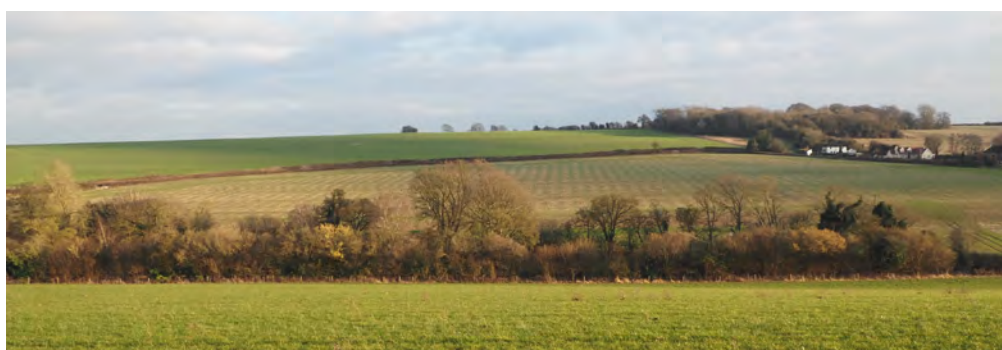


Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment For Hartley Parish Council

Final Report
March 2022



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Acronyms used in this report

LCA	Landscape Character Area
LCT	Landscape Character Type
LLCA	Local Landscape Character Area
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
TPO	Tree Protection Order

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the residents of Hartley parish for taking part in the consultation workshop, and to the parish clerk for organising it. The author is very grateful to members of the project steering group for their input of local knowledge. Because the fieldwork was undertaken in winter, members of the local community and the steering group have kindly provided photographs from other seasons. These have been acknowledged where possible. All other photographs were taken by Fiona Fyfe in January 2022.

Part 1: Introduction

1.0 Commissioning, purposes and structure of report

This Landscape Character Assessment was commissioned by Hartley Parish Council in December 2021. It was undertaken by Fiona Fyfe Associates between January and March 2022, and included an online consultation workshop for local residents on 9th February 2022. The neighbouring parish of Fawham commissioned a Landscape Character Assessment at the same time, so the fieldwork and consultation for the assessments were undertaken jointly.

The Landscape Character Assessments are intended to inform the Hartley and Fawham Neighbourhood Plans, which are currently in preparation. The existing Landscape Character Assessments (at National, County and District level) were not considered to provide sufficient level of detail, so this Assessment was commissioned to provide a finer-grain study which picks up the variations in landscape character within the parishes. This Landscape Character Assessment includes those character areas which lie exclusively within Hartley Parish and those which straddle the boundary with Fawham Parish.

The document is structured in three parts. Part 1 (Introduction) introduces the concept of landscape character assessment and the methodology employed. Part 2 (Landscape Background) provides background information on Hartley parish and its landscape, including a summary of existing Landscape Character Assessments covering the parish. Part 3 (Landscape Character Assessment) describes the five Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) identified within Hartley parish. Following the map showing the LLCAs, a series of profiles describe each of the LLCAs and make recommendations for the future protection and enhancement of their special qualities.

2.0 Introduction to landscape character assessment

Defining 'landscape'

The European Landscape Convention (ratified by the UK in 2007 and not affected by Brexit) defines 'landscape' as:

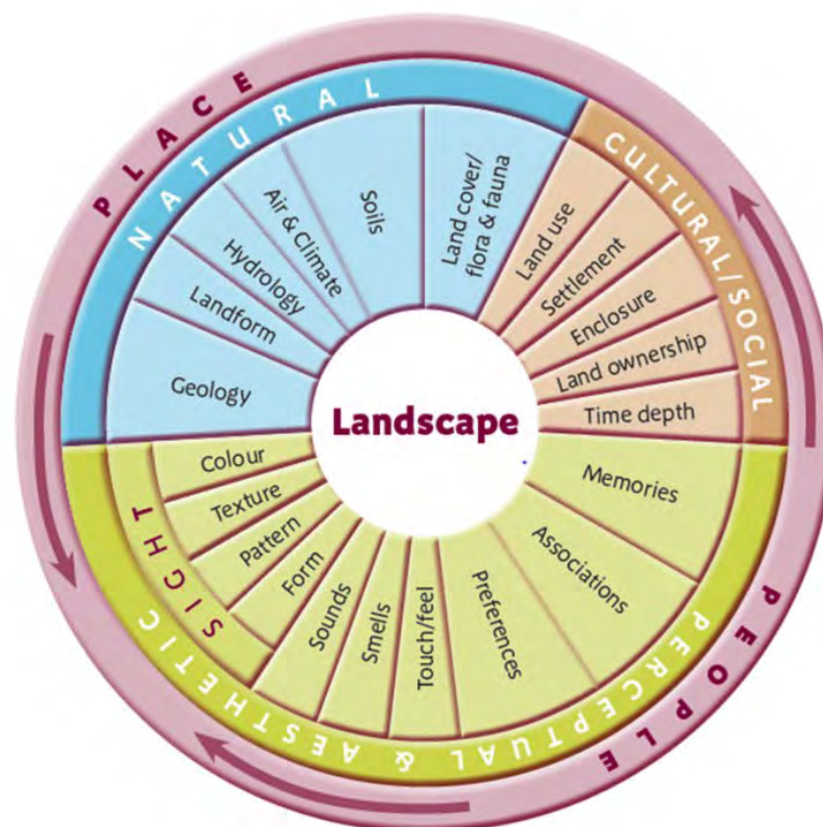
An area of land, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.¹

An holistic approach to landscape is a key principle of the thinking behind the European Landscape Convention, which acknowledges in its preamble:

¹ European Landscape Convention, Council of Europe 2000 p.9

- That landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity...
- That landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures...
- That the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality.
- That developments... planning... and infrastructure... are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes.
- That the landscape is a key element of individual and social wellbeing and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone...

The following diagram² explains the different elements of landscape which capture its natural, cultural and perceptual qualities. All are considered when undertaking landscape character assessment.



Landscape Character Assessment

Landscape character assessment has been a recognised tool within the UK planning system for many years, used to inform the management of change and to deliver sustainable development. It provides a framework for people to think about what gives their area its unique sense of place.

² From *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* (Natural England, 2014 p.9)

*Landscape character assessment is a tool to help understand what the landscape is like today, how it has come to be like that, and how it may change in the future. Its role is to help ensure that change and development does not undermine whatever is characteristic or valued about any particular landscape.*³

*Landscape character assessment is the process of identifying and describing variation in the character of the landscape. It seeks to identify and explain the unique combination of elements and features (characteristics) that make landscapes distinctive.*⁴

Landscape Character Assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales from national to local, depending on the purpose for which they are required. More information on the existing national, county and district-wide Landscape Character Assessments covering Hartley parish – and how this Assessment relates to them - is provided in section 9.0.

3.0 Methodology and approach

The Hartley Landscape Character Assessment was carried out by a Chartered Landscape Architect with extensive experience in landscape character assessment, and local knowledge of the chalk landscapes of the Kent Downs.

The project methodology is in line with the approach set out in the current Best Practice Guidelines for Landscape Character Assessment⁵. and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment⁶. It can be divided into four stages, as shown:

³ From *Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland* Natural England 2002 p.3

⁴ *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* Natural England, 2014 (glossary)

⁵ *An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment* Natural England, 2014

⁶ *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition* Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2013



Part 2: Landscape Background

4.0 Location and Context

Hartley Parish is located in the north-east of Sevenoaks District, between Fawkham (to the west) and Meopham (to the east, within Gravesham District). The parish boundaries are shown on Map 1. To the south is Ash-cum-Ridley parish, which contains the late-20th Century settlement of New Ash Green. Hartley's northern parish boundary follows the London Victoria- Chatham railway line, with the settlement of Longfield (Dartford District) to the north.

The north-central part of Hartley parish saw dense development in the late 20th Century, but the remainder of the parish retains its rural character and is designated Green Belt. The Green Belt boundary is currently drawn tightly around the urban edge. The study area boundary for this Landscape Character Assessment follows the Green Belt boundary, excluding the urban area.

5.0 The natural environment

5.1 Geology and Topography

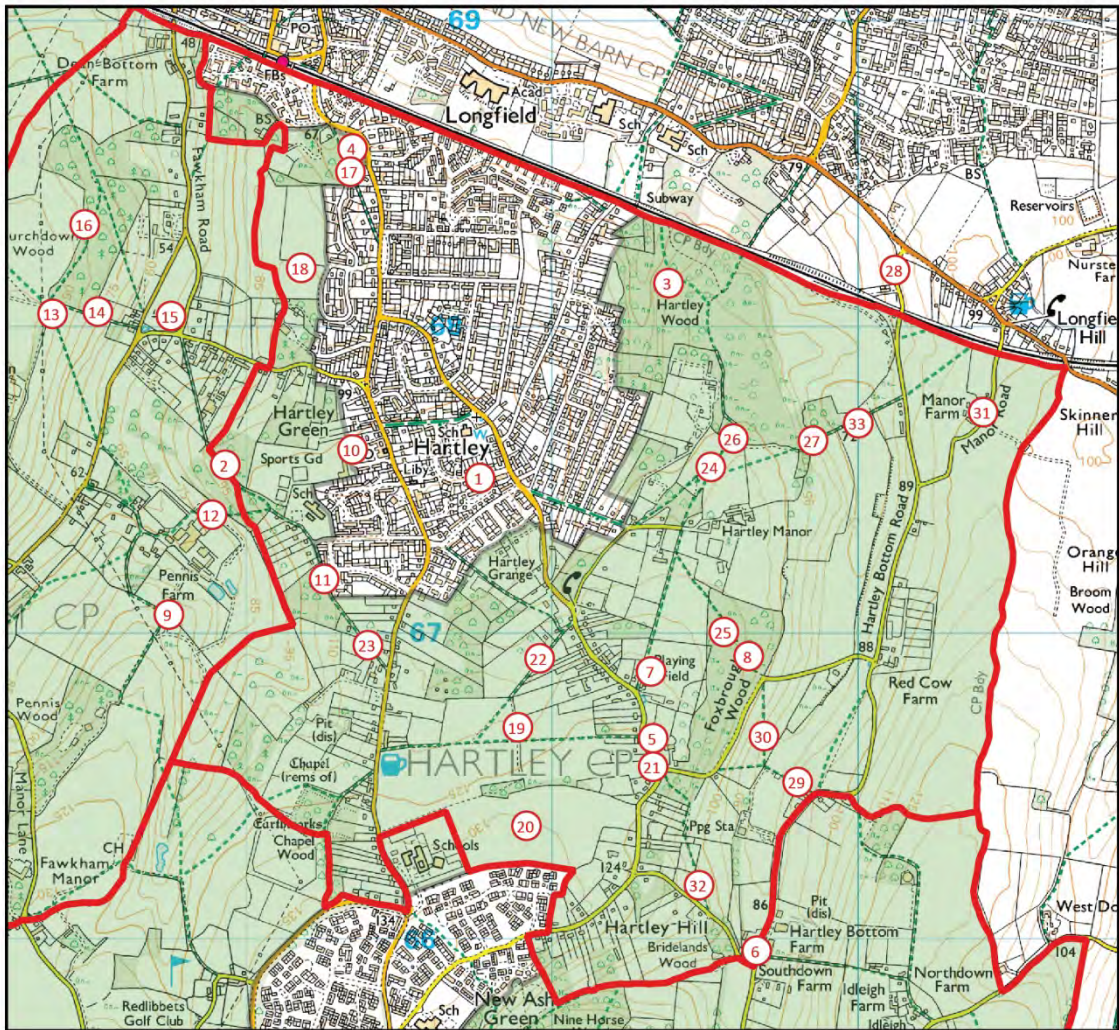
Hartley is located on the northern edge of the Kent Downs, on the Lewes nodular chalk formation. A number of Deneholes (medieval chalk extraction pits) have been found in Hartley. They comprise a circular shaft which opens out into chambers at the base, and were dug to access the highest quality (unweathered) chalk. The bedrock chalk geology is consistent across the parish, but there are variations in the superficial geology. The highest land is covered with clay-with-flints deposits (formed by surface weathering of chalk) giving heavy but fertile soils. Alluvial surface deposits (also relatively fertile) are found in valley bottoms.



Fig. 1: Inside denehole in Hartley Photo credit: G. Cramp



Fig. 2: Flint nodule, Pennis valley footpath



Hartley Landscape Character Assessment

Map 1: Hartley parish boundary and photograph locations

March 2022

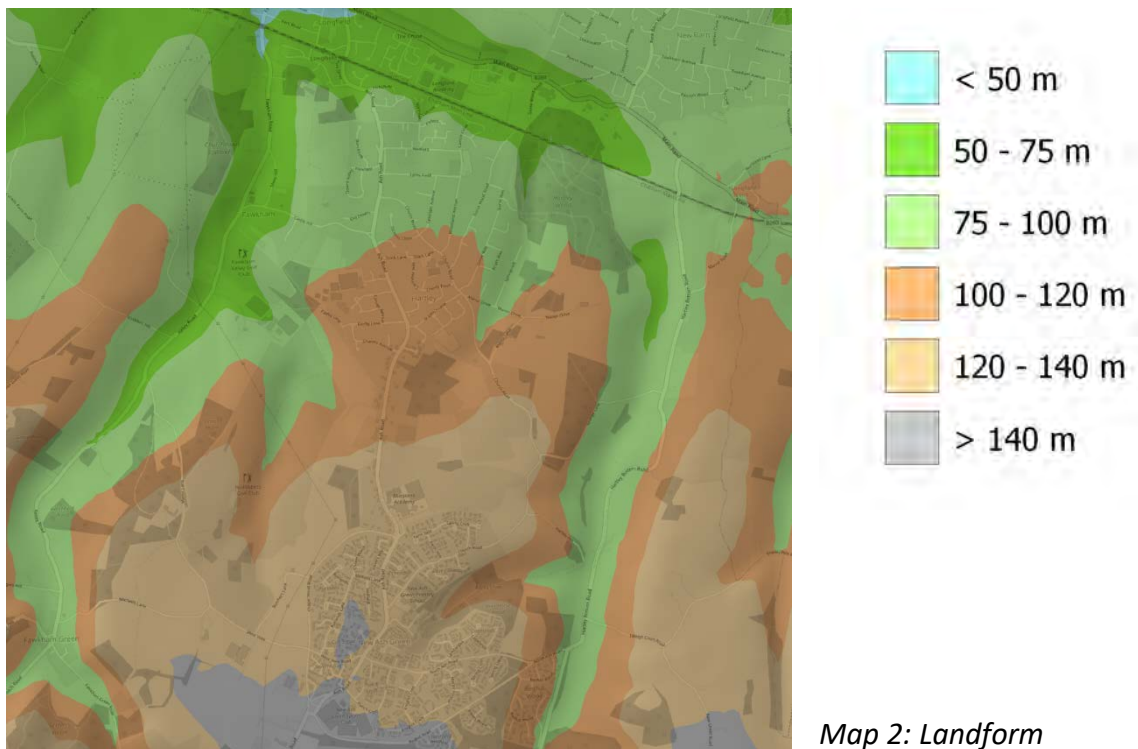
- Key**
- Parish Boundaries
 - Metropolitan Green Belt within Sevenoaks District
 - Approximate photo location



Mapping © Ordnance Survey. Crown copyright 2022. Licence no. 100052789

Map 1: Map of Hartley parish, showing photo locations used in this document

Map 2 (landform) shows that Hartley village is located on an undulating plateau (rising gently towards the south) which drops into steep-sided valleys: the Pennis and Fawkham Valleys to the west, and Hartley Bottom to the east. The parish boundary follows the ridgeline on the eastern side of Hartley Bottom.



5.2 Vegetation and habitats

Natural environment designations and priority habitats within Hartley are shown on Map 3 below. The parish contains significant blocks of Ancient Woodland, covering approx. 115 acres. The largest blocks are Bramblefield Wood, Hartley Wood, Foxbrough Wood and Chapel Wood (labelled on Map 3). There are also smaller areas of Ancient Woodland, several of which are narrow strips known as 'shaws'. These include Billings Hill Shaw, Northfield, Old Downs, Hoselands Wood, Bridelands Wood, and woodland on the edges of the Pennis Valley.

Historic maps show that in the 1880s Hoselands wood (to the SW of Rectory Meadow as shown on Map 3) extended further south, and its former extent can today be seen in a 'ghost wood' hedge.

There are further areas identified as deciduous woodland (but not Ancient Woodland) on the Priority Habitat Inventory. These are also shown on Map 3, along with areas covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). TPOs cover the south-west and central parts of Hartley Wood, Foxbrough Wood, trees to the west and north-east of Hartley Manor, part of Chapel Wood, the shaw on the northern side of Northfield, and part of Hoselands Wood.

A large area of new woodland known as Barnetts Wood (not shown on the Priority Habitat Inventory) has been recently planted as an extension to the Ancient Woodland shaw on the northern side of Northfield.

In addition to the woodland blocks and shaws, there are also many individual trees in fields, hedges and gardens which add to the well-treed feel of the parish. There is an area of traditional orchard Priority Habitat to the west of Church Road.

Rectory meadow, in the north-west of the parish (labelled on Map 3) contains flower-rich unimproved chalk grassland, and is managed as a Local Nature Reserve by Kent Wildlife Trust with help from local volunteers.

Both Rectory Meadow and Hartley Wood are designated Local Wildlife Sites. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest or other nature conservation designations within the parish.

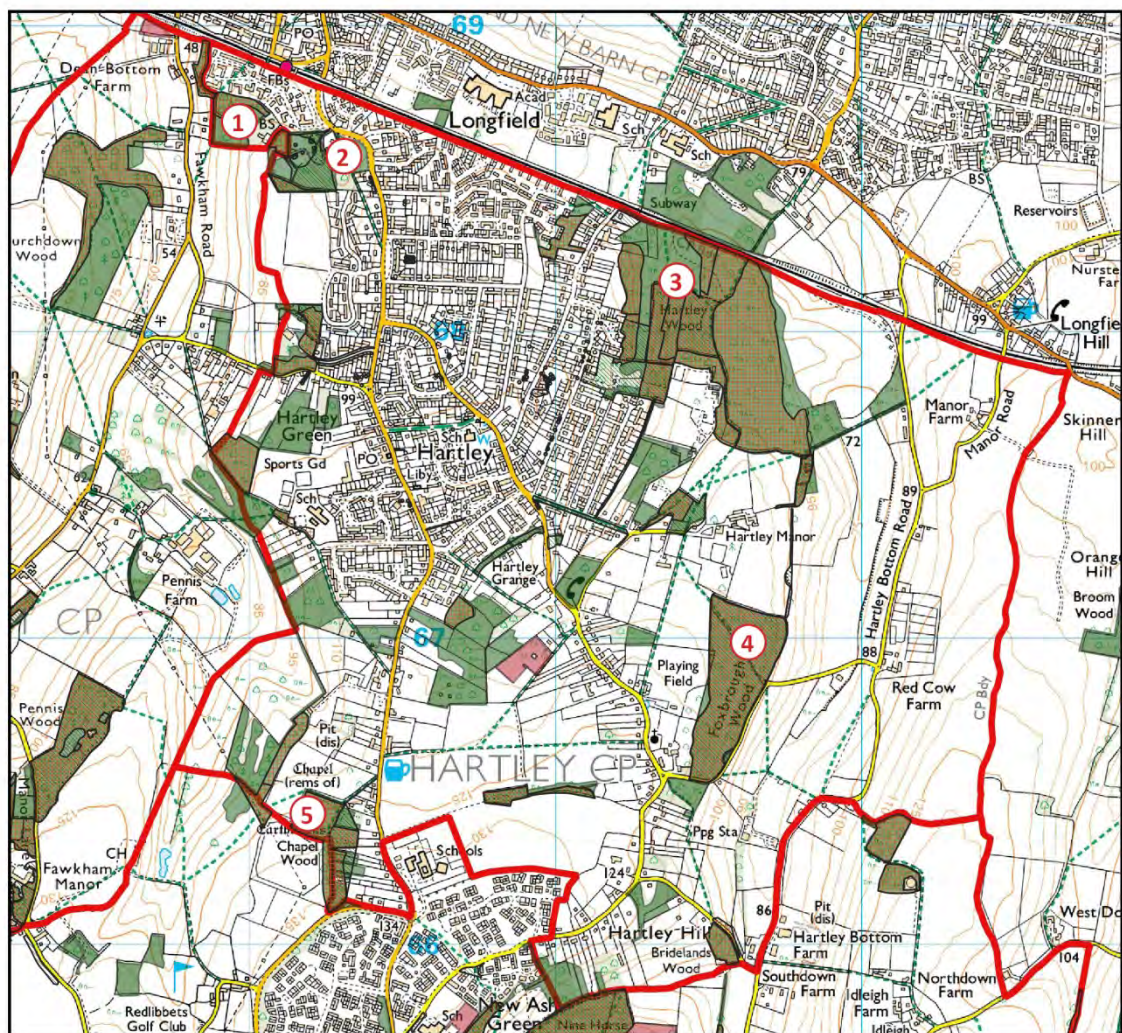
Land at the northern end of Hartley Bottom (immediately east of Hartley Wood) is occupied by a former municipal tip, where rubbish from Southwark was brought in by train and dumped. The tip closed in the 1960s, and is now being re-colonised by scrub and woodland. It provides undisturbed habitat for a range of plant, insect and bird species.



Fig. 3: Bluebells in Ancient Woodland, Hartley Wood
Photo credit – Chris Alford



Fig. 4: Orchids and other chalk grassland flowers in Rectory Meadow
Photo credit – Hartley Parish Council



Hartley Landscape Character Assessment

Map 3: Ancient Woodland, TPOs and Priority Habitat Inventory sites in Hartley

March 2022

Key

- Parish Boundaries
- Ancient Woodland
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)
- Priority Habitat Inventory**
- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard



0 250 500 m



- 1 Bramblefield Wood
- 2 Rectory Meadow
(Local Wildlife Site and Local Nature Reserve)
- 3 Hartley Wood
(Local Wildlife Site and village green)
- 4 Foxbrough Wood
- 5 Chapel Wood

Mapping © Ordnance Survey. Crown copyright 2022. Licence no. 100052789

Map 3: Ancient Woodland, TPOs and Priority Habitat Inventory Sites in Hartley

6.0 Cultural Heritage

6.1 Historic features

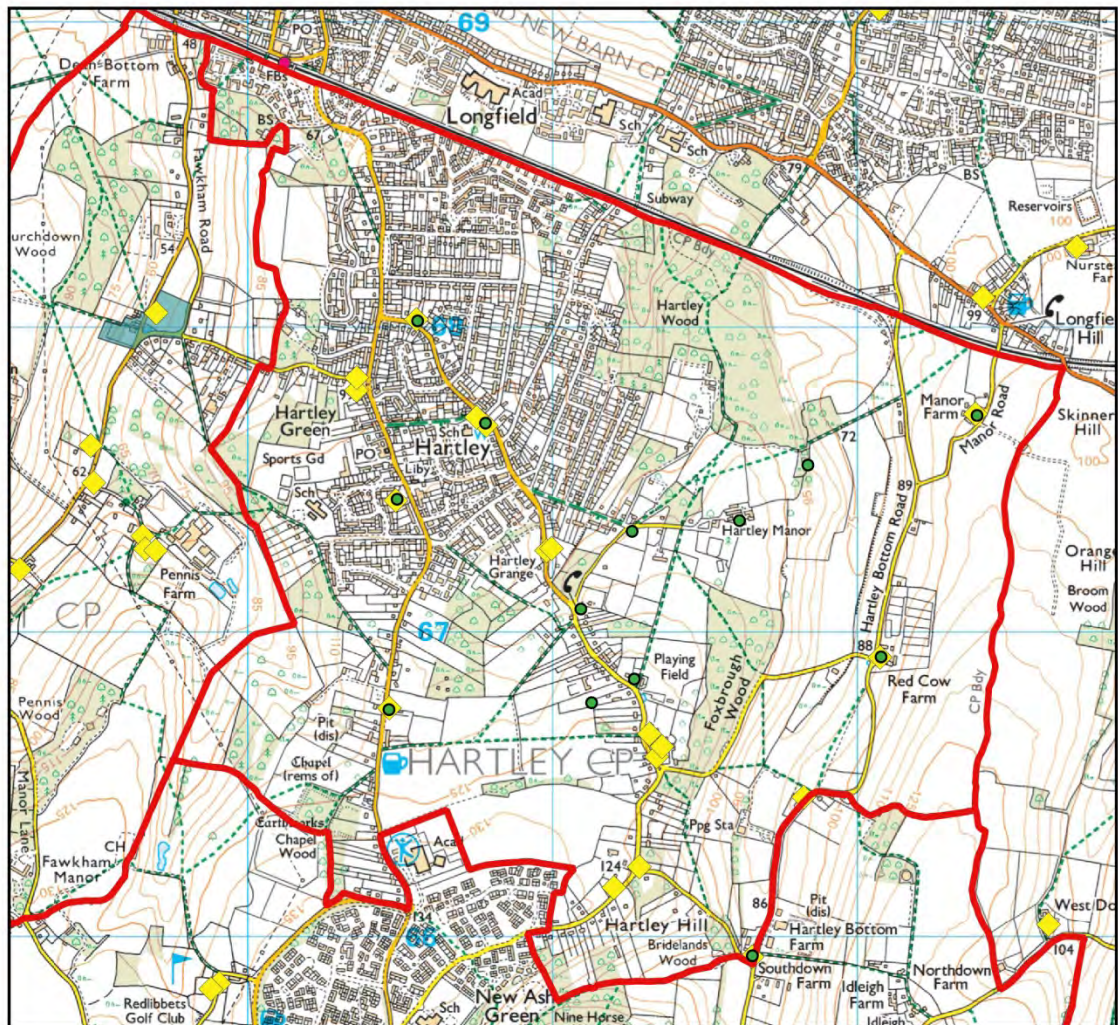
Hartley has seen considerable expansion of development in the 20th Century, but nevertheless retains evidence of its earlier history within its landscape. The 1801 Mudge Map of Kent (Map 4) shows roads and woodlands which can still be identified today. The Mudge Map shows settlement scattered along what are now Ash Road and Church Road, including a cluster of buildings labelled Grub Street around what is now the Black Lion. Hartley Church is also shown. Hartley Wood, Foxbrough Wood, Chapel Wood and Bramblefield Wood can be identified, as well as the lost Hoselands Wood on the north-west boundary of the parish, and Gorse Wood, some of which survives within the urban area of Hartley.



Map 4: Extract from the 1801 Mudge Map of Kent (thanks to Gerald Cramp for use of this image)

The buildings shown on the Mudge Map generally correlate with those identified as historic farmsteads or Listed Buildings in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) (see Map 5). The parish church of All Saints Hartley is Listed Grade 1, and is Norman with a Norman south door. The church was remodelled about 100 years later and extended in 2010.. It is likely to have replaced an earlier wooden building on the same site. Together with Hartley Court it forms a cluster of Listed Buildings on the corner of Church Road and Grange Lane.

Chapel Wood is also associated with historic settlement, as it is the site of a medieval village and therefore an important archaeological site. Excavations revealed medieval occupation, but also that the site has not been developed or farmed since about 1350. Documentary sources record that this wood has existed since 1571.



Hartley Landscape Character Assessment

Map 5: Heritage Sites in Hartley

March 2022

Key

- ▭ Parish Boundaries
- ◆ Listed Buildings
- ▭ Conservation Area
- Historic Farmstead identified in Kent Historic Environment Record (Hartley Parish only)



0 250 500 m

Mapping © Ordnance Survey. Crown copyright 2022. Licence no. 100052789

Map 5: Heritage sites in Hartley

In the early 20th Century, farmland along Ash Road and Church Road was divided into linear plots and sold off. A distinctive settlement pattern evolved with individual houses (originally often of bungalow/ chalet design) alongside the road, with long garden plots extending back. This disrupted the earlier field pattern (although traces of it remain). As well as being fairly small, the original houses were set back from the road and retained the roadside hedges. However over the intervening decades many of the houses have been rebuilt or extended, sections of road have been widened and straightened, and frontages have become more suburban in character.

There are no Scheduled Monuments or other cultural heritage designations within the parish.



Fig. 5: All Saints Church, Hartley (Listed Grade I)



Fig. 6: Historic Farmstead (and former pub) at the corner of Hartley Bottom Road and Hartley Hill (Listed Grade II)

7.0 Access, perceptual qualities and views

7.1 Access and open space

Numerous footpaths connect the built-up area of Hartley with the surrounding countryside. Many of these Public Rights of Way (PRoW) have been in existence for centuries and were listed by Hartley Parish Council in 1913 and 1934. Most are paths across fields or through woodland, but some (in the vicinity of buildings) have become narrow passageways between garden fences.

Hartley contains extensive areas of Public Open Space, including the large open field of Northfield; Manor Field playing fields; Billings Hill Shaw; Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve, and part of Hartley Wood (the latter is also designated as a Village Green).

7.2 Perceptual qualities

One of the most striking qualities of Hartley's landscape are the contrasts within such a small area. These include the contrast between wooded and open areas, and the contrast between the densely built-up area and the countryside. These contrasts are particularly appreciated by residents of the parish.

The extensive deciduous woodland and numerous trees create a gentle and verdant setting for the village and form a seasonally-changing backdrop in their colours and textures. Spring bluebells and autumn leaves are particularly appreciated. The constant presence of woodland and trees also enhance the sense of tranquillity, which is notable, particularly given the proximity of Hartley to London and other large settlements.

7.3 Views

The most notable views in the parish are those from the edges of the central plateau over the surrounding valleys, including the views from the north-west of the parish across the Fawkham Valley; views across the Pennis Valley, and views to the east over Hartley Bottom. There are also impressive long views within Hartley Bottom. All of these views are strongly rural in character.



Fig. 7: Manor Playing Fields Public Open Space



Fig. 8: Path through Foxbrough Wood

8.0 Present and future forces for change affecting Hartley's landscape

8.1 Types of changes

There are many different forces for change acting on the landscape of Hartley parish. Some are natural processes whilst others are man-made. Some are single, large-scale changes whilst others are smaller incremental changes which can have a strong cumulative impact on the landscape. Some changes may be sudden, whilst others may occur gradually. Many of the changes will be exacerbated by climate change. As well as visual impacts, these changes may impact on the local economy, and on the health, safety and wellbeing of local people.

Climate change

- Increased high intensity rainfall events leading to more frequent flooding along the valley floor and soil loss from the valley sides.
- Increased likelihood of summer drought affecting which tree species can thrive, and increasing stress on trees.
- Stronger and more frequent storms making trees vulnerable to wind damage.

- Increased risk of pests and diseases (e.g. tree disease spreading from warmer climates).
- Changes in choices of crops (e.g. vines) affecting the appearance of the landscape.

Changes in land use, and in agricultural and woodland management practices

- Intensive farming methods leading to loss of habitats, biodiversity and bioabundance.
- Lack of management of hedges.
- Increase in use of land for horses or recreation, affecting the appearance of the landscape.
- Erosion of footpaths, especially in the winter months.
- Pollution from fertilizer and agricultural runoff.
- Soil loss through water and wind erosion (this problem is exacerbated by the removal of some field boundary hedges in the second half the 20th Century).
- Lack of traditional woodland management (e.g. coppicing).
- Tree disease (e.g. ash dieback).
- New grant schemes offer opportunities for more environmentally-friendly farming methods.

Development and infrastructure

- Large-scale development.
- Small-scale development and property extensions, potentially out of character and lacking local distinctiveness, and increasing the visibility of buildings within the landscape.
- Conversion/replacement of agricultural/ industrial buildings with residential development.
- Loss of open space and large gardens to development including back land development.
- Gradual suburbanisation through road schemes, insensitive property boundary treatments and lighting.
- Renewable energy projects.
- Agricultural development (e.g. new barns).
- Telecommunications masts.

Loss of rural character

- Increased traffic resulting in highways changes, increased signage, and damage to verges, banks and hedges.
- Presence of motorway impacting on tranquillity, with sudden increases in traffic on rural lanes as satnavs redirect people.
- Fly tipping and littering.
- Changing character of footpaths from rural to urban where they run between high close-boarded fences which restrict views and make the paths very narrow.

9.0 Landscape Character Context

9.1 Landscape Character Types and Areas

Landscape Character Assessments identify and map the units which make up the landscape. These are known as Landscape Character Types (LCTs) and Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). Landscape Character Assessments can identify LCTs, LCAs or both. Most of the Kent-based Landscape Character Assessments focus on LCAs. LCAs can be further divided into Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) as identified in this Assessment for Hartley parish.

Landscape Character Types LCTs are generic types of landscape which can occur in different places. They have similar characteristics wherever they occur, and are called by a descriptive name (e.g. 'chalk downs').

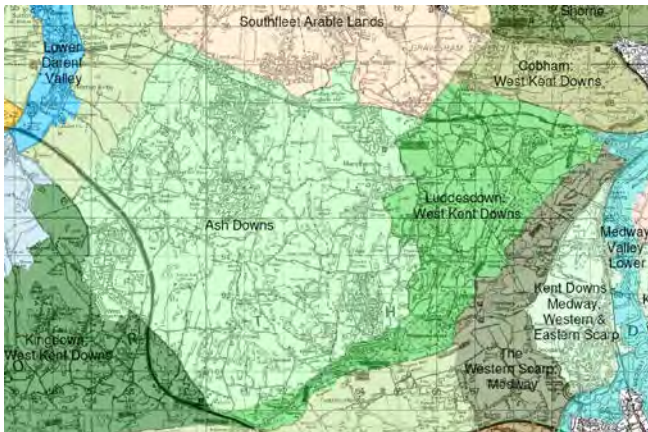
Landscape Character Areas LCAs are geographically-unique areas, each with a distinctive 'sense of place' reflecting local distinctiveness. They are called by a place-based name (e.g. 'Horton Kirby Downs').

9.2 Scales of assessment

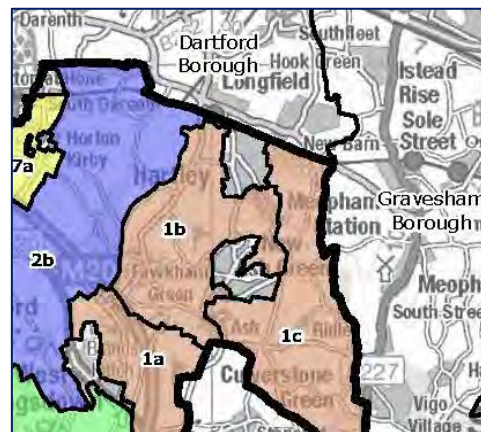
Landscape Character Assessments can be undertaken at a range of scales and levels of detail (from national to local) depending on the purpose for which they are required. As the area covered gets smaller, then the level of detail of the Assessment increases. This is shown in the table below, which sets out the Landscape Character Assessment context for Hartley parish.

Scale of Assessment	Title of Assessment	How Hartley fits
National	The Character of England (Countryside Agency/Natural England 2005 onwards)	Hartley is within National Character Area 119 <i>North Kent Downs</i> which extends from Dover in the east to Guildford in the west.
County	Landscape Assessment of Kent (Jacobs Babbie, 2004)	Hartley is within the Ash Downs LCA, which covers Hartley, Fawkham, New Ash Green, Brands Hatch, Stansted, Culverstone Green and Meopham (See map extract below).
District	Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, 2017)	Hartley is within the <i>Settled Downs</i> LCT. It is covered by two LCAs: 1b <i>Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs</i> covers the western part of the parish, and 1c <i>Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs</i> covers the eastern part. (see extract below)
Local	Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment (Fiona Fyfe Associates 2022) – This document	Five Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) are identified within Hartley Parish

9.3 Existing Landscape Character Assessments covering Hartley Parish



*Extract from Landscape Assessment of Kent showing Hartley and surroundings
Jacobs Babbie 2004*



*Extract from Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment showing Hartley and surroundings
LUC 2017, fig. 5.1)*

1a = West Kingsdown Settled Downs;
1b= Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs;
1c = Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs;
2b=Horton Kirby Downs

The table and maps above shows how Hartley parish 'nests' within existing Landscape Character Assessments. These Assessments identify landscape characteristics at appropriate scales, which are as follows.

National Character Area 119: North Downs

Key characteristics

- Cretaceous Chalk forms the backbone of the North Downs. A distinctive chalk downland ridge rises up from the surrounding land, with a steep scarp slope to the south providing extensive views across Kent, Surrey and Sussex and across the Channel seascape to France.
- The broad dip slope gradually drops towards the Thames and the English Channel, affording extensive views across London and the Thames Estuary. The carved topography provides a series of dry valleys, ridges and plateaux.
- Chalk soils are predominant across the NCA but the upper part of the dip slope is capped by extensive clay-with-flint deposits. Patches of clay and sandy soils also occur with coombe deposits common in dry valleys.
- The North Downs end at the dramatic White Cliffs of Dover, one of the country's most distinctive and famous landmarks. Most of the coast between Kingsdown and Folkestone is unprotected, allowing for natural processes. The cliffs are home to internationally important maritime cliff-top and cliff-ledge vegetation.
- The area is cut by the deep valleys of the Stour, Medway, Darent, Wey and Mole. The river valleys cut through the chalk ridge, providing distinctive local landscapes which contrast

with the steep scarp slope. The fertile and lighter soils of the footslopes and valley bottoms support arable farming.

- The south-facing scarp is incised by a number of short, bowl-shaped dry valleys, cut by periglacial streams and often referred to as combes. The undulating topography of the dip slope has also been etched by streams and rivers, today forming dry valleys, some of which carry winterbournes that occasionally flow in the dip slope, depending on the level of the chalk aquifer.
- The footslope of the escarpment supports arable cropping, the dominant land use within the NCA. In the east, the richer, loamy soils of the lower dip slope support large tracts of mixed arable and horticultural production.
- Woodland is found primarily on the steeper slopes of the scarp, valley sides and areas of the dip slope capped with clay-with-flints. Well-wooded hedgerows and shaws are an important component of the field boundaries, contributing to a strongly wooded character. Much of the woodland is ancient.
- Tracts of species-rich chalk grassland and patches of chalk heath are important downland habitats and of international importance.
- Ancient paths, drove roads and trackways, often sunken, cross the landscape and are a distinctive feature of the dip slope. Defensive structures such as castles, hill forts and Second World War installations, and historic parks, buildings and monuments are found throughout.
- Small, nucleated villages and scattered farmsteads including oasts and barns form the settlement pattern, with local flint, chalk and Wealden brick the vernacular materials.
- In the western part of the area, around and to the west of Sevenoaks and into Surrey, there is increased urban development.

NOTE – the full description can be found at
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/7513013>

Ash Downs County LCA

Characteristic Features

- A pleasant mix of deep, dry pastoral valleys enclosed by wooded ridges and species-rich hedgerows, with broad plateau-tops beyond.
- Small valley-bottom villages, and large 20th Century settlements on plateau.
- A winding network of narrow, historic lanes often eroded by traffic.

NOTE – the full description can be found on pages 19-20 at
https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/12461/Landscape-Assessment-of-Kent-October-2004_Part1.pdf

Sevenoaks District LCAs

Settled Downs LCT Key Characteristics

- Undulating chalk downland with plateaux, valleys and some dramatic steep slopes.
- Mixture of large scale open prairie fields and smaller scale enclosures, most derived from parliamentary enclosure.
- Mixture of arable and pasture farmland with woodland on hilltops.
- Thick hedgerows and coppice woodlands including beech and oak standards.
- Historic settlement pattern of scattered farmsteads and hamlets, with modern houses scattered along roadsides.
- Urban influences from adjacent residential development of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- Characteristic narrow rural lanes follow contours and valley floors, linking existing settlements.
- Large areas of recreational open space including golf course and a racing circuit.
- Views mostly well-contained by woodland and topography with occasional views out from higher ground.

LCA 1b: Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs Key Characteristics

- Small scale and enclosed landscape with dramatic chalk valleys with steep slopes rising to chalk plateaux.
- Varied land cover includes ancient coppice woodland, open field systems, enclosed pastures, golf courses, parkland and estate woodland.
- Fields are enclosed by mature hedgerows with mature oak and beech and dead and regenerative elm.
- Narrow rural lanes follow contours. On the plateau are wide sweeping roads with infill development.
- Older farmsteads on higher ground with newer residential buildings in sheltered areas.
- Well-contained views limited by tall hedges and areas of tree cover.
- High levels of tranquillity.

LCA 1c: Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs Key Characteristics:

- Undulating chalk downs with clay and flints capping to ridges.

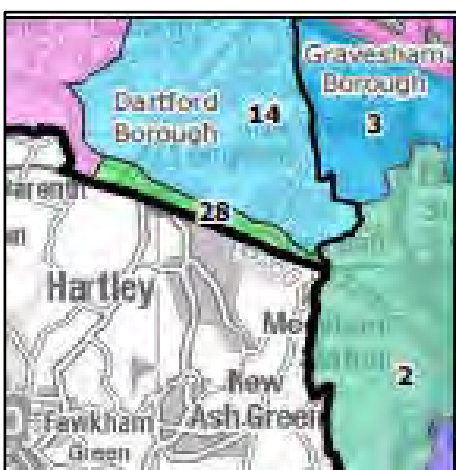
- Small-medium arable and grassland fields on the slopes with large-scale prairie fields on higher ground.
- Copses of Ancient Woodland are frequent, along with mature in-field trees.
- Acid clay soils on hilltops support woodland and some farms.
- Small, compact farmsteads and hamlets on higher ground. Mostly brick but some flint used as a building material.
- Narrow, winding lanes with high hedges.
- Smaller scale and enclosed on steeper ground, more open and larger scale on ridge tops.
- Tranquil, rural landscape.

NOTE – the full description can be found on pages 19-37 at

[https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1517/env004_sevenoaks_landscape_character_assessment - main report january 2017.pdf](https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1517/env004_sevenoaks_landscape_character_assessment_-_main_report_january_2017.pdf)

9.3 Surrounding Assessments

Hartley is in the north-east corner of Sevenoaks District, and is bounded to the north by Dartford Borough and to the east by Gravesham Borough. Dartford Borough does not have its own Borough-wide Landscape Character Assessment and so relies on the County-wide Landscape Assessment of Kent. The part of Dartford Borough bordering Hartley parish is therefore within the wider Ash Downs Landscape Character Area described above. This is shown as no. 28 on the map below. Gravesham Borough does have its own Landscape Character Assessment, and the area adjoining Hartley is LCA 2: *Meopham Down* (shown as no. 2 on the map below).



Extract from Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment (LUC, 2017 fig. 1.3) showing Landscape Character Areas surrounding Sevenoaks District

Gravesham Borough Landscape Character Assessment can be viewed at [https://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:1443/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-01 Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment May 2009.pdf](https://selfservice.gravesham.gov.uk:1443/webdocs/Environment%20and%20Planning/GLP/HER-01_Gravesham_Landscape_Character_Assessment_May_2009.pdf)

Part 3: Landscape Character Assessment

10.0 Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) identified within Hartley parish

Five LLCAs have been identified within Hartley. Three are within Sevenoaks LLCA 1b: *Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs* and two are within Sevenoaks LCA 1c: *Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs*.

The LLCAs are shown on Map 6 below, and are as follows:

- Pennis Valley LLCA (extends into Fawkham parish)
- Lower Fawkham Valley LLCA (extends into Fawkham parish)
- Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA
- Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA
- Hartley Bottom LLCA

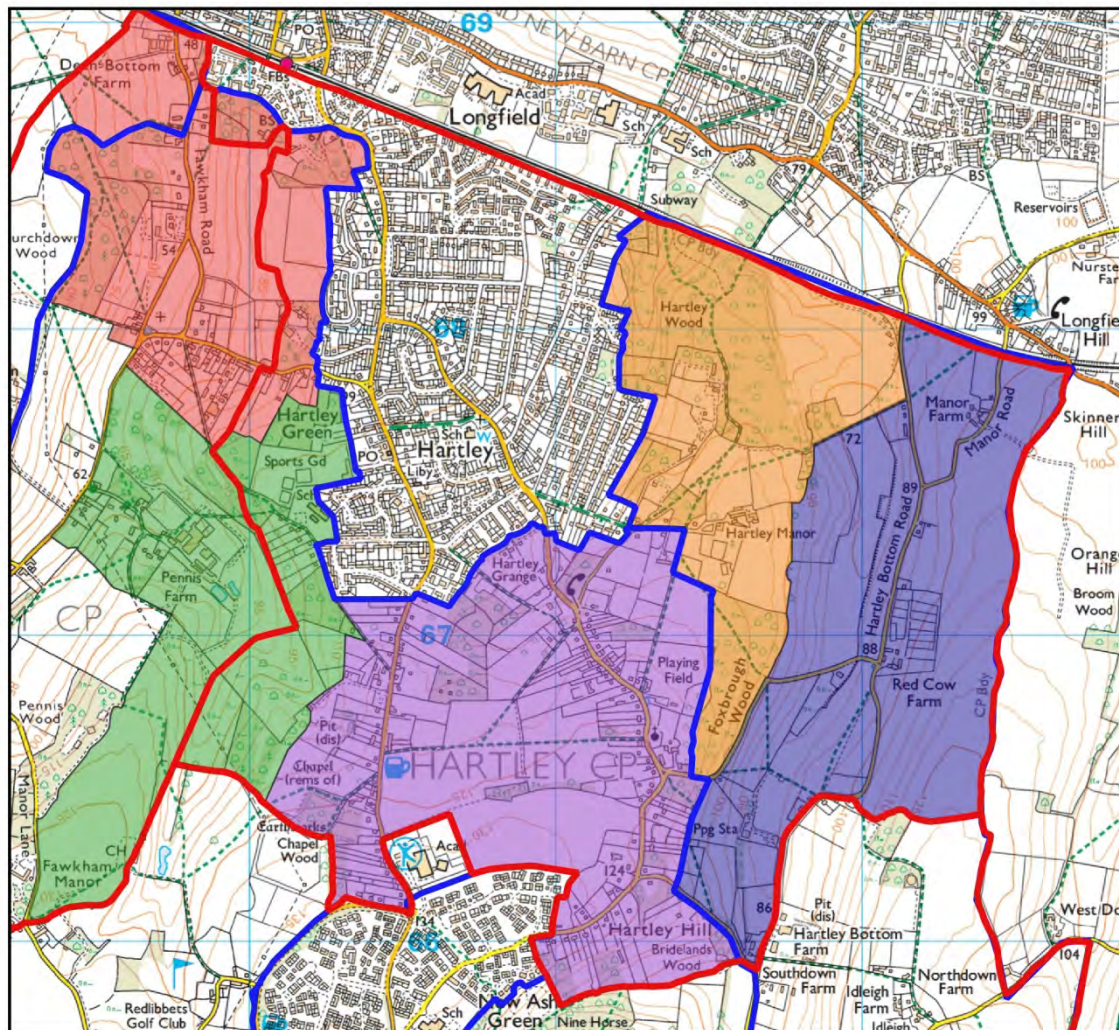
The following pages contain illustrated profiles for each of the LLCAs, describing their key characteristics, landscape value, landscape sensitivity and guidance for future management.

A note on boundaries

In general, the boundaries of LCAs from the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment have been respected and followed in the creation of the LLCAs, in order to aid the 'nesting' of the Assessments. However, during preparation of the Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment an anomaly was identified in the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment, at the northern end of the boundary between LCA 1b *Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs* and LCA 2b *Horton Kirby Downs*. Here, the *Horton Kirby Downs* LCA extends down into the floor of the Fawkham Valley, into an area much more closely related physically, visually and culturally to the *Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs* LCA.

This anomaly has been addressed in the Hartley Parish Landscape Character Assessment, which includes the side and floor of the Fawkham Valley within the Lower Fawkham Valley LLCA. Although this anomaly occurs outside Fawkham parish it is relevant because it affects the boundaries of one of the LLCAs which span both Fawkham and Hartley parishes.

Although LLCA boundaries are shown as a clear line on maps, in reality the boundaries are often transitional, with a gradual change between LLCAs. Therefore potential developments or land use changes near LLCA boundaries should be mindful of the special qualities of all LLCAs potentially affected and follow guidance for all the relevant LLCAs.



Hartley Landscape Character Assessment

Map 6: Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCAs) in Hartley

March 2022

Key

- ▬ Parish Boundaries
- ▬ Sevenoaks Landscape Character Areas
- ▬ Pennis Valley LLCA
- ▬ Lower Fawkham Valley LLCA
- ▬ Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA
- ▬ Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA
- ▬ Hartley Bottom LLCA



0 250 500 m



Map 6: Hartley Local Landscape Character Areas

Pennis Valley

Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)

National Character Area: 119 North Downs

County Landscape Character Area: Ash Downs

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Area: 1b Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs



Fig. 9: The Pennis Valley, from within Fawkham Parish, looking towards Hartley Parish. This view shows the recreational land use, the steep valley landform, and the variety of trees.

Summary Description

This LLCA is located in the eastern part of Fawkham parish and the western part of Hartley parish. It also extends into Ash-cum-Ridley parish to the south. It comprises the discrete dry valley of the Pennis Valley - a tributary of the main Fawkham Valley.

Its landform creates a secluded and enclosed feel within the valley, although there are views into it from surrounding high land, including adjacent LLCAs. The Pennis Valley LLCA has a strongly recreational character as it contains a number of sports and recreation facilities, including golf courses and sports grounds. The golf courses have a particularly strong impact on its character, especially in terms of the species, ages and patterns of trees, the past loss of ancient woodland, and the erosion of traditional field patterns (although some lines of mature trees and ancient hedges remain). It is valued for private and public recreation facilities, including footpaths.

Buildings/ structures are often recreational in function. There are relatively few domestic properties (limited to the peripheries of the LLCA), and the larger-scale agricultural/ industrial/ recreational buildings at Gay Dawn Farm form a single cluster in the valley floor at the centre of the LLCA.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying bedrock **geology** of the Lewes nodular chalk formation. Overlain by Head (clay, silt, sand and gravel) in valley floor, and some clay-with-flints (weathered Head) on the highest ground.
- **Topography** forms a steep dry tributary valley on the eastern side of the Fawkham Valley. There are some open water lakes/ reservoirs in the valley floor.
- Extensive **woodland** and **tree cover**, although much is ornamental planting relating to the golf course and sports grounds. It is therefore relatively young, and contains different patterns and tree species than other LLCAs. There are some mature trees in former hedgerows, and small patch of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site near the parish boundary.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include trees, grassland and mature hedges. There are no designated wildlife sites, but there are areas of woodland priority habitat and ancient woodland.
- **Land use** is predominantly recreational: golf courses, sports grounds, etc. There are a small number of houses and a school set within gardens and grounds. Gay Dawn Farm contains a mix of agricultural, industrial/business and recreational land uses.
- **Field boundaries and Historic Landscape Character** have been disrupted by the later golf courses, although some traces remain. The HLC identifies *fields predominately bounded by tracks, roads, etc.*, some *post-1810 settlement*, and some *parliamentary enclosure*, but this has been overlain by later property division. A mature hedge forms the western boundary of the LLCA which includes 9 woody species, including whitebeam.
- **Settlement** Gay Dawn Farm (adjacent to the historic farmstead at Pennis Farm and Listed Building of Pennis House) has expanded to include agricultural/ industrial buildings and recreation facilities. Although these include football pitches, parking areas, fencing, signage etc., they are located in the valley bottom and surrounded by vegetation, which helps to reduce their visual prominence and limit any urbanising impact on the wider surrounding landscape. The buildings and sports facilities form a single cluster, and appear as a nucleated group of buildings in long views of the valley. There are a few low-density residential properties (set in treed grounds) to the west of Gay Dawn Farm (Fawkham) and along Fairby Lane at the top of the valley side (Hartley). School and Country Club buildings and grounds on the western edge of Hartley are also included in this LLCA. These comprise isolated buildings in extensive landscaped grounds which also have a recreational and non-urban character.
- **Roads** are limited within this LLCA. There is a short public road providing access to Pennis Farm and other houses, a private access road leading to Corinthian Sports Club, and part of Fairby Lane (in Hartley). Valley Road forms the western edge of the LLCA.
- **Historic features** include Pennis Farm - a historic farmstead which includes a cluster of three Listed Buildings (Pennis House, Pennis Farm and the gates). The holloway running up the hillside behind Pennis House is an ancient route between Fawkham and West Yoke / Ash. It appears as a track on the 1801 Mudge Map of Kent.

- Several popular **footpaths** cross the LLCA. These show on historic maps and pre-date the golf courses. They would originally have been tracks between/ across fields.
- The enclosed landform and abundant trees create a sense of **enclosure and seclusion** in the valley floor, particularly in the upper parts of the valley which are further from the buildings at Gay Dawn Farm.
- The combination of trees and open areas within the golf courses create a distinctive small-scale **pattern** to the landscape, with strong variety of **colour and texture**.
- Dramatic **views** across the valley from the surrounding high land.



Fig. 10: Sports Ground at Hartley Country Club, framed by trees and woodlands (some ancient)



Fig. 11: View west across the Pennis Valley from footpath near Fairby Lane, Hartley



Fig. 12: Corinthian Sports Club within valley floor at Gay Dawn Farm, Fawkhams



Fig. 13: The Pennis Valley as seen from the opposite side of the Central Fawkhams Valley. The buildings at Gay Dawn Farm appear as a single cluster within the Pennis Valley.

Landscape value

Valued landscape qualities which should be respected:

- Enclosed landform and abundant trees create a sense of enclosure and seclusion in the valley floor.

- Rural recreational character which retains traces of its earlier agricultural land uses (e.g. mature trees along former hedgelines, mature hedges, and bluebells in former woodland areas).
- Long views into the LLCA from surrounding high land, including the Central Fawkham Valley and Hartley Hill Plateau LLCAs.
- Relatively little development, with few domestic properties, and the larger buildings at Gay Down Farm forming a single cluster of low-rise buildings in a limited part of the valley floor.
- The soft green edge – including ancient woodland - to existing development on the western side of Hartley.
- Extensive tree, grassland and woodland cover with associated wildlife habitats (although little is currently designated).
- Extensive network of public rights of way (including ancient holloway behind Pennis Farm).

Landscape sensitivity

The table below shows the valued landscape qualities to respect (see Landscape Value section above), together with the threats and issues currently or potentially affecting them. The following Guidance section makes recommendations on how these special qualities can be managed.

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Enclosed landform and abundant trees create a sense of enclosure and seclusion in the valley floor.	This LLCA is highly sensitive to development which would impact on its rural character; sense of seclusion; long views; the existing vegetated edge to development in Hartley, or the sense of separation between Fawkham and Hartley.
Rural recreational character which retains traces of its earlier agricultural land uses (e.g. mature trees along former hedgelines, mature hedges, and bluebells in former wooded areas).	
Long views into the LLCA from surrounding high land, including the Central Fawkham Valley and Hartley Hill Plateau LLCAs.	
Relatively little development, with few domestic properties, and the larger buildings at Gay Dawn Farm forming a single cluster of low-rise buildings in a limited part of the valley floor.	
The soft green edge – including ancient woodland - to existing development on the western side of Hartley.	

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Extensive tree, grassland and woodland cover with associated wildlife habitats (although little is currently recognised)	Non-recorded habitats are vulnerable to loss, particularly in areas where habitats are associated with recreational use (such as golf course roughs and trees).
Extensive network of public rights of way (including ancient holloway behind Pennis Farm)	Public access to the landscape via footpaths may conflict with private recreational use (golf course)

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this visually-rural and predominantly undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale or visually-prominent development.
- Ensure the visual impact of the single nucleated cluster in the valley floor at Gay Dawn Farm is not increased, including when seen from the footpath at the corner of Churchdown Wood.
- Retain a strong green southern edge to the urban area of Hartley created by gardens, trees, Ancient Woodland and sports grounds.
- Retain the low density and unobtrusive character of existing residential development at the peripheries of the LLCA.
- Protect the alignment and character of the historic paths from alteration or damage (e.g. re-routing, or removal of earth banks).

Manage

- Work with landowners to promote good habitat management, and aim to further extend and link habitats.
- Survey grassland, mature hedges and woodland/ treed areas to identify existing areas of priority habitat which are not currently recorded.
- Manage Public Rights of Way, ensuring access to the LLCA is not reduced further, and that footpaths are safe and enjoyable to use.

Plan

- Should demand for recreational use within this LLCA reduce in the future, seek opportunities to restore the landscape to further enhance biodiversity and bioabundance (for example by encouraging new woodland and grassland habitats).

Lower Fawkham Valley

Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)

National Character Area: 119 North Downs

County Landscape Character Area: Ash Downs

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Area: 1b Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs; small part of 2b Eynsford and Horton Kirby Downs



Fig. 14: The Lower Fawkham Valley, from footpath to Churchdown Wood. Churchdown Wood is on the left, and Fawkham Church and conservation area is on the right. Woodland and trees on the horizon are within Hartley Parish.

Summary Description

The Lower Fawkham Valley is located in the north of the study area, and contains land within both Fawkham and Hartley parishes. It comprises the fields and woodlands on both sides of the Fawkham Valley, as well as land along Castle Hill. There is strong visual connectivity across the LLCA, with views east-west across the valley from the upper valley sides. There is therefore strong intervisibility between the parishes within this LLCA. The sloping nature of the topography means that much of the LLCA is highly visible, and there are many views from roads, footpaths and accessible areas within it. The open land around Fawkham Church is also valued as a recreational space with a strong visual connection to the surrounding rural landscape.

Much of the land is in agricultural use, but there are also significant blocks of woodland (including ancient woodland) and rough grassland. Rectory Meadow in Hartley is a LWS managed as a Local Nature Reserve and Churchdown Wood (Fawkham) is also a LWS. Baldwin's Green Conservation Area is located in the south-west of the LLCA, and includes the Grade I Listed church of St Mary set in open land within the valley floor. Castle Hill is a rural lane with properties set back from the road, often in large grounds. There are glimpsed views north over open fields or into woodland.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying **geology** comprises bedrock of the Lewes nodular chalk formation. It is overlaid by Head (clay, silt and sand gravel) in the valley floor, and clay-with-flints (weathered Head) on the highest part of the eastern valley side.
- **Topography** comprises slopes on either side of the dry valley. The landform here is not as steep as further south, but is still marked. There is a small pond to the south of the church.
- **Woodland** is extensive, particularly in the north and west. Woodland blocks include some Ancient Woodland (Churchdown Wood, Bramblefield Wood, Old Downs), as well as 19th Century plantation. Further tree cover occurs in gardens and grounds, in hedges, and alongside roads. There is a 'ghost wood' of Hoselands Wood to the west of Hartley, which is now visible as a hedge of woodland trees.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include woodland (including ancient woodland), grassland (Rectory Meadow, and the slopes below Churchdown Wood), hedges and verges. Churchdown Wood and Rectory Meadow are designated Local Wildlife Sites, and Rectory Meadow is also a Local Nature Reserve. Deciduous woodland (including but not limited to ancient woodland) is recorded on the priority habitat inventory, along with a small traditional orchard near the northern boundary.
- **Land use** is predominantly agricultural (arable) with some paddocks, woodland and properties, including some in large grounds.
- **Field boundaries and Historic Landscape Character** Fields are fairly large, and mostly described in the HLC as *Fields Bounded by tracks, roads and other rights of way*. Historic maps show some areas of woodland as today, but Churchdown Wood has been extended since 1888, and Hoselands Wood (on the high land on the Hartley side of the valley) has been lost. The HLC notes both *pre 19th Century Coppice* and *19th Century Plantation*. Church Meadow is bounded by mature hedgerows containing a diversity of woody species.
- **Settlement** within the LLCA is relatively low density and dispersed in character compared to the denser 20th Century development in Hartley (Banckside and Downs Valley estates) which adjoins the eastern edge of the LLCA. These 20th Century properties in Hartley are not visible from Valley Road, and because they are set down only the roof tops of properties in Downs Valley are glimpsed from the footpath below Churchdown Wood. Similarly, the Bramblefield area to the north of the LLCA abutting the railway line is well screened from the valley by dense woodland. This 20th Century development therefore does not have a strong impact on the rural character of the LLCA.

Within the LLCA there is a cluster of historic buildings near the church at Baldwin's Green (designated a Conservation Area) and isolated properties of rural character along Valley Road. There is also a small area of light industrial use (Fawkham Business Park) set slightly back from Valley Road in the far north of the LLCA.

There is some inter-war and later residential development along the southern side of Castle Hill. The properties were set back from the road within large garden plots, and were small in size.

- **Historic features** are concentrated in the south-west of the LLCA, including St Mary's Church (Listed Building Grade I), the site of the adjacent Manor House and chapel, and Baldwin's Green Conservation Area. St Mary's Church is Norman with many internal 13th and 14th Century details, and a distinctive white painted weatherboarded bellcote. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the small number of buildings from different periods, each with its own architectural style. These include the Parish Church of St Mary, Churchdown Farm, Churchdown House and The Shaws (now two dwellings: Beech House and The Laurels). The Appraisal also notes *the treescaped setting of the church when seen along roads; the superb views of the church, houses and the countryside beyond; the low walls, open fencing and hedgerows which add to the rural qualities of the area, and that the village as a whole presents an idyllic rural scene*. Outside the Conservation Area there is a historic farmstead at Salts Farm, and several areas of Ancient Woodland. Cropmarks have been recorded on valley sides, including a prehistoric banjo enclosure west of Salts Farm.
- Valley **Road** runs north-south through the LLCA, and Castle Hill runs east-west. The southern part of Valley Road (past the church) was re-routed in the early 20th Century to create an easier alternative to the narrow lane known as Steep Hill. It has a rural character, with hedges, mature trees, and occasional properties which are generally set back from the road within treed grounds. Castle Hill is an ancient hollow-way recorded in a 16th Century document and remains a narrow, winding enclosed lane which retains a rural character with woodland, open fields and occasional larger properties in grounds to the northern side. Between the properties are stretches of open land with views across the fields to the north. The 20th Century ribbon development on the southern side comprises detached properties which are generally not prominent from the lane as they have retained their hedged boundaries and narrow gateways. Occasional more suburbanised openings do not detract from the overall rural character of the lane. The long gardens help to screen these properties in longer views from the south. The older and substantial property of Old Downs is located at the top of Castle Hill on the northern side, largely hidden within wooded grounds. Steephill School is also set within extensive treed grounds, and is rural in character.
- There are several **footpaths** through the woodland and around the periphery. As mentioned above Rectory Meadow is open to the public as a Local Nature Reserve, Church Meadow is also accessible, and much of Churchdown Wood is open to the public via PRoW and informal paths.
- The open fields and relatively large woodland blocks create a relatively **large scale** landscape with a simple **pattern**. There is a stronger sense of enclosure within woodland and along Castle Hill. Woodland and trees create seasonal variation in colour and texture.
- The area around St Mary's Church and Baldwin's Green has a strong **sense of place and of history** created by the historic buildings within their rural settings, and is valued by the community for its sense of **peace and quiet**.
- There are long **views** in both directions across the valley. Within Fawkham parish, views looking east from Churchdown Wood, north from Church Meadow, south along the valley,

and north from high land north of Churchdown Wood are particularly striking. Views looking West across the valley from Hoselands Wood and along the fields behind Banckside are appreciated by the residents of Hartley.



Fig. 15: Fawkham Church and Conservation Area



Fig. 16: Ancient woodland (left) and 19th Century plantation (right) at Churchdown Wood (Fawkham)



Fig. 17: Rectory Meadow (Hartley) Local Nature Reserve



Fig. 18: View from Hartley towards Fawkham. The hedge on the right is a 'ghost wood' – the remnants of a former wood which survives as a hedge boundary

Landscape value

Valued landscape qualities which should be respected:

- Prominent non-developed slopes which contribute to views and sense of place.
- The strongly-rural character of the LLCA.
- Open/ treed horizons which reinforce the rural character of the LLCA (properties in Hartley are not visible from Valley Road, and only limited rooftops may be glimpsed from the footpath below Churchdown Wood on the opposite side of the valley).
- The rural character of Castle Hill with woodland, open fields and occasional larger properties in grounds to the northern side and generally discrete detached houses on the southern side with long back gardens which screen the properties in longer views from the south.
- Nature Conservation Sites, including Rectory Meadow and Churchdown Wood Local Wildlife Sites and Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve. Along with ancient woodland,

traditional orchard, grassland and historic hedges, they have landscape, heritage and ecological value.

- Baldwin's Green Conservation Area (and the Listed St Mary's Church building within it) and their settings, which create a strong and much appreciated sense of place and history.
- Easy access from both parishes to the countryside via footpaths and accessible areas e.g. Rectory Meadow (Hartley) and Church Meadow (Fawkham).
- Notable views within the LLCA and also beyond as far as London to the west.
- The rural character of Valley Road and Steep Hill with narrow winding lanes, informal edges and dispersed properties.

Landscape sensitivity

The table below shows the valued landscape qualities to respect (see Landscape Value section above), together with the threats and issues currently or potentially affecting them. The following Guidance section makes recommendations on how these special qualities can be managed.

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Prominent non-developed slopes which contribute to views and sense of place	The LLCA is highly sensitive to large-scale development which would impact on the open and rural character of the area; the views across and from the LLCA, and the open or treed skylines. The LLCA is highly visible from many roads, footpaths and properties and can be seen from a wide area. Introducing development into this LLCA is also likely to remove or reduce the sense of physical and visual separation which currently exists between the rural settlement of Fawkham (and Castle Hill) and the much more urban character of Hartley.
The strongly rural character of the LLCA.	
Open/treed horizons which reinforce the rural character of the LLCA	
The rural character of Castle Hill with woodland, open fields and occasional larger properties in grounds to the northern side and generally discrete detached houses on the southern side with long back gardens which screen the properties in longer views from the south.	
The rural character of Valley Road and Steep Hill, with narrow winding lanes, informal edges and dispersed properties.	At present the roads largely retain their traditional hedges, and property boundaries and entrances have generally not become suburbanised. However there is a risk that the rural character of the lanes will be gradually lost through the introduction of suburban-style fencing, walls, gates, lights, and surfacing. Increasing the size of houses and their proximity to the road also risks creating a more suburban character. Conversion of current light industrial areas to residential use could also create a more suburban character, particularly if houses are placed right up to the road.

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Baldwin's Green Conservation Area (and the Listed St Mary's Church building within it) and their settings, which create a strong and much appreciated sense of place and history.	Further development in the vicinity (for example along Valley Road) or a change in the character of the surrounding agricultural landscape will impact on the sense of place, and the settings of the Conservation Area and Listed Building. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes that telegraph poles and overhead wires intrude into the visual context of the houses.
Nature Conservation Sites, including Rectory Meadow and Churchdown Wood Local Wildlife Sites and Rectory Meadow Local Nature Reserve. Along with ancient woodland, traditional orchard, grassland and historic hedges, they have landscape, heritage and ecological value.	<p>Lack of management of grassland and woodland sites can lead to decline in habitat-specific species.</p> <p>Fragile woodland ground flora and habitats may be damaged by trampling if paths are not clearly defined or if visitor numbers are high.</p> <p>Some areas of grassland (specifically Rectory Meadow and grassland below Churchdown Wood) are not currently identified on the Priority Habitat Inventory, and therefore have limited protection.</p> <p>Woodland and grassland on the edge of Hartley is particularly vulnerable to new development. Woodland which is of similar age and/or species is particularly vulnerable to climate changes and tree disease.</p>
Easy access from both parishes to the countryside via footpaths and accessible areas e.g. Rectory meadow (Hartley) and Church Meadow (Fawkham).	Current access could be impeded by new development, or a change in land ownership which limits the access currently allowed to open spaces and informal paths (for example the northern part of Church Meadow, and the informal footpath along the field edge alongside Valley Road).
Views within the LLCA and also beyond, as far as London to the west.	Views are highly sensitive to large or small scale development which may limit or alter them. Views can also be adversely affected by vegetation growth.

Guidance

Protect

- Protect this visually prominent, rural and undeveloped landscape from inappropriate large-scale development.
- Retain and enhance a strong green edge to Hartley.
- Retain the undeveloped horizons which are characteristic of this LLCA.
- Protect the existing open rural settings to the Church and Conservation Area.

- Retain public access to open spaces and footpaths. Seek to formalise access arrangements where appropriate, especially unofficial footpaths which are important for the safety of pedestrians.
- Protect existing views within the LLCA. Seek to keep popular viewpoints open, accessible and clear of vegetation.
- Protect the rural character of roads and lanes (Valley Road, Steep Hill and Castle Hill), resisting changes to rural frontages and property boundaries. Engage with local residents to raise awareness of the importance of retaining traditional rural hedges and entrances. Any highways works should be carefully designed to respect the rural character, and not introduce urbanising elements.

Manage

- Continue to manage nature conservation sites, for example clearing scrub to prevent encroachment into grassland areas.
- Work with Kent Wildlife Trust to ensure that all eligible grassland sites are identified on the Priority Habitat Inventory.
- Consider re-introducing traditional management such as coppicing into woodland areas, and aim to create a diversity of ages and species of trees.
- Work with landowners to promote biodiversity and climate change resilience within agricultural areas. Consider re-instating former hedges shown on the 1831 Tithe map to act as biodiversity corridors and landscape features. Additional new hedgerows running parallel to the contours would help reduce flooding and soil loss down the slope.

Plan

- Seek opportunities to move services underground services and remove poles and wires
- Consider extending existing woodland, for example re-establishing woodland on the high land on the Hartley side of the valley. 'Hoselands Wood' was still extant there in 1888.
- Formalise informal footpaths.
- Seek to minimise the visual impacts of future conversion of agricultural/ industrial sites or redevelopment of residential properties so that they would not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the existing character of the area.

Hartley Hill Plateau

Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)

National Character Area: 119 North Downs

County Landscape Character Area: Ash Downs

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Area: 1b Fawkham and Hartley Settled Downs



Fig. 19: Scene near the centre of the Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA. In the foreground is an old field boundary, with early 20th Century linear plot boundaries extending back from it. Houses and gardens along roads are visible in the distance.

Summary Description

This LLCA is located in the central and south part of Hartley Parish. It comprises a plateau of relatively flat land (sloping very gradually downwards towards the north) and which drops away at the edges to the Pennis Valley in the west and Hartley Bottom in the east.

The roads of Ash Road and Church Road run close to the edges of the LLCA. Land along these roads was subdivided into linear plots in the early 20th Century, creating a distinctive and contrasting pattern of houses spaced along the roads, long linear boundaries extending back from the roads, and undeveloped open land in the centre and peripheries.

There are several historic features within this LLCA, including some of the earliest settlement foci at Hartley Church and Hartley Court, the Black Lion Public House, and Chapel Wood. There is also a relatively large amount of Public Open Space, including Northfield, Billings Hill Shaw and Manor Field. Some sections of the roads still retain their rural character. The LLCA forms a gap between the more densely built up areas of Hartley Village to the north and New Ash Green to the south.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying **geology** comprises bedrock of the Lewes nodular chalk formation. In the southern (slightly higher) part it is overlain by clay-with-flints (weathered Head).
- **Topography** forms a relatively flat plateau, gently sloping upwards towards the south, and dropping off steeply into the adjacent Pennis Valley to the west and Hartley Bottom to the east. Due to the underlying chalk geology there is little surface water.
- **Woodland** blocks are relatively small compared to other parts of the parish, but there are still many shaws, hedgerow and garden trees and the LLCA has the sense of being well-treed. There is Ancient Woodland at Chapel Wood, Bridelands Wood, Billings Shaw and to the north of Northfield. This latter strip of ancient woodland has recently been extended and is known as Barnett's Wood.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include deciduous woodland (including some ancient woodland) identified on the priority habitat inventory. There is a small area of traditional orchard in the centre of the LLCA. There are no designated wildlife sites within this LLCA.
- **Land use** is a mixture of woodland, gardens, horse paddocks, orchard and public open space.
- **Field boundaries** are primarily 20th Century in pattern, as most farmland within this LLCA was divided into lots and sold off in the early 20th Century. The lots consisted of plots stretching back from the road, creating long, narrow linear plots with straight boundaries (hedges or fences). Traces of the earlier field patterns remain around the edges of the former fields which were divided. The Historic Landscape Characterisation describes the LLCA as mostly *Small regular with straight boundaries* and *post-1810 settlement*, with some *pre-19th Century coppice* at Chapel Wood.
- **Settlement** is focussed on the roads of Ash Road and Church Road. The early-20th Century allotting of land led to a distinctive linear development pattern of small detached houses alongside (but set back from) both sides of the roads, with gardens in front, and long gardens behind. Over time many of these houses have been extended or replaced with larger properties. Some plots do not contain properties, and these are generally tree-covered or used as horse paddocks. There is a small amount of small-scale commercial or equine use, but the vast majority of buildings are residential. See below for a description of older buildings and settlement patterns.
- The LLCA contains a number of **historic features**. One of the oldest settlement foci in the parish was at Chapel Wood, which contains the site of a medieval village abandoned about 1350, including a chapel and a tile kiln. Historic maps show settlement around the Black Lion pub on Ash Road, and around the Church and Hartley Court on Church Road. There are also isolated farms shown along the roads, many of which survive today and are identified as historic farmsteads on the Kent Historic Environment Record. Hartley Court, Hartley House and Brick End are Listed Buildings (Grade II). All Saints Church is Listed Grade I). Several dene holes (chalk pits) have been identified within this LLCA.
- The **roads** of Ash Road and Church Road (formerly known as Church Lane) run close to the east and west edges of the LLCA. Hartley Hill and Grange Lane drop down off the plateau

into Hartley Bottom to the east. Ash Road is slightly wider and straighter than Church Road, but both are tree-lined and markedly different in character from the roads within the urban areas of Hartley and New Ash Green. The southern part of Church Road has retained its rural character, being narrow and hedge-lined.

- The LLCA contains a large number of **footpaths**, which enable easy access into the parts of the LLCA away from the roads. A long footpath crosses the LLCA connecting Ash Road with All Saints Church. Footpaths also drop down into the valleys on either side. The LLCA contains an exceptionally high proportion of public open space, including Northfield, Billings Shaw, and Hartley Manor playing fields. These open spaces (along with the footpaths) are exceptionally well used and appreciated by local residents.
- Parts of the LLCA have a strong **sense of place and of history**, particularly Chapel Wood, and around All Saints Church. The central part of the LLCA, with its distinctive pattern of linear boundaries, and sense of detachment from the built-up area also has a strong sense of place.
- **Tranquillity** is relatively strong in the central part of the LLCA, and in the open spaces on the peripheries, such as Hartley Manor Playing Fields. These areas feel peaceful and rural, despite their proximity to the urban areas of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- The LLCA is characterised by the **contrast** between the low-density settlement along roads, and the undeveloped land away from the roads. The linear plot boundaries create a distinctive pattern to this LLCA, and there are also contrasts between the **texture** of treed and open areas.
- There are occasional long **views** from the edges of the plateau over the Pennis Valleys to the west and Hartley Bottom to the east. These views can be seen from footpaths, and occasionally from roads across undeveloped or more open plots. There are also long views across areas of Public Open Space within this LLCA, including Northfield, and Hartley Manor Playing Fields.



Fig. 20 Northfield Public Open Space, looking towards ancient woodland which has recently been extended



Fig. 21: Street scene near Hartley Church, where the road has largely retained its rural character



Fig. 22: Remnant traditional orchard



Fig. 23: View out (from footpath) from Hartley Hill Plateau LLCA towards the Pennis Valley LLCA

Landscape value

Valued landscape qualities which should be respected:

- A 'breathing space' between the more densely built-up areas of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- Dispersed linear pattern of dwellings set alongside roads and relatively small in size, within linear plots.
- A lack of development away from roads, so the central part and peripheries of the LLCA feel quite isolated and relatively tranquil.
- Surviving rural boundaries along roads (e.g. hedges and trees) retaining the rural character of roads, particularly the southern part of Church Road.
- Views out from edges of plateau over Pennis Valley and Hartley Bottom.
- High proportion of public open space.
- Historic buildings and settlement foci, including Hartley Church & Hartley Court, and medieval settlement site at Chapel Wood.
- Ancient woodland, and extensive areas of deciduous woodland Priority Habitat. Also some traditional orchard Priority Habitat.

Landscape sensitivity

The table below shows the valued landscape qualities to respect (see Landscape Value section above), together with the threats and issues currently or potentially affecting them. The following Guidance section makes recommendations on how these special qualities can be managed.

Valued quality	Threats and Issues
A 'breathing space' between the more densely built-up areas of Hartley and New Ash Green	New development, or changing character of roads and properties, reducing the contrast between this LLCA and the more built-up areas to the north and south.
Dispersed linear pattern of dwellings set alongside roads and relatively small in size, set within linear plots	Extension of properties and backland development, making them larger and closer together, changing the character of the built form, increasing its density, and limiting views out. Increased height can also make dwellings more prominent. Recent years have seen construction of light industrial uses which impact on the rural residential character.
A lack of development away from roads, so the central part and peripheries of the LLCA feel quite isolated and relatively tranquil.	In the current settlement pattern, most buildings are sited alongside roads. Changing this pattern and introducing new buildings into areas currently undeveloped would undermine this pattern, and impact on the sense of relative isolation and tranquillity experienced in parts of the LLCA away from roads.
Surviving rural property boundaries (e.g. hedges and trees) retaining the rural character of roads, particularly the southern part of Church Road.	Some places (e.g. around Hartley Church) retain their rural roadside hedges, with simple gates set back from the road edge. Elsewhere there are cumulative impacts through suburbanisation of property boundaries (e.g. brick walls, ornate gates, close-board fencing, roadside lighting and hard surfacing of driveways). The rural character of roads can also be affected by suburban-style road features (e.g. concrete kerbs, lighting, traffic calming, signage etc.)
Views out from edges of plateau over Pennis Valley and Hartley Bottom.	Infilling by new development, close-board fencing or vegetation can block views from the plateau of the valleys beyond, reducing awareness of the surroundings and therefore sense of place.
High proportion of Public Open Space	Development or lack of management which reduces the quantity or quality of Public Open Space. Some paths are not formally designated and are therefore at greater risk of loss or closure. Some paths become extremely muddy and eroded in winter.
Historic buildings and settlement foci, including Hartley Church & Hartley Court, and medieval settlement site at Chapel Wood	Development on or close to historic sites may affect their fabric or their settings.
Ancient woodland, and extensive areas of deciduous woodland Priority Habitat. Also traditional orchard Priority Habitat.	Lack of management or understanding of importance may impact on woodland or orchard habitats, leading to their eventual loss.

Guidance

Protect

- Protect the relatively rural character of this LLCA and its function as a 'breathing space' between the more densely built-up areas of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- Protect the low-density pattern of development, for example by avoiding extensions/ new builds which limit the spaces between properties and give an impression of dense development. Extensions backwards rather than sideways have less impact on the street scene. Keeping buildings relatively low limits their visual impact in views from roads, footpaths, and Public Open Spaces.
- Protect the undeveloped character of the centre and peripheries of this LLCA.
- Protect the rural character of roads (particularly the southern part of Church Road), resisting changes to frontages and property boundaries. Engage with local residents to raise awareness of the importance of retaining traditional rural hedges and entrances. Any highways works should be carefully designed to respect the rural character, and not introduce urbanising elements.
- Protect views out over the Pennis Valley and Hartley Bottom from roads and footpaths.
- Protect Listed Buildings and their settings, and retain the integrity of Chapel Wood archaeological and ancient woodland site.

Manage

- Retain existing Public Open Space and continue to manage it for the benefit of local residents.
- Manage newly-planted woodland as required to achieve diversity of tree species, habitats and ground flora.
- Manage paths to enable use year-round where practical, for example by introducing boardwalks in muddy patches. .
- Encourage continued use and expansion of traditional orchards, for example through establishment of a community orchard.

Plan

- Consider a small Conservation Area on Church Road around the All Saints Church and Hartley Court, where the rural character is still strong.
- Consider designation of some of the informal paths as Public Rights of Way.

Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)

National Character Area: 119 North Downs

County Landscape Character Area: Ash Downs

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Area: 1c Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs



Fig. 24: View from near Hartley Manor looking towards Hartley Wood, showing open spaces, woodland blocks and mature trees. There is an excellent footpath network and much of Hartley Wood is a designated village green.

Summary Description

This LLCA is located on the east side of Hartley village, between the built-up area and the Hartley Bottom Valley. It comprises the ancient woodlands of Foxbrough and Hartley Woods, the land around Hartley Manor, and the former tip site. Land here was not subdivided in the Early 20th Century, so it retains its older field patterns, and there are few houses or other buildings. It is strongly visually connected with Hartley Bottom, as there are long views across the valley from the edge of the plateau.

This is a well-wooded landscape, with extensive blocks of ancient woodland, and mature trees (including ornamental planting and former field/hedgerow trees around Hartley Manor). The former tip site is also reverting to scrub and woodland. The trees form a strong edge to the urban area. As well as its value for wildlife, the LLCA is popular for recreation - it contains many footpaths and with much of Hartley Wood designated a Village Green. Local residents particularly appreciate the bluebells in spring and the rich autumn colours.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying **geology** comprises bedrock of the Lewes nodular chalk formation. It is overlaid in places by clay-with-flints (weathered Head), and by Head deposits of clay, silt, sand in the north-western part of the LLCA. The north-eastern part of the LLCA comprises a former municipal tip, where rubbish from Southwark was brought by train and dumped into the Longfield Valley/ Hartley Bottom between the late 19th Century and the 1960s.
- **Topography** comprises a relatively small plateau (sloping gently upwards towards the north) which forms the higher land to the west of Hartley Bottom. The LLCA contains a shallow dry valley in the north-west, near to the urban edge of Hartley. To the north the land falls away towards Longfield. The municipal tip has artificially raised the land level at the northern end of Hartley Bottom.
- Very extensive **woodland** and **tree cover**, including the large woodland blocks of Hartley Wood in the north and Foxbrough Wood in the south (both Ancient Woodland), scattered mature trees, thick hedgerows, scrub, and ornamental planting around Hartley Manor. Hartley Wood creates a very strong green edge to the urban area of Hartley.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include extensive areas of deciduous woodland (including ancient woodland) recorded on the priority habitat inventory. Other habitats include mature trees and hedgerows. Natural colonisation is taking place on the former tip site, providing undisturbed habitat for a range of plants, insects, animals, birds and fungi.
- The most extensive **land use** is deciduous woodland, there is also some pasture and ornamental grounds in the centre of the LLCA. The north-eastern part of the LLCA has been used as a tip in the past.
- **Field boundaries** within this LLCA are limited to the central part of the LLCA and are mostly hedged. These are noted within the Historic Landscape Characterisation as parliamentary-type enclosure. Most of the LLCA is described on the HLC as pre-19th Century coppice, and there is also a small amount of 19th Century plantation.
- **Settlement** is very limited within this LLCA, and comprises a small number of scattered properties in large grounds, including Hartley Manor. The properties are in the central part of the LLCA, and with the exception of Hartley Manor are relatively recent.
- **Historic features** include the historic farmstead at Hartley Manor and the outfarm to the north-east. Archaeological features such as woodbanks are associated with ancient woodland sites.
- There is only one public **road** a few metres long (providing access to Hartley Manor) within the LLCA. However there are many Public Rights of Way, including through woodlands and open areas. Part of Hartley Wood is designed as a Village Green. The LLCA is regularly accessed and much appreciated by the residents of Hartley.
- The **strongly rural character and sense of place** is created by the combination of woodland, open space, mature trees and lack of visible development. The continuity of woodland within the landscape adds to the **sense of history**.
- The presence of woodland, and the lack of roads and settlement within this LLCA creates a sense of **tranquillity**, despite its proximity to the urban area.

- The extensive deciduous woodlands and trees add exceptional variety of **colour and texture** to the landscape, and are particularly appreciated for their bluebells in spring and autumn colours.
- **Views** from the eastern edge of the LLCA into Hartley Bottom. There is a strong intervisibility between this LLCA and the Hartley Bottom LLCA to the east.



Fig. 25: Ancient coppice stools at Foxbrough Wood



Fig. 26: Entrance to village green at Hartley Wood. Here the woodland contains a substantial proportion of beech, and evergreen species such as holly and yew



Fig. 27: Former tip area adjacent to Hartley Wood



Fig. 28: Hartley Wood as seen from the north (from within Longfield Parish)

Landscape value:

Valued landscape qualities which should be respected:

- Woodland, including extensive Ancient Woodland, providing a rich diversity of wildlife habitats.
- Isolated mature trees.
- A strong wooded edge to the built-up area.
- Public access and footpath network.
- Lack of development within the LLCA.
- Visibility in views from/to Hartley Bottom.

Landscape sensitivity

The table below shows the valued landscape qualities to respect (see Landscape Value section above), together with the threats and issues currently or potentially affecting them. The following Guidance section makes recommendations on how these special qualities can be managed.

Valued quality	Threats and issues
Woodland, including extensive ancient woodland, providing a rich diversity of wildlife habitats	Lack of woodland management can result in loss of species diversity and wildlife habitats. Woodland habitats may be damaged by trampling. Ash dieback is a particular threat to woodland trees.
Isolated mature trees	Tree disease or old age could lead to loss of trees, affecting the habitats they provide, and the character of the landscape.
A strong wooded edge to the built-up area	Extensions to the built-up area could create incursions into woodland, with consequences for habitats, biodiversity and landscape character. Woodland / tree loss (including through ash dieback) could make existing development more visible.
Public access and footpath network	Intense use of footpaths can lead to path erosion (deepening or widening) particularly when the surface is wet/ muddy.
Lack of development within the LLCA	At present there are few buildings within this LLCA, giving it a strongly undeveloped character. This would be undermined should buildings (or other structures) be constructed here.
Visibility in views from/to Hartley Bottom	There is a high degree of inter-visibility between the eastern part of this LLCA, and the valley of Hartley Bottom immediately to the east. In many cases, changes in one LLCA would be visible from the other.

Guidance

Protect

- Protect the undeveloped character of this LLCA.
- Protect the strong green edge to Hartley created by the woodland and trees within this LLCA. Should any trees be lost (for example through Ash Dieback) replace them in the same locations, using alternative species if necessary.
- Protect the existing views from this LLCA over Hartley Bottom.

Manage

- Retain coppice woodland in coppice management to perpetuate the niche habitats found in this environment. There may be opportunities for community involvement in woodland management.
- Elsewhere manage ancient woodland to maintain diversity of native ground flora, and age and species diversity of trees.
- Encourage people to keep to paths/ less sensitive areas of woodland to avoid damage to ground flora.
- Manage footpaths, where necessary providing sensitive surfacing (e.g. boardwalks) to keep them passable and prevent erosion.
- Encourage new infield and parkland trees which will become the mature trees of the future.
- Allow natural regeneration of habitats to continue on the former tip site.
- Replace trees lost to ash dieback with a range of native species (contact Kent Ash Project for advice and information).

Plan

- Should any changes be considered in either this LLCA or Hartley Bottom, consider the likely impacts on views from both LLCAs.
- Consider expanding the area designated as Village Green
-

Hartley Bottom LLCA

Local Landscape Character Area (LLCA)

National Character Area: 119 North Downs

County Landscape Character Area: Ash Downs

Sevenoaks Landscape Character Area: 1c Ash-cum-Ridley Settled Downs



Fig. 29: Scene within Hartley Bottom LLCA, showing large fields and long views. Foxbrough Wood forms a prominent feature on the western side of the valley.

Summary Description

Hartley Bottom LLCA is located in the east of Hartley Parish, and comprises the valley sides and floor of the dry chalk valley of Hartley Bottom. It is bounded to the west by the woodlands of the Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA (Hartley Wood and Foxborough Wood), which contribute to the character of Hartley Bottom, and to the long views which can be experienced along and across the valley. The former tip site (within Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau LLCA) partially fills the northern end of Hartley Bottom.

This LLCA is relatively open and unenclosed, with a notable lack of both woodland and buildings. It has seen very little recent development, although some development (including large-scale farm buildings) is visible beyond the parish boundaries. Historic farmsteads are scattered along the narrow, hedge-lined lanes which run along the valley and climb steeply up the valley-sides. There is a contrast between the abundant hedgerows found in the valley floor, and the 'prairie fields' (caused by 20th Century hedgerow removal) on the eastern valley side, which form the eastern skyline.

Key Characteristics

- Underlying **geology** comprises bedrock of the Lewes nodular chalk formation, with a small patch of sand of the Thanet formation in the north-east of the LLCA. Superficial deposits of Head (clay, silt and sand gravel) are found in the valley floor, and weathered Head (clay with flints) is found on the higher part of the eastern valley side.
- **Topography** comprises slopes a fairly steep and narrow dry valley running north-south. The LLCA includes the valley bottom and land on both valley sides. There is very little surface water, but there is a pumping station within the valley to extract groundwater.
- **Woodland** and **tree cover** is very limited. There are no woodland blocks within this LLCA (although there are large woodlands on the adjacent Hartley Wooded Eastern Plateau LLCA which can be seen from Hartley Bottom LLCA). There is a small parcel of Ancient woodland at the bottom of Hartley Hill. Within the LLCA there are small copses and woody hedges in the valley floor, and some gardens with mature trees.
- **Semi-natural habitats** include hedges, verges and garden vegetation. There are no habitats recorded on the Priority Habitat Inventory within this LLCA.
- **Land use** is primarily agricultural (mostly arable), with a small amount of light industrial/ storage use in the north of the LLCA. There are also some horse paddocks around Red Cow Farm.
- **field boundaries** within the LLCA are generally hedges, including some woody hedges in the valley floor. The HLC identifies a pattern of *small rectilinear fields with wavy boundaries* to the west of Hartley Bottom Road, and *small regular with straight boundaries (Parliamentary Enclosure type)* in the south of the LLCA. The eastern half of the LLCA is *prairie fields* reflecting the extensive boundary loss which has taken place in the 20th Century. Comparison of 19th Century maps and modern day aerial photographs confirms this loss. Early maps also show extensive orchards within this LLCA, now gone.
- **Settlement** comprises scattered historic farms alongside the lanes, and the settlement pattern has changed relatively little since the late 19th Century. Some farms (including outside Hartley Parish) have expanded to include large agricultural/ light industrial/ storage buildings.
- **Historic features**, are generally related to the agricultural land use in the area. They include several historic farmsteads and their associated buildings, including oasts at Manor Farm and Red Cow Farm, and hopper huts (where seasonal hop pickers from London slept) at Manor Farm. Several of these structures are Listed Buildings. The lanes are also historic features and have been in their present courses since at least the early 19th Century, and probably from well before this.
- Hartley Bottom **Road** runs along the valley bottom and there are no roads linking this road to the East. Steep, narrow hollow lanes with tight corners run down the western side of the valley to connect Hartley Bottom Road with Hartley Hill to the west. There are some footpaths within this LLCA, particularly in the western part, running across or between fields. The eastern part of the LLCA is less accessible.

- The relative lack of development and recreational land use within this LLCA means that much of it has a peaceful and relatively ‘unchanged’ feel. It is **strongly rural**, and feels visually and physically detached from the built-up parts of Hartley and New Ash Green.
- The relatively large fields and lack of tree cover create a **large scale and simple pattern** to the landscape.
- There are long and open **views** along and across the valley. These often extend north and south beyond the parish boundaries. Views westwards are influenced by woodland and other features within the Hartley Eastern Wooded Plateau and Hartley Hill Plateau LLCAs which form the western backdrop and skyline. The eastern skyline is formed by the ridge separating Hartley and Meopham.



Fig. 30: Abundant valley-floor hedgerow contrasting with ‘prairie fields’ on the eastern valley side



Fig. 31: Historic farmstead at Manor Farm



Fig. 32: Long view looking north along Hartley Bottom from footpath near Hartley Hill



Fig. 33: Hartley Bottom as seen from the north, looking south from the former tip

Landscape value

Valued landscapes which should be respected:

- The long views across and along the valley (including from adjacent LLCAs), and the associated sense of openness.
- The lack of development within Hartley parish.
- The strongly-rural and agricultural character.
- The abundant hedges within the valley floor.

- The historic farmsteads (some of which are Listed Buildings) and their settings.
- The open, undeveloped skyline on the eastern side of the valley.

Landscape sensitivity

The table below shows the valued landscape qualities to respect (see Landscape Value section above), together with the threats and issues currently or potentially affecting them. The following Guidance section makes recommendations on how these special qualities can be managed.

Valued quality	Threats and issues
The long views across and along the valley (including from adjacent LLCAs)	Views may be affected by the introduction of unsympathetic new features (including large-scale agricultural buildings) or be blocked by new trees.
The lack of development within Hartley parish	Within Hartley parish, development is generally limited to a small number of historic farms. However, this LLCA extends into the neighbouring parish of Ash at its southern end. There is some existing development (including large-scale agricultural buildings) within Ash which are visible from Hartley.
The strongly rural and agricultural character	Despite its proximity to the urban area of Hartley, Hartley Bottom currently retains its strongly rural and agricultural character. This could be affected by development or land use changes within the valley (on in adjacent LLCAs) which introduce an urban or urban-fringe character to the valley or increase volumes of traffic on the lanes.
The abundant hedges within the valley floor	Removal or poor management of remaining hedges would reduce their landscape and biodiversity value. Many hedges have already been lost from this LLCA (particularly on the eastern valley side). Orchards have also been lost.
Historic farmsteads and their settings	Unsympathetic or poorly-sited residential or agricultural development could impact on the character or setting of Listed Buildings. Alterations to farm buildings can lead to loss of character or context. 'Everyday' structures such 'hopper huts' can be particularly vulnerable as their importance is not always realised.
The open, undeveloped skyline on the eastern side of the valley.	The ridge followed by the parish boundary with Meopham is a prominent landscape feature, and forms the skyline in many views. Buildings or structures here (for example mobile phone masts) would be very visually prominent.

Guidance

Protect

- Protect the essentially undeveloped and strongly-rural character of Hartley Bottom.
- Protect the rural character of the lanes and footpaths.
- Protect views of the LLCA from footpaths and from adjacent LLCAs.
- Protect Listed Buildings and their settings, ensuring that changes in the vicinity are sensitive to their history and context. This includes dwellings but also agricultural buildings. Remember that 'everyday' buildings, such as the hopper huts at Manor Farm are also of importance, particularly as many have not survived.

Manage

- Manage existing hedgerows where necessary, and seek to expand the hedgerow network within the valley to create wildlife corridors, enhance biodiversity, reduce flooding, reduce soil erosion and improve the variety and interest of the landscape.
-

Plan

- Seek to minimise the visual impact of agricultural buildings, through appropriate design, screening and mitigation, including where they occur close to (but outside) the parish boundary.
- Seek to keep the ridgelines above the valley clear of buildings and structures. Seek opportunities to enhance the appearance and biodiversity of the eastern ridge by restoring lost hedgerows. Planting hedgerows parallel to the contours should also help to prevent run-off of soil and water down the slope.
- Consider re-introducing orchards into the valley, perhaps as a community scheme.