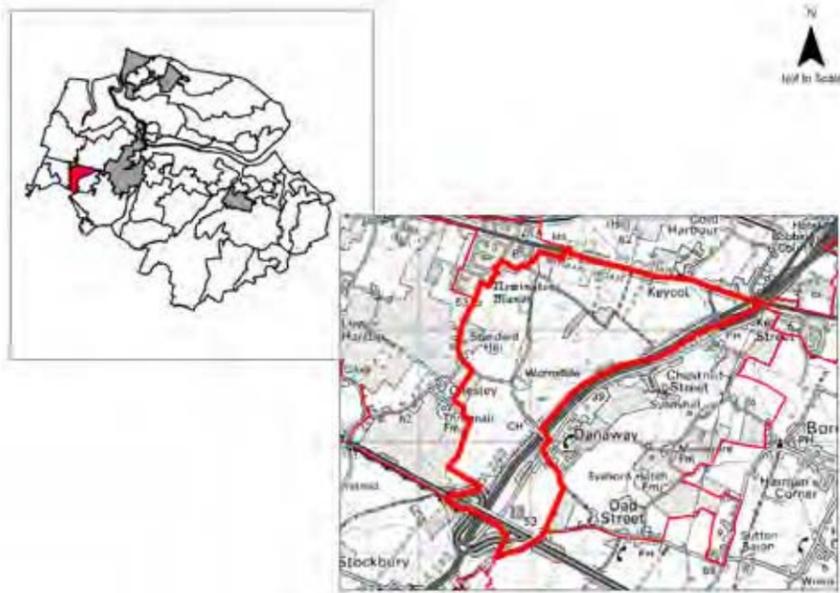
Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



**Biodiversity Opportunity Network  
Lynsted Enclosed Farmlands**

# 27. Newington Arable Farmlands



## Key Characteristics

- Rolling arable landscape
- Simple geology of Thanet Bed deposits
- Settlement limited to ribbon development along major roads and isolated farmsteads
- Mixed field pattern, generally medium-scale
- Few isolated remnant woodlands at field margins
- Views mainly enclosed by topography, roadside screening and built development
- 'A' roads, motorway and open narrow winding lanes

## Landscape Description

Between the Newington Fruit Belt and the A249 lies an area of land that has lost much of its traditional character as it has been opened up for the purpose of agricultural intensification. This is a characteristically rolling open landscape. The rich soils, generally Thanet beds, would historically have supported fruit and hop production and the occasional oast and orchard are proof of these activities.



A large central area has been developed as a golf course. Elsewhere the medium-scale irregular fields are mainly used for the production of arable crops and for grazing horses.

Buildings are generally restricted to the A2 and A249 corridors where residential dwellings have been constructed in mixed style throughout the 20th century. Two historical farms still exist and are constructed in a mixture of brick and weatherboard. Newington Manor is an important timber framed house dating from the 16th century, located on the southern boundary of Newington and backing onto the rural landscape.

Areas of woodland are rare and where they do exist are small remnant areas found at field margins, or as colonising trees on the edge of the A249. Many of the internal hedgerows have been lost and even along the narrow lanes hedgerow fragmentation has meant that post and wire fencing is largely seen at the field boundaries.

Major transport routes surround Newington Arable Farmlands. To the northern boundary is the A2, to the south the M2 and to the east the A249. Despite this, it has a very rural and tranquil character for the most part. The landscape seems to sit above these networks, which are in cutting or hidden behind residential ribbon development. Even the major interchange of the A249 and M2 is well screened by mature vegetation.

## Condition: Poor

This landscape is in poor condition. Most of the structure traditionally associated with the rural fabric has been removed. Internal field boundaries have been lost, with the enlargement of many fields. Even the lanes have an open feeling, since only small sections of hedgerow remain, supplemented by post and wire fencing. Where fields have been kept small for horse grazing, the sense of openness persists since boundaries lack hedgerows. The mature vegetation of the major road corridors provides important visual screening and maintains the integrity of the landscape character.

The few vegetative corridors and limited areas of small isolated remnant woodland have reduced the value of the area in ecological terms. Intensive arable farming practices have further impacted on the ecological integrity.



## Guidelines: Create

Guidelines for the Newington Arable Farmlands are to create landscape structure where it has been lost.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes.
- Safeguard remaining remnants of woodland, orchard and hedgerow, especially along lanes and look for opportunities for their re-creation, for example by the enclosure of existing open areas, the integration of existing and new development with woodland blocks and hedgerows (replacing post and wire) and by linking existing isolated woodlands and hedgerows.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick walls, chestnut paling fences or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles, very occasional slate and for building walls - black weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson, field maple and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting -

## Sensitivity: Low

This is an area with low sensitivity. Views into and out of the area are restricted by the rolling topography and intermittent vegetation creating an area of moderate visibility. The traditional landscape character has been lost to modern farming methods and lacks distinctiveness and a sense of place. This is exacerbated by mediocre 20th century housing styles. However, isolated farms and traditional residential dwellings are important historic elements.



pedunculate oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, hazel, hawthorn and elder and silver birch in colonising areas. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees and beech as hedging. Shelterbelts - poplar.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
Sensitivity				

## 27. Newington Arable Farmlands

### Biodiversity Network Opportunity

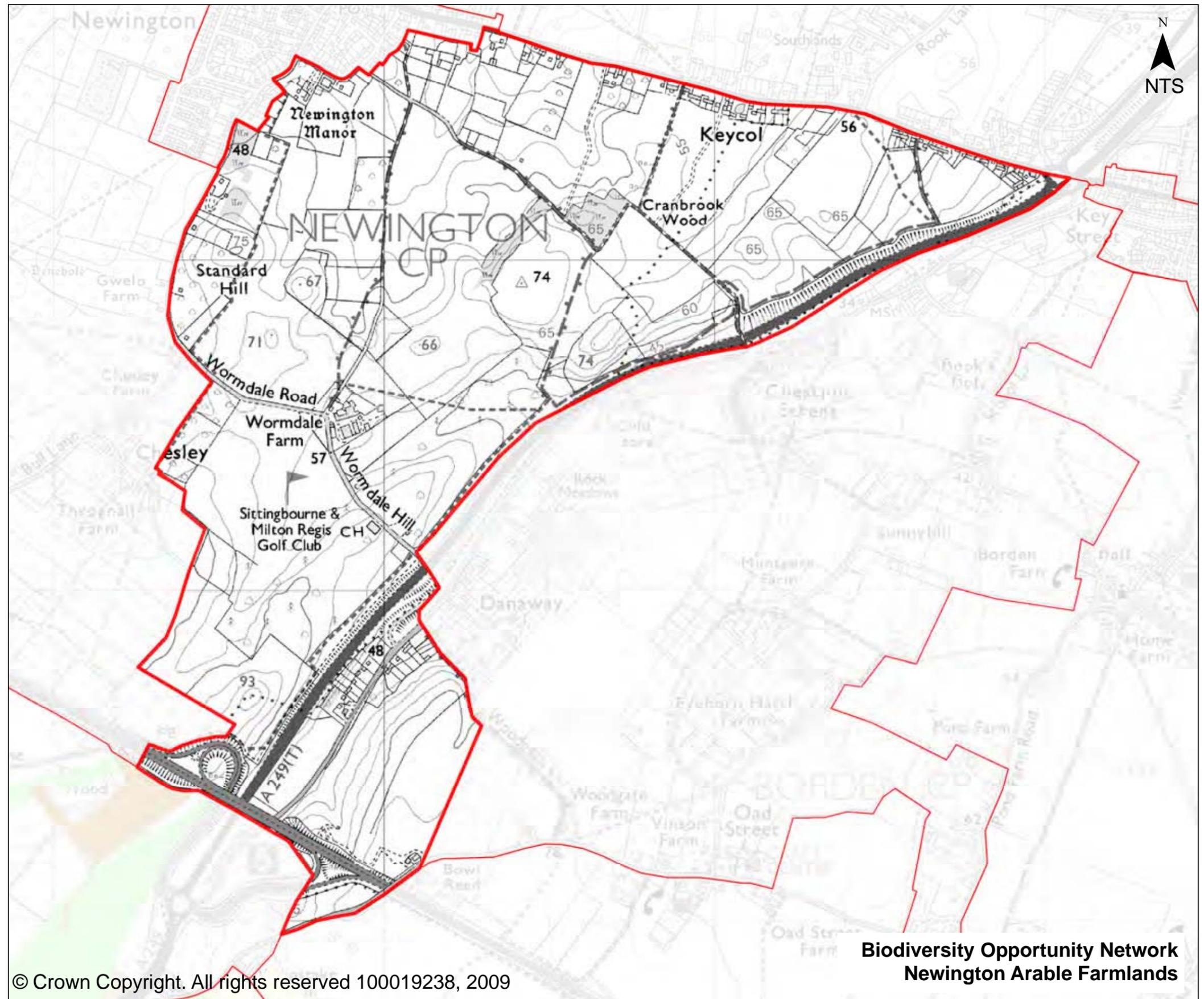
Newington Arable Farmlands falls outside of the strategic habitat network. Nevertheless, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



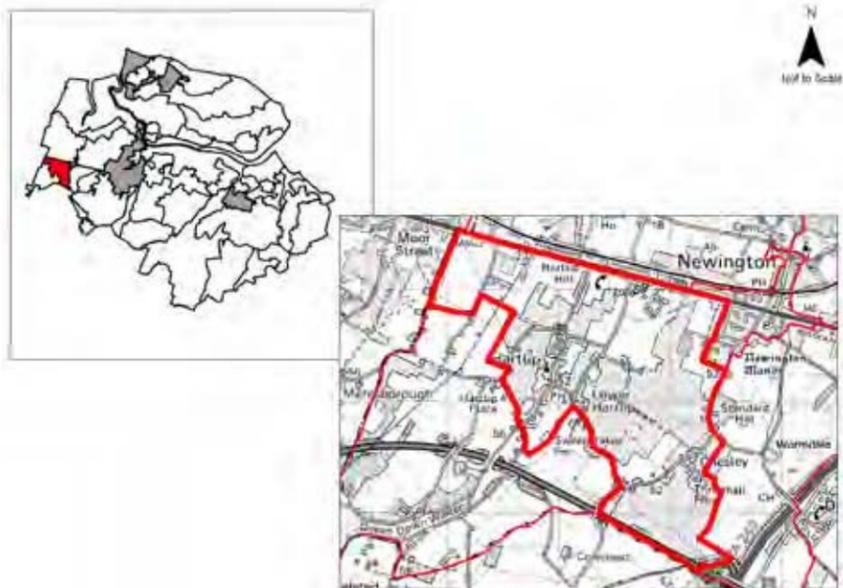
#### Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



# 28. Newington Fruit Belt



## Key Characteristics

- Undulating landscape of rich loam soils
- Strong landscape structure formed by the network of mature hedgerows and shelterbelts that surround orchards
- Views largely enclosed
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts
- Linear village with historic core, scattered isolated farmsteads and cottages of mixed age and building style

## Condition: Moderate

Newington Fruit Belt has a strong character and is in moderate condition overall. There are a significant number of degrading features which are concentrated along the A2 corridor to the north, including the highway itself, a cold store and industrial estate. Coniferous plantations and evergreen shelterbelts are out of character with the traditional fruit belt landscape.

However, the strong network of mature field boundaries provides visual coherence and largely screens any discordant buildings. This landscape is plentiful in its habitats, which include hedgerows, shelterbelts, grassy road verges, grazing meadow and orchards. The cultural integrity of the landscape is largely intact. Although some traditional farm buildings have been replaced with larger scale modern units, others have been restored. Settlements have been enlarged but historic buildings are in good condition and a strong landscape structure helps to maintain its character.

## Sensitivity: Low

This is an area with low sensitivity. The sensitivity has reduced since the 2005 assessment because it was considered that the urbanisation along the A2, and twentieth century expansion of Hartlip, interrupt the pattern of the landscape more significantly than previously considered. The landscape is strongly enclosed by landform and vegetation and in general terms the visibility is low, although closer to the A2 corridor where the landscape is more open, and higher up the dip slope of the North Downs. The rural landscape mostly maintains its traditional function and distinct character, with a strong sense of place in parts.

However the landscape has become interrupted in parts, with commercial and industrial development along the A2. Conifer plantations, presumably for the production of Christmas trees, have also lead to a change in land use. Twentieth century village expansion has to a degree altered the character of the village of Hartlip and to the point that further development might suburbanise the settlement.

## Landscape Description



put down to arable production and occasionally fields are used for horse pasture. Nevertheless the strong field pattern is largely retained which decreases the impact of such land uses.

Hartlip Village is the largest settlement in the area. It is a linear village that contains a number of fine historic houses that are loosely grouped around the church. The church is the most substantial building and dates from 13th century. Surrounding residential properties date from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. During the past fifty years, infill development has taken place to the north and south of the village core and, although this has in places led to a somewhat suburban character, the green framework of the village is strong and helps to create a strong sense of visual cohesion.

Elsewhere many scattered farms and cottages are built in a mixed style. They are generally well maintained and well sited within the fabric of the landscape. This may also be said of a number of large modern farm buildings, which are generally well screened by the mature shelterbelts. Along the A2 over large commercial buildings are poorly designed and not well screened. These features have a major impact on the quality of the landscape and the A2 corridor.

To the south west of Newington lies an area traditionally used for fruit production. It is surprising within the local vicinity to find that this function and the integrity of the landscape structure are very much intact and in good condition. It is a small-scale, enclosed landscape with a strong and regular field pattern. Mature and over-mature hedgerows of mixed native species and mature statuesque shelterbelts of poplar and alder emphasise the landscape pattern and intimated nature of this area.

The rich soils are formed from a mixed geology, but the largest proportion consists of the fertile Bagshot beds. A seam of head gravel outcrops below the village of Hartlip and elsewhere there are areas of Thanet beds. The topography may be described as gently undulating and climbs away from the A2 on its northern boundary towards the North Downs dip slope, reaching a height of 60m. Narrow winding lanes cut through this undulating landscape, enclosed by shelterbelts and hedgerows. Generally the mature vegetation that dominates the landscape restricts views, but long views are present along the southern boundary towards the high ground of the North Downs.

Orchards and fruit production remain the dominant feature and in places new orchards have been planted, and most are intensively managed. Some areas have however been



## Guidelines: Create and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Newington Fruit Belt indicate the creation of a new landscape structure and reinforcement of the existing character.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes.
- Reinforce the strong enclosed landscape structure and the rural character of enclosed narrow winding lanes through the retention and management of existing hedgerows and shelterbelts. Seek opportunities to further reinforce this landscape structure, especially in localised denuded areas and through the screening of commercial buildings along the A2.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick or brick and flint walls, iron railings, timber paling fences or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles or occasional thatch and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick and, occasional brick and brick and flint. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, holly, ash, elder, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple,

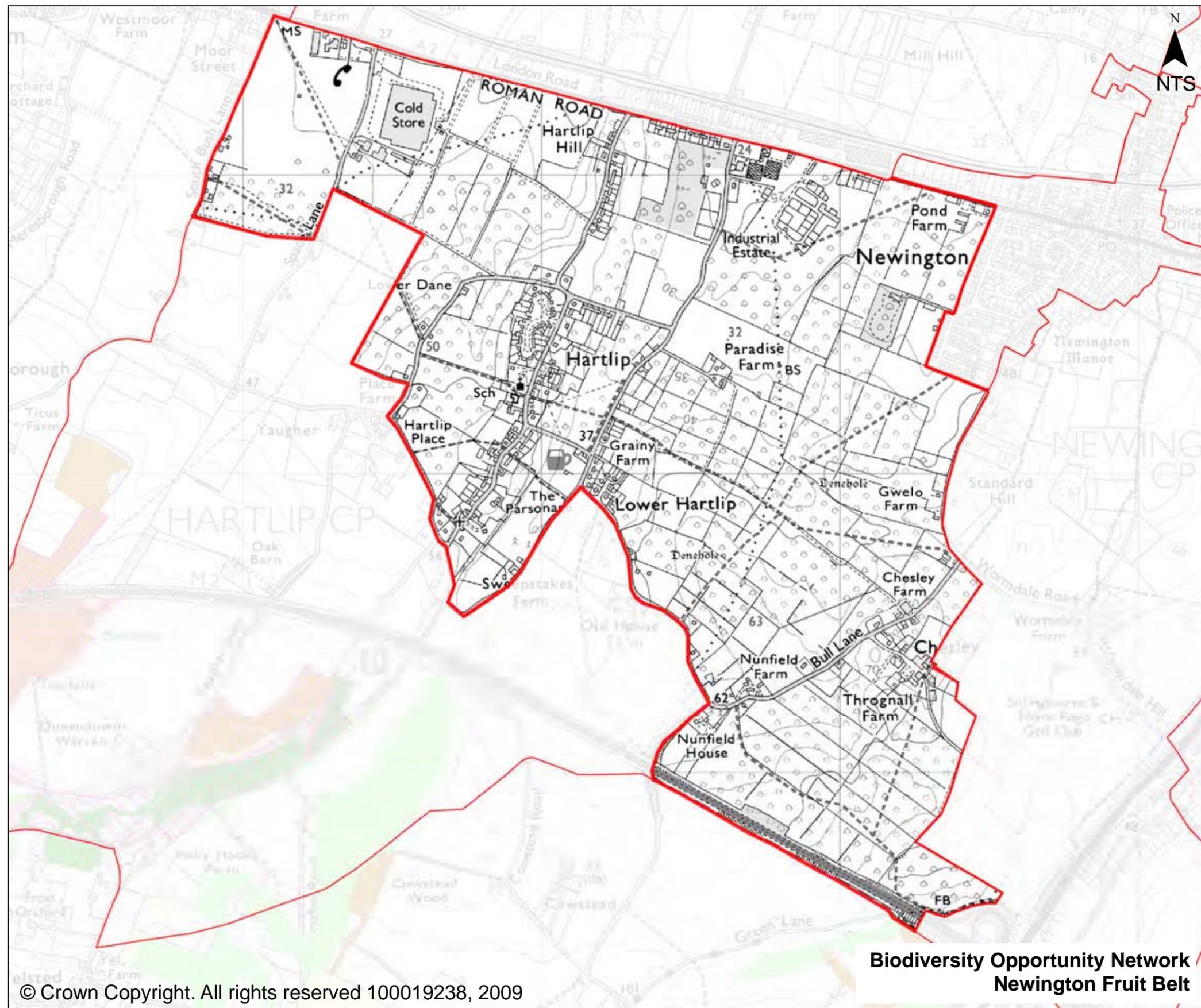
bullace, damson, field maple and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting - pedunculate oak, ash, wild cherry, field maple, hazel, hawthorn and elder. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees and beech, holly, box or yew as hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar and alder. Other - fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
<b>Sensitivity</b>				

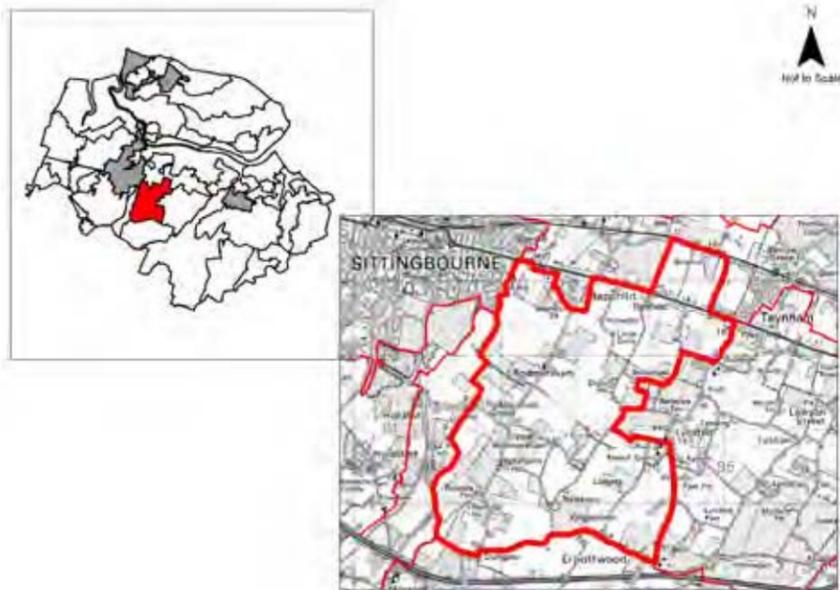
# 28. Newington Fruit Belt

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

Newington Fruit Belt falls outside of the strategic habitat network, reflecting its intensive agricultural land uses. Nevertheless, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



# 29. Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands



## Key Characteristics

- A gently rolling landscape with steeply sloping, rounded, dry chalk valleys
- Complex geology of rich drift deposits, chalk and clay-with-flints
- Land largely used for grazing and arable production, with significant areas of fruit production, including traditionally managed orchards
- Isolated properties and farmsteads, occasional small-scale historic villages
- Occasional unsympathetic large-scale modern agricultural buildings
- Scattered remnant deciduous woodlands at field boundaries
- Isolated long views from open grazing land, elsewhere enclosed by topography and vegetation
- 'A' road and narrow winding lanes

## Landscape Description



This is an area of diverse character and geology. It is a rolling landscape with steeply sloping, rounded, dry chalk valleys cutting north south. The land inclines 65m from its northern to southern boundaries. The soils are extensively fertile drift deposits of the Thanet, Woolwich and Bagshot beds, with head deposits following the course of the chalk valleys. On the higher North Downs dip slope clay-with-flints begin to appear.

Today large areas of this landscape have been opened up for use as grazing land and for arable production. In these areas most of the internal and lane side hedgerows have been lost to post and wire fencing. This, coupled with the inclined topography, provides for long uninterrupted views to north and south from certain high points.

Elsewhere the character is contrasting, since traditional fruit production is still the major function of certain farms. These farms predominantly run in a north-south belt through the area. The orchards are in very good condition, the field pattern is irregular, small to medium-scale and is reinforced by the mature shelterbelts of poplar and alder. There are some good examples of large old cherry orchards that are still grazed in the traditional fashion, and there has recently been some new fruit planting in the Rodmersham area. Mature hedgerows of mixed native species are also a feature

of the fruit areas. Woodlands are insignificant in number, small and isolated and are generally limited to field boundaries.

Once within the chalk valleys the character is different again. Here the landscape has a more intimate character, the field size is reduced and historic features help to identify past activities. Numerous oasts and remnant shelterbelts stand as indicators of former traditional land uses.

Settlement is limited to isolated farms and cottages, small historic villages, scattered historic manor houses and urban fringe development along the A2. Generally settlement form is one dwelling deep from the road. Many fine examples of traditional vernacular architecture are located within this area. Buildings date from the 1600s and many timber-framed houses are well maintained. Occasionally restoration has taken place and in some cases buildings, particularly oasts, have become derelict. Scattered 20th century houses and large-scale modern agricultural sheds do detract from the traditional character. Rodmersham Church is a landmark building, which is visible across open fields and through orchards closer in.



## Condition: Poor

Generally this landscape is in poor condition and is considered to be incoherent. In places the traditional character is well maintained, whilst elsewhere orchards have been removed to make way for large-scale arable and grazing land. Although some new orchards have been planted, the landscape remains damaged from the large-scale removal of hedgerows which have been replaced by wire fencing. This has both further undermined the character of the landscape and opened up views. Coupled with the insignificant areas of woodland cover, the ecological interest of the area is poor.

The condition of the built development varies widely from large-scale modern agricultural sheds to fine historic cottages and churches, to derelict traditional Kentish buildings. Overall it may be said that built development currently has a moderate impact on the landscape with potential for improvement, through screening and restoration.



## Guidelines: Restore and Create

This is a landscape that requires restoration and creation of features to strengthen the landscape character.

- Pay particular attention to the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and on landmark buildings.
- Restore and improve the remaining landscape structure of hedgerows, shelterbelts, remnant woodland and orchard and look for opportunities to create and link such features and to enclose the landscape, especially within denuded areas and along roads and lanes.
- Conserve the traditional landscape character of the older/mature orchards.
- Improve the integration of large-scale modern agricultural buildings and new development into the landscape using woodland blocks and hedgerows.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick, estate iron railings, fuse-brick (in more suburban areas), or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional slate or thatch and corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick, white painted brick, brick oast roundels and

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. Many features help to reflect its historic functions. In general terms the visibility of this landscape is moderate. However, this varies greatly from high on the open elevated slopes to low within the more enclosed fruit producing areas and the chalk valleys.

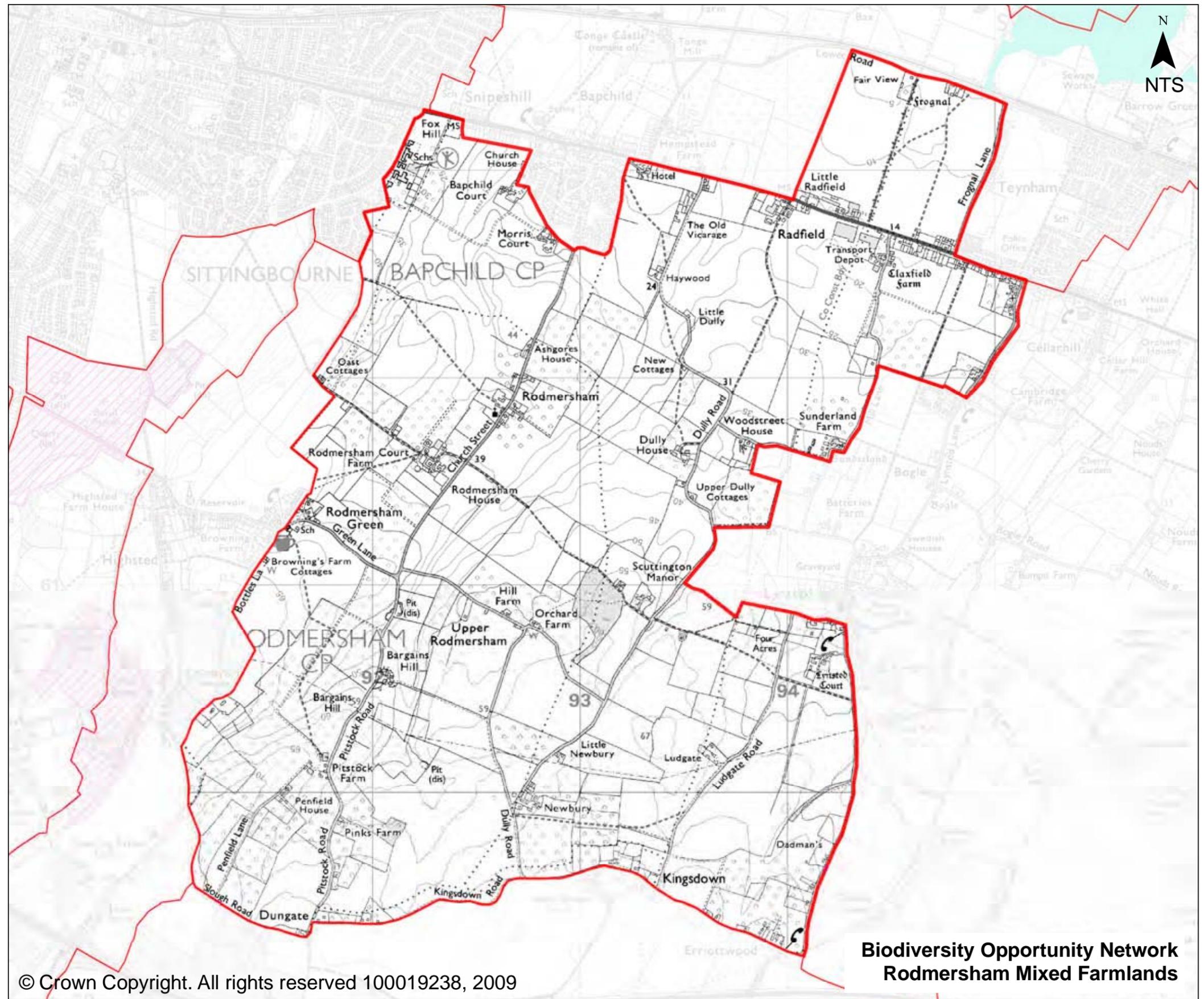
weatherboarding. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, field maple, blackthorn, elder, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson and dogwood, for mixed woodland or other planting - hornbeam, ash, pedunculate oak, hazel, field maple, yew, beech and wild cherry. Additionally, within developed areas - older fruit tree varieties for trees, beech, box, holly or yew hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar or alder. Other - fruit orchards, predominantly cherry.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
		Sensitivity		

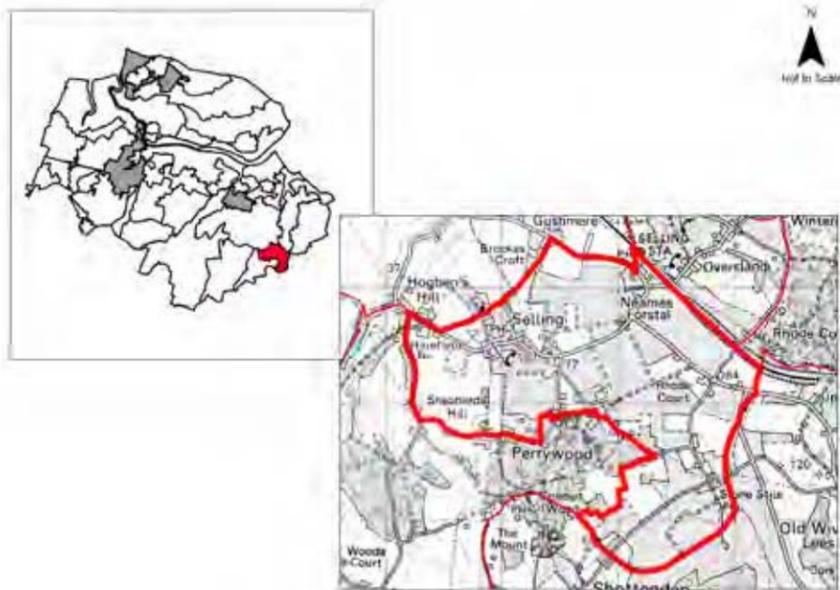
# 29. Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

Rodmersham Mixed Farmlands lies outside of the strategic Biodiversity Network Opportunity. However, significant local biodiversity improvements can be made by following general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



# 30. Selling Fruit Belt



## Key Characteristics

- Traditional rolling Kentish landscape of orchards
- Deep silty drifts of brickearth and deep, better-drained good quality, silty soils of Thanet beds. Also thinner well drained chalk soils
- Dominated by fruit production, with limited areas of cereal production
- Small to medium-scale fields with structured pattern of mature shelterbelts
- Secluded landscape with a strong sense of enclosure
- Mixed native hedgerows and single species beech hedges close to settlement
- Well managed landscape
- Traditional vernacular buildings. Numerous modern properties in mixed style

## Landscape Description



tightly enclosed by the mature hedgerows, forming, in some places, long stretches of beech. 'B' roads link the main settlements, but these are similarly narrow and winding. The settlement pattern comprises the nucleated village of Neames Forstall and the linear village of Selling, as well as isolated farms and scattered cottages. Villages are isolated and contain buildings of mixed quality that have developed over a long period. Many well-maintained historic properties, include brick and weather boarded cottages, farmhouses and barns. Numerous historic properties are, however, in need of restoration or improvement. Less attractive modern houses are also present, which have to a degree reduced the quality of the built environment.

The overall picture of the area is traditional Kentish countryside, with a rolling landscape enclosed by an abundance of orchards and the associated shelterbelts and scattered traditional buildings.

The landscape throughout much of the character area forms part of the nationally designated Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Selling Fruit Belt describes the fruit producing area found around Selling village and south of Neames Forstall. It is part of a much wider fruit producing area that covers a large area of North East Kent.

The mixed geology includes Thanet beds, chalk, brickearth and head deposits. The fertile well drained soils support a mosaic of productive orchards. Topography varies from strongly folded in the south to gently undulating. There is a strong but irregular field pattern of small to medium-scale; created by poplar windbreaks and the many well maintained intact mature hedgerows. This pattern is exaggerated by the straight rows of orchard trees. Soft and top fruit are both produced and some enclosed fields have been put down to arable. The wooded high ground in neighbouring Perry wood is a contrasting and prominent feature in views from Selling Fruit Belt and orchards occupy some of its lower slopes.

Roads are limited to narrow lanes with few passing places,



## Condition: Good

This area is considered to be in good condition. The fruit belt character is strong throughout the area, although in places the unity of the orchards is fragmented by arable fields and smaller grazing meadows used for horses. Post and wire fencing and modern housing slightly downgrade the rural landscape.

Despite the fact that woodland is restricted to shaws and copses ecological integrity is strong. Strong mature hedgerow and shelterbelt networks as well as grass meadows and orchards provide good and varied habitats. The cultural heritage of this landscape is apparent from the traditional buildings, although more recent development particularly buildings from the mid to late 20th century make no reference to the local vernacular.

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a very distinct landscape with its strong pattern of orchards, shelterbelts and traditional buildings. The field pattern is historic although recent farming practices are less traditional with increased mechanisation and use of herbicides. The rolling topography combined with the filtered effect of numerous windbreaks, hedgerows and small woodlands has created a landscape of low visibility.

Thus the landscape is considered to be of moderate sensitivity. Any changes that would result in the loss of tree and hedge cover, opening up views, would increase the visibility of this landscape. This would in turn increase the sensitivity. The landscape is so directly related to its land use that the area is particularly sensitive to changes in farming practice.



## Guidelines: Conserve and Reinforce

Guidelines for the Selling Fruit Belt aim to encourage the conservation and reinforcement of the strong landscape pattern.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and for landmark buildings.
- Refer to the Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2009 – 2014 (First Revision 2009) for policies relating to the management of the Kent Downs AONB and its setting.
- Actions within this character area should be undertaken in accordance with the Core Strategy Natural Assets Policy which aims to conserve and enhance the AONB.
- Conserve the strong, rectilinear and intimate landscape character of the area formed by the mosaic of orchards framed by shelterbelts, mixed hedgerows and stretches of beech hedges close to settlements. Additionally, look for opportunities to reinforce the landscape framework by use of hedgerows (including the replacement of wire fencing) and shelterbelts.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick, estate iron railings, red brick and flint or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional thatch or slate and corrugated sheeting on outbuildings and for building walls – weatherboarding (often white for dwellings and black for outbuildings), tile hanging,

timber frame and plaster infill, flint, red or yellow stock brick and white/rendered painted brick. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, hazel, field maple, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson and dogwood. Single species hedges often on approaches to settlements, normally beech (with occasional hawthorn). For shaws or other tree planting - hornbeam, hazel, alder, field maple and wild cherry. Additionally, within developed areas – pedunculate oak, ash, horse chestnut, older fruit tree varieties and beech, box, privet, holly or yew hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar. Other – mixed fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
<b>Sensitivity</b>				

# 30. Selling Fruit Belt

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

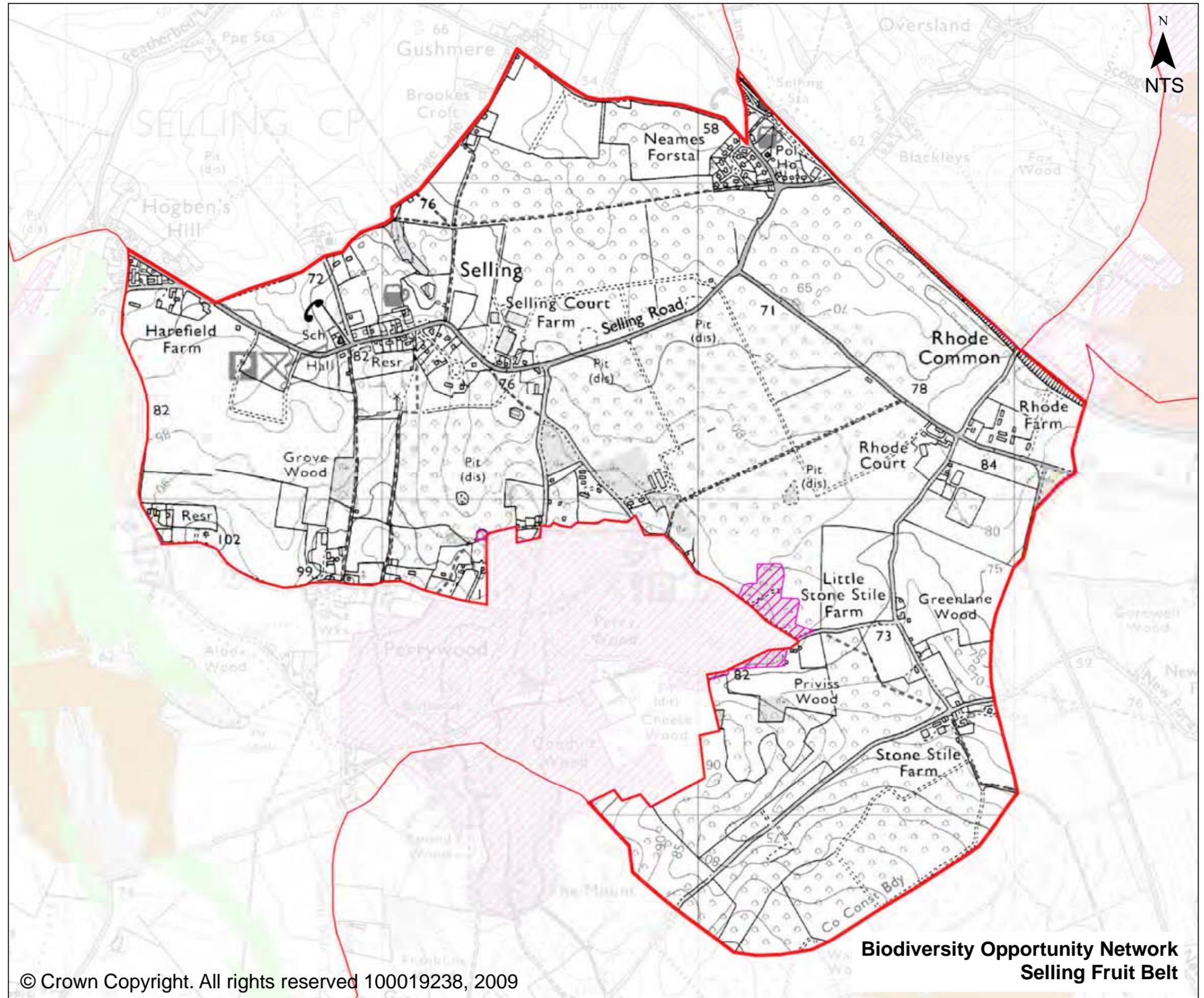
Apart from the presence of the small block of ancient woodland near Stone Stile, designated as a LWS, there is no identified strategic network opportunity in the Selling Fruit Belt. However, general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



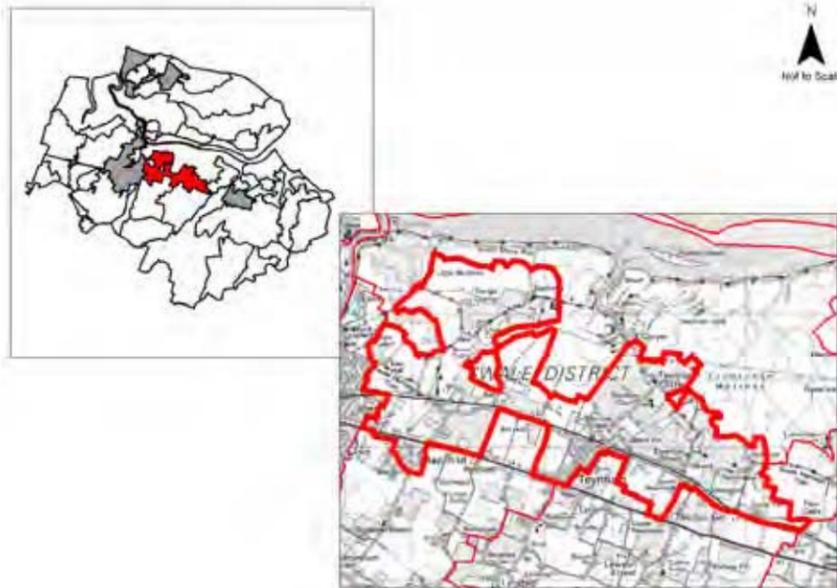
### Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network

Note: Habitats (existing and potential) are only shown where they occur within the strategic network identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust's BOA mapping (see Figure 10 and Appendix C)

- Open water (inland) - existing
- Wetland - existing
- Wetland - potential
- Intertidal habitat - existing
- Grazing marsh - existing
- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



# 31. Teynham Fruit Belt



## Landscape Description

This area is located between the A2 corridor and the Luddenham and Conyer Marshes. Whilst well provided for in terms of access routes it has a distinctly isolated feeling. The complex geology comprises mainly fertile Thanet and Woolwich beds. Occasionally isolated areas of head gravel appear and further north Lenham beds, Blackheath beds and London clay are situated around Blacketts Farm.

The topography of the area is quite unusual. Generally the area forms the northern part of the Lyn Valley. Within this valley the landscape is one of small hills and valleys. Springs commonly appear within these valleys and drain onto the marshes. The deep well drained loamy soils support a mixture of agricultural land uses. In the east fruit production is still the main function and the small-scale field pattern is strong. Further west the landscape has a more marginal exposed character and numerous orchards have been lost to arable production and sheep grazing. Generally this is an enclosed landscape. However, where fields have been enlarged and orchards lost, long views are present across adjacent marshlands.

The landscape contains quirky anomalies unique to this character area. In places roads and tracks are located above the level of adjacent fields. This effect is believed to have been created by the extraction of brickearth from the neighbouring fields. Where this occurs orchards and arable fields appear to be sunken. Elsewhere important buildings such as manor houses have been built on mounds, apparently to avoid inundation during times of flooding. St. Mary's Church at Teynham is sited in high ground, occupying a prominent position in the landscape overlooking the Lyn Valley and Osiers Stream.

The Sittingbourne to Faversham railway cuts across the landscape on an embankment, which somewhat isolates the areas to the immediate north and south. To the south Teynham and Bapchild are small urban settlements that have grown up around the railway and the A2. Buildings in these settlements are of mixed age, with the oldest tending to be scattered along the Roman road that is now the A2. Large oasts are a characteristic feature of former hop production.

Many Victorian properties developed with the arrival of the railway station at Teynham and since then building has continued in mixed style that generally does not reflect local vernacular tradition.

Away from the A2 and north of the railway line the scene is completely transformed. Narrow lanes twist and turn through the orchards to the edge of the marsh. In the east majestic poplar windbreaks define the edge of the marsh and form a strong network around the patchwork of orchards. This creates a particularly unusual and distinctive edge. Isolated hop fields are a traditional feature reminiscent of a once larger scale industry. Away from the marsh edge the landscape is extremely intimate and many fine historic buildings dating from the 15th, 16th and 17th century are scattered throughout the area. A number of properties dating from the 11th century are mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086. The area was the birthplace of commercial fruit growing in Britain when, in the 16th Century, King Henry VIII's fruiterer planted 'the sweet cherry, the temperate pippyn and the golden reinette' at Osiers Farm.

Further west around Bax and Blacketts Farms, fingers of marshland penetrate between high outcrops with glimpses of the wider expanse beyond. Here fewer orchards now exist and the landscape has a generally more open and exposed feeling. Some isolated mature shelterbelts do still stand at the margins of enlarged arable fields as a legacy to the landscape's past function. Elsewhere field boundaries are generally formed of post and wire fencing. There are a number of historic timber framed properties in this area, as well as traditional flint churches, but most are twentieth century cottages and farm buildings in various architectural styles.

## Key Characteristics

- Undulating, intimate, landscape composed of small hills and valleys
- Complex geology of the fertile drift deposits, head gravel and London clay
- Small-scale well managed network of orchards and occasional hop fields. Elsewhere enlarged arable and grazing fields
- Birthplace of commercial fruit growing at Osiers Farm
- Narrow winding lanes enclosed by mature hedgerows and shelterbelts
- Tracks, lanes and historic buildings raised above adjacent areas, which is indicative of the area's susceptibility to flooding
- Mixed traditional historic houses and farms. 20th century residential and commercial development
- Main transport routes include the railway and A2
- Important local landmark at Tonge Mill and pond

Tonge Mill and its associated pond and stream are a popular local landmark and visitor destination, with the mill chimney and the English Elms around the pond visible in the wider landscape. The trees, spring, ponds and connecting stream are important in terms of their wildlife interest and the remains of Tonge Castle, to the rear of Tonge Mill, provide an important historic reference. To the south of the pond, the community woodland is forming a new landscape feature.

## Condition: Moderate

This is a landscape in moderate condition overall, although the landscape around the urban edges is often poor. It is a visually coherent area with a strong landscape pattern. There are few visual detractors, including polytunnels and derelict farm buildings. Field enlargement has not had a significant impact visually since topography and mature trees largely screen the effect. From the marshes this agricultural intensification has a greater impact and whilst the grazing fields do effortlessly join with the grazing marshes, post and wire boundaries detract from the visual quality. Likewise large-scale agricultural sheds are prominent features when viewed from the marshes.

In general the ecological integrity of the area is moderate. Orchards and associated boundary trees, the railway embankment and spring fed valleys are all important for biodiversity. Where fields have been enlarged the nature conservation value has been reduced by the loss of hedgerows.



## Guidelines: Conserve and Create

Guidelines for the Teynham Fruit Belt area focus on conserving the rural environment and creating an improved urban edge.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and landmark buildings and historic parkland.
- Conserve the distinctive, tranquil and often intimate landscape character of the area formed by its hills, valleys, springs and streams/drains, raised banks, orchards, hedgerows and shelterbelts. Additionally look for opportunities to create a stronger landscape structure in denuded areas by use of shelterbelts and hedgerows (inc. supplement/replace post and wire fencing) and to soften existing and new development using shelterbelts and hedgerows.
- Conserve the distinctive character of the marshland/orchard edge, often defined by poplar windbreaks and narrow lanes with glimpses of the open expanse of grazing marsh and the small-scale pattern of orchards.
- Conserve the intimate, historic character away from the marsh edge which provides the setting of many historic buildings.

To the west of the area the urban influence of Sittingbourne, the edge of which is clearly visible from the wider landscape, downgrades the landscape. This includes the expanded settlements of Teynham and Bapchild where building styles are mixed and few modern dwellings have been developed in local vernacular style. Large-scale commercial units along the A2 are poorly sited and designed, a further indicator of the urban fringe of Sittingbourne.

## Sensitivity: Moderate

This is a moderately sensitive landscape. The rural landscape has retained many traditional agricultural functions, however modern farming practices and 19th and 20th century urbanisation have degraded the quality of localised areas.

In general terms the visibility of the landscape is moderate. However this varies from high on the more open elevated farmlands, where there are long views towards the Swale, to low in the more enclosed areas of fruit production. The higher ground can be viewed from the marshlands and development in these areas would be sensitive. Conversely views at the marshland fringes are occasional, but wide and distant.

- Create a stronger/crisper urban edge which provides a clear transition between rural and urban areas, whilst ensuring that any new development does not impose visually on the marshland to the north.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries - red or yellow stock brick walls, occasional estate iron railings (white

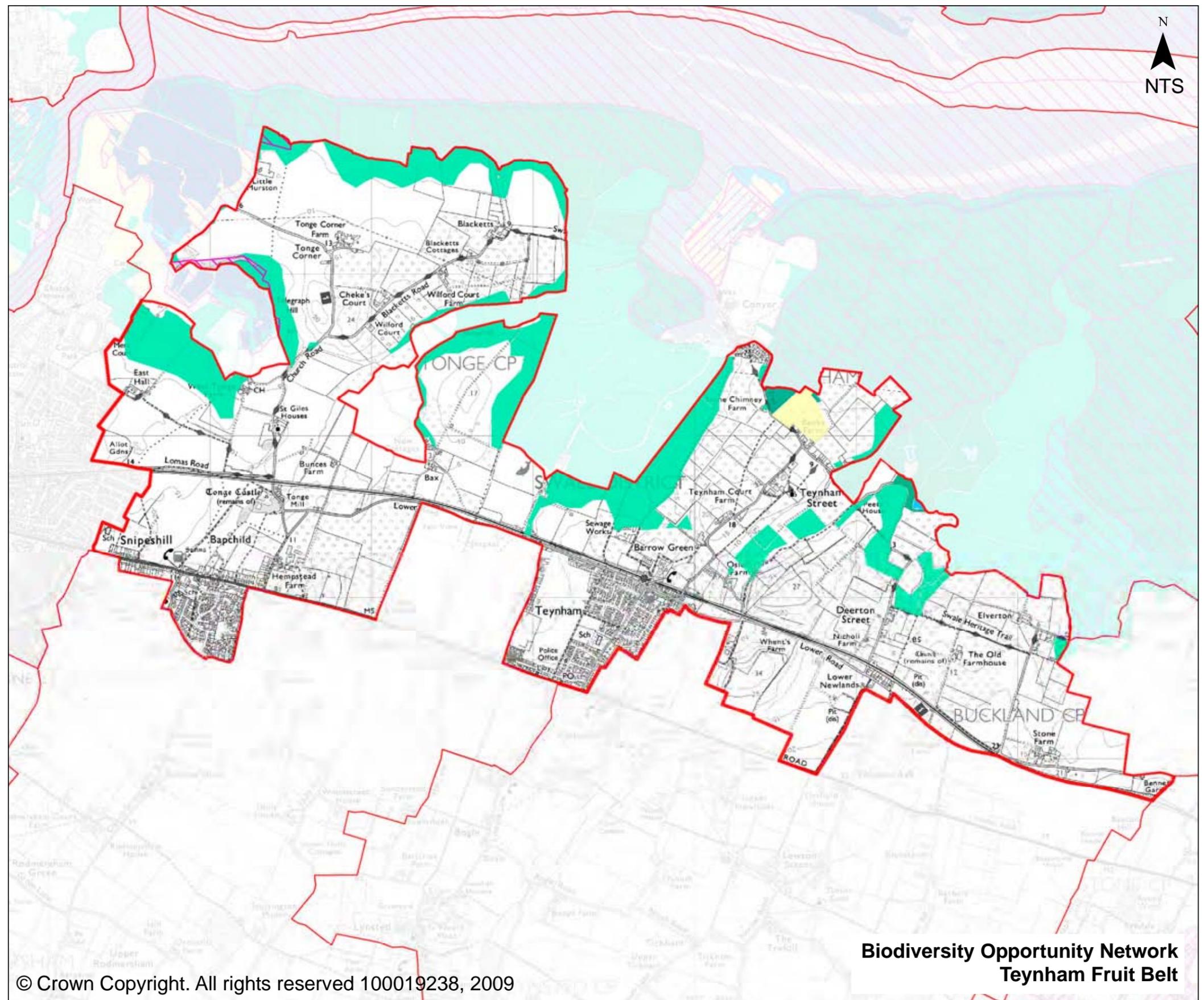
Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
	poor	CREATE	RESTORE & CREATE	RESTORE
		low	moderate	high
<b>Sensitivity</b>				

# 31. Teynham Fruit Belt

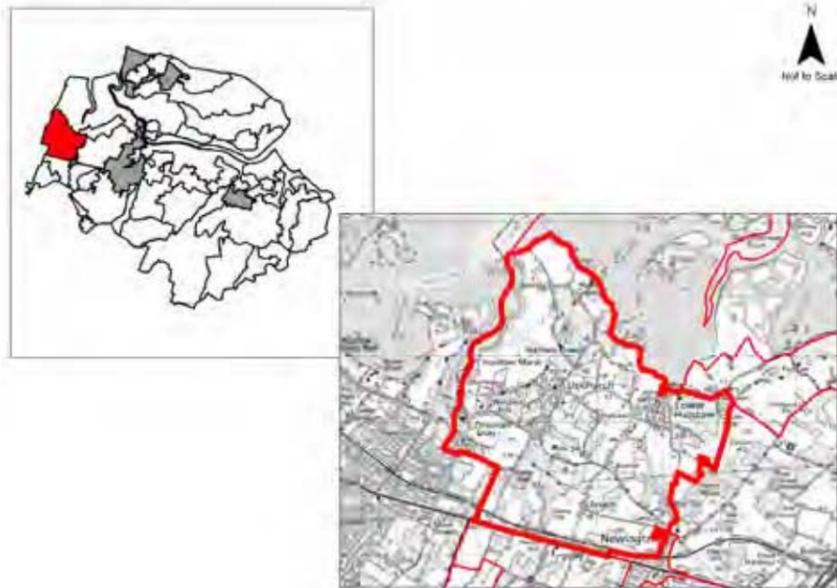
or black), or hedgerows, for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and occasional slate and thatch and for building walls - weatherboarding, tile hanging, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick and white painted/rendered brick, flint and stone church. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose, crab apple, bullace, damson, field maple and dogwood. Tree planting - localised alder, walnut. Additionally, within developed areas – silver birch, willow, hawthorn, blackthorn, or older fruit tree varieties and hawthorn as hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar. Other - fruit orchards and hops.

## Biodiversity Network Opportunity

Teynham Fruit Belt has some limited strategic habitat network situated around its northern margins. Small areas of grazing marsh and/or intertidal habitat potential exists here reflecting the marshland habitats to the north. There is also opportunity for species-rich neutral grassland adjacent to a small patch of existing grazing marsh near Teynham Street. Elsewhere general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



## 32. Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt



### Landscape Description

The Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt contains a diverse range of landscape types. Situated north west of Newington and north of the A2, it includes the settlements of Lower Halstow and Upchurch.

On the mainland it is an area of mixed geology. To the north of Upchurch the promontory that contains Ham Green retains in part an alluvial marshland, known as Horsham Marsh. This is an important area for wildlife and is designated as part of the Medway Estuary and Marshes SSSI/SPA/Ramsar site, which is most notable for its assemblages of over wintering and passage birds. A smaller portion of the marsh at the northern end is locally designated as the Grazing Marsh at Upchurch LWS.

Further east the Lower Halstow Brickworks LWS provides a complex of varied habitats including reedbed and species-rich grassland adjacent to the Medway Estuary and Marshes.

As the land rises to the south the geology diversifies to that which typically supports fruit production. This includes mixed outcrops of Thanet, Woolwich and Bagshot beds as well as deposits of head and head gravel. It is an undulating landscape that rises gently away from the foreshore to 30m in places. At these high points there are long views to Grain and Sheppey in the north and south to the North Downs. Elsewhere there is a strong sense of enclosure, emphasised by the significant network of mature hedgerows and shelterbelts that are associated with the agricultural landscape. Some of the many narrow lanes are enclosed by mature hedgerows, which in places contain mature standard oaks.



### Key Characteristics

- Small to medium-scale rural landscape with a strong sense of enclosure
- Small nucleated villages with historic centres and modern urban expansion on periphery
- Undulating landscape with occasional long views to north and south
- Distinctive coastal edge formed by abutting marshland and arable/horticultural land, with views of estuary and rising land
- Fragmented structure of mature hedgerows and shelterbelts surround orchards, pasture and arable fields
- Grazing marsh to the west of Ham Green
- Narrow winding lanes, with the busy A2 on the southern boundary

There is a complex mixture of truly rural landscapes and more transitional or fringe landscapes associated with the rural settlements. Land use includes mature and newly planted orchards, pasture and arable production, as well as the grazing marshes west of Ham Green. Closer to Medway there is equine and golf course development.

The historic nucleated villages of Upchurch and Lower Halstow have been overwhelmed by late 20th century urban sprawl, which has greatly increased their size and reduced their aesthetic qualities and the sense of remoteness that would once have dominated the area. Outside the villages the rural landscape contains many traditional farms and scattered cottages.

Historically this landscape is of interest, since the Romans established extensive salt and pottery workings around Upchurch and the shore was later used for the winning of estuarine clay. Also there were watercress beds north of Newington, once a significant producer for local and London markets. Evidence of these still exists although they are now largely redundant.

During the 19th century George Charmbers, John de Jardin Snr., Francis Moltino, W.D. Doust and William Wyllie painted this coastal area. In the 20th century the watercolourist and art historian Martin Hardie worked here.

### Condition: Moderate

The condition of the Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt can be described as moderate overall, although the grazing marsh is considered to be in favourable ecological condition. The pattern of elements is generally coherent with its small to medium-scale field pattern and traditional land uses. The fragmented hedgerows and windbreaks add to the landscape structure, although in places shelterbelts of inappropriate evergreen species have been planted (e.g. *Cupressocyparis leylandii*).

A number of historic buildings are in good condition both within villages and the surrounding areas. However, the influence of urbanisation, including equine and golf course development, has altered the quality of the natural landscape at the urban fringe and the historic character of the settlements. At the outskirts of settlements fields are frequently subdivided, often by a variety of fencing types, to accommodate horse pastures, allotments and other urban related land uses. This has reduced the coherent rural character of these fringe landscapes. Large transmission cables have also further affected the remote rural character of the area.

### Guidelines: Conserve and Create

The guidelines in this area are aimed at conserving existing landscapes and restoring elements to develop the existing structure.

- Consider the generic guidelines for fruit belt landscapes and for commercial and equestrian.
- Conserve the remaining enclosed landscape structure and look for opportunities to create features to restore a strong landscape structure with tree, shelterbelt, hedge planting and wetland features such as watercress beds.
- Conserve the distinctive landscape and historic character formed at the coastal edge and eastern road approaches to Lower Halstow, together with the contrast provided by the abutting of large-scale marshland landscapes with the more intimate backdrop of arable/horticultural land, with its rising land behind, winding narrow lanes and estuary views.
- Conserve the undeveloped and distinctive character of Horsham Marsh to the west, which is typical of the wider North Kent Marshes.
- Use local and vernacular materials appropriate to the location: for boundaries – (within villages) red or yellow stock brick as appropriate or hedgerows,

### Sensitivity: Moderate

The area borrows a considerable degree of its sense of place from the neighbouring marshlands and coast. These, in places, provide a unique setting to an otherwise small-scale rural landscape. Fields and orchards are host to marshland birds at high tide, whilst views into the area from the estuary means that the marshland and coastal fringe is highly visually sensitive to development.

The structure provided by hedgerows and shelterbelts, although fragmented, does assist in enclosing and screening views. This may also be said of the undulating topography, which assists in screening the areas of settlement. Overall the area is moderately visually sensitive, although the open nature of the Horsham Marshes and the coastal fringe in general makes it locally highly visible.

Building styles and materials vary greatly, so that even in older buildings there is little continuity, although in isolation numerous buildings are considered to be distinct in character. The influence of urbanisation has put pressure on the rural fringe landscapes between the Medway Towns and villages to the east.

for roofs - Kent-peg tiles and for building walls - weatherboarding, timber frame and plaster infill, red or yellow stock brick as appropriate. For new hedges and hedgerow trees - hawthorn, dogwood, pedunculate oak (scattered), blackthorn and field maple. Additionally, within developed areas – silver birch, willow, hawthorn, blackthorn or older fruit tree varieties and hawthorn as hedging. Shelterbelts – poplar, willow or alder. Other - fruit orchards.

Condition	good	REINFORCE	CONSERVE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE
	moderate	CREATE & REINFORCE	CONSERVE & CREATE	CONSERVE & RESTORE
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<b>Sensitivity</b>				

## 32. Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt

### Habitat Opportunity Network

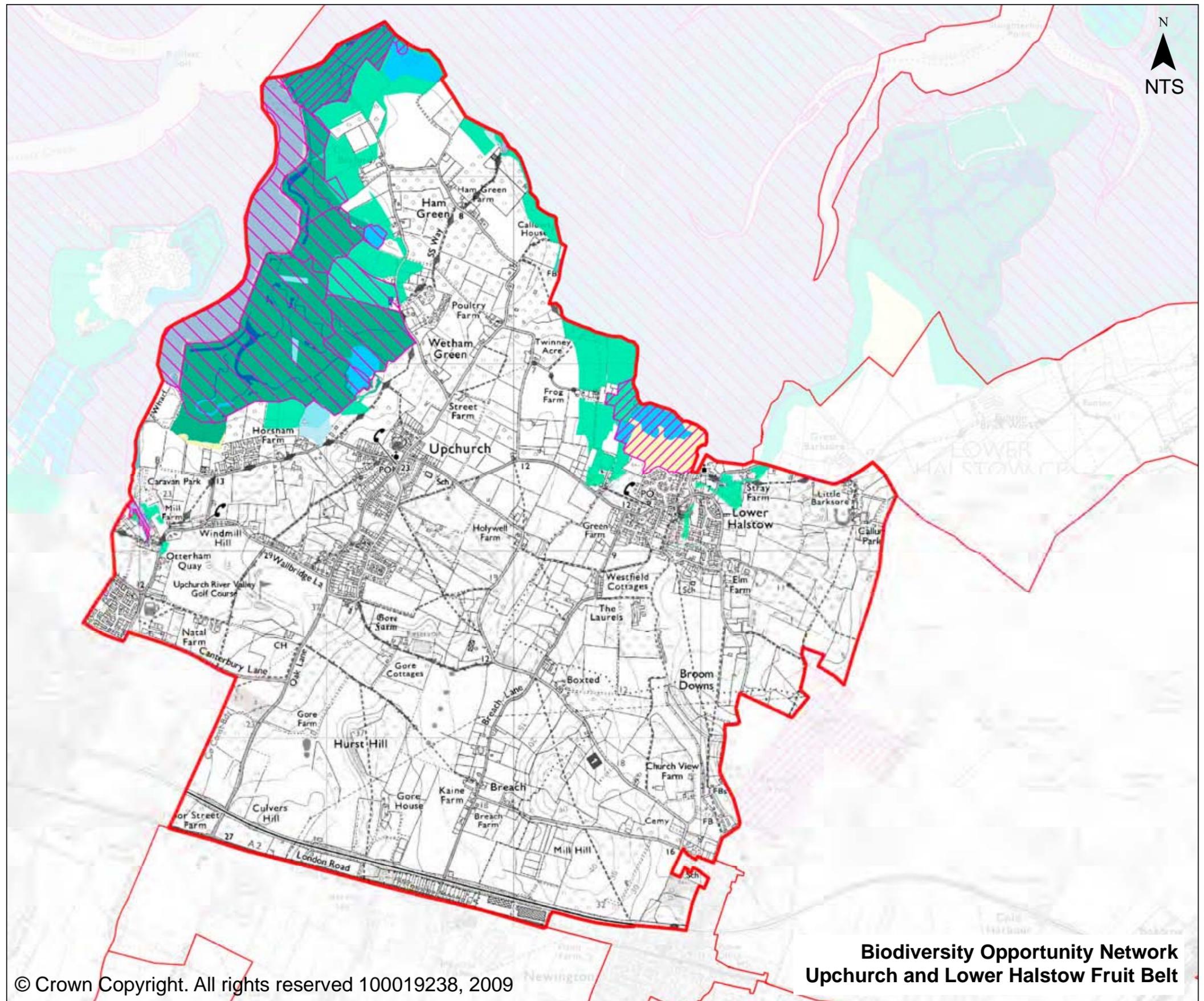
The designated marsh habitat to the north of this area forms part of the wider grazing marsh and intertidal network of the Borough. Around its margins, there is opportunity to extend and buffer the existing habitat. Elsewhere general guidelines mentioned above for arable and orchard land should be followed here. The restoration and extension of the hedgerow network and arable field margins/buffers would provide improved habitat connectivity at the local scale, and lower intensity farming practices should be encouraged. The conservation and sensitive management of the older, traditional orchards for biodiversity should be a local priority. Opportunities for new non-intensively managed orchards should be pursued on land of lower biodiversity value. Much of this can be supported through the Environmental Stewardship scheme administered by Natural England.



#### Legend: Biodiversity Opportunity Network

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- Wetland - potential
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- Grazing marsh & intertidal habitat - potential
- Species-rich neutral grassland - existing
- Species-rich neutral grassland - potential
- Acid grassland & heathland - existing
- Acid grassland & heathland - potential
- Chalk grassland - existing
- Chalk grassland - potential
- Ancient Woodland - existing
- Woodland - potential
- Character Areas
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Wildlife Sites



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Upchurch and Lower Halstow Fruit Belt**