



**Natural Environment and Biodiversity in the
Parish of Ashdon, June 2021**



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1. INTRODUCTION

Uttlesford District Council have published their Preliminary Outline Strategy for considerations to inform the new Uttlesford Local Plan - Point (d.):

'Development should preserve or enhance heritage assets, valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity importance and green spaces – for Uttlesford this includes.....Hatfield Forest and other ancient woodlands and sites of ecological importance and the landscape comprised of river valleys, including chalk streams, farmland plateaux and chalk uplands.' (July 2021).

In the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan the value of the landscape and its biodiversity importance has been given a high priority. Ancient woodland is a key feature of the Parish habitats. Neighbourhood Plan Policies ASH10, ASH11 and ASH15 aim to protect the habitats and biodiversity of Ashdon.

This 'Natural Environment and Biodiversity' document provides further evidence to support these Policies.

2. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

The landscape and natural environment of Ashdon is varied and diverse; ranging from ancient woodlands and wooded farmland, to arable farmland on the plateau areas and valley sides, all dissected by wooded valleys with chalk streams. The Parish of Ashdon is covered by two National Character Areas. To the north, a spur of NCA 87 East Anglian Chalk extends to Steventon End, while the majority of the Parish falls within NCA 86 South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland. Assessment of the Parish has indicated that the characteristics of NCA 86 are most strongly expressed throughout the Parish even in the north. The characteristics of this character area are detailed in the Ashdon Landscape Appraisal (2020).

The range of habitats also include scrub, gardens, churchyards, hedgerows, orchards, remnant chalk grassland and ponds. These support a variety of flora and fauna from orchids to humble grasses and buzzards to butterflies. Although a full biological survey has not been undertaken, local knowledge has identified a good range of habitats and species. The only habitat poorly represented is species rich grassland which is restricted to roadside verges and tiny remnants; field margins could be more diverse. Scrubland is an undervalued habitat which takes time to develop its richness but responds to sympathetic if minimal management. Small orchards are still found around Sprigg's farm, Water End and at Burnt house. The village itself and the extensive hedgerows are well populated with trees, however, there is no co-ordinated planning to replace existing tree stock although some active projects have been undertaken by landowners.

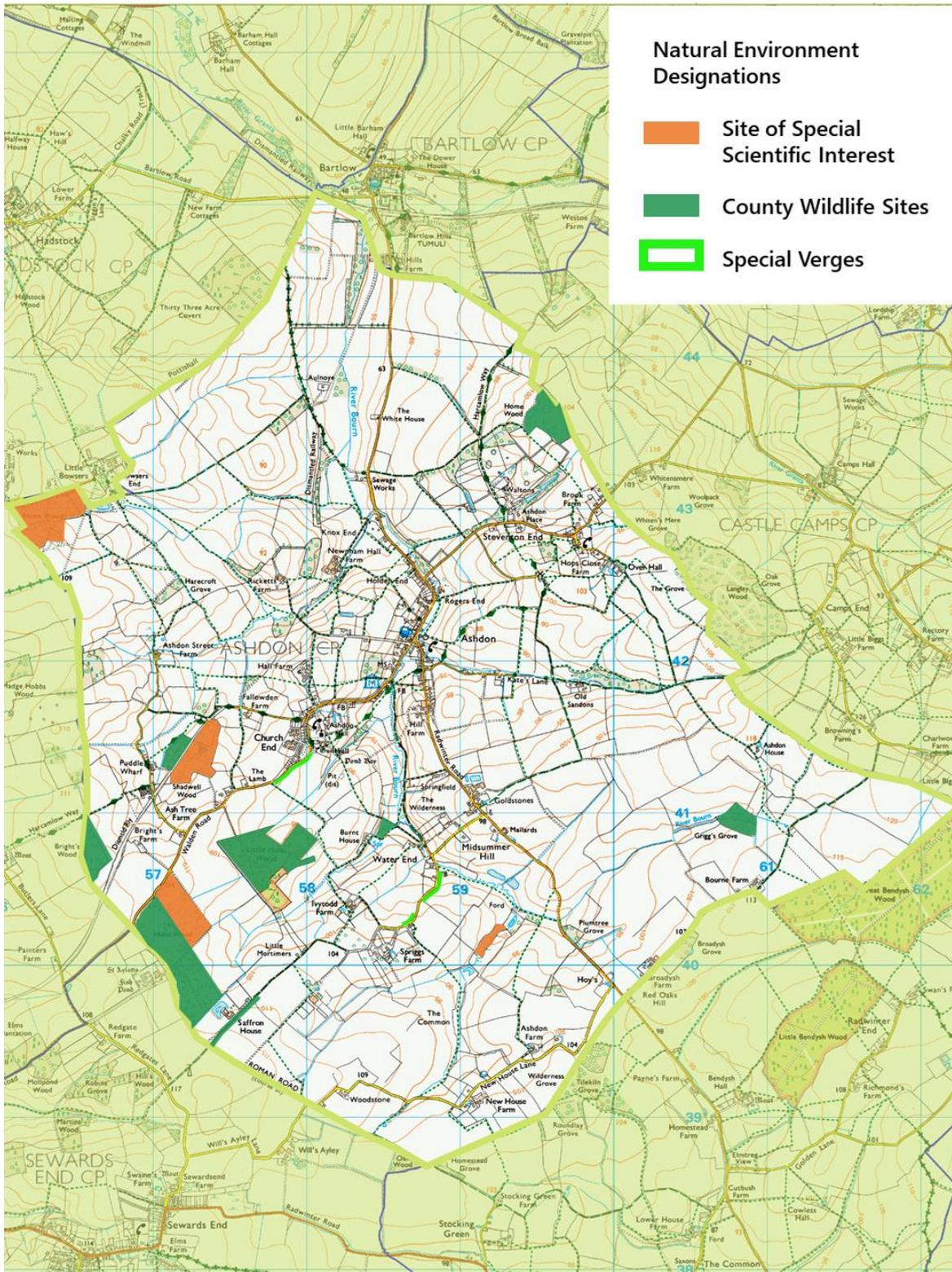
3. DESIGNATED NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ASSETS

There are 13 designated sites in the Parish that are recognized to be important for nature conservation for the specific species present and the habitat that is represented. These are shown in Map 1.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI):

- Shadwell Wood (Essex Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve) with part of Hales Wood (National Nature Reserve) SSSI;
- Ashdon Meadows SSSI;
- Nunn Wood SSSI.





Map 1 - Designated Natural Environment Assets

County Wildlife Sites (Local Wildlife Sites):

Bright's wood (Ufd 157)	Hales wood South (Ufd 163)
Little Hales wood (Ufd 175)	Shadwell wood West (Ufd 166)
Burnt House meadow (Ufd 182)	Home wood (Ufd 202)
Grigg's Grove (Ufd 219) (woodland around a source of the River Bourne)	

These County/ Wildlife Sites were designated by Uttlesford District Council (Local Wildlife Site Review, 2007).

Special Roadside Verges

The following Special Roadside Verges are current sites for Ashdon (Map 1 and details in appendix). They are designated by Essex County Council who coordinate the scheme for Essex with Essex Wildlife Trust and other local partners, like Uttlesford District Council. Essex County Council hold the master map on their GIS - Geographic Information System.

LOCATION	UDC REF	ECC REFERENCE	Side of Road	GRID REF1	GRID REF2
Ashdon – Church End	UTT54	SV-UTT54	S	TL578412	TL579413
Ashdon – Water End (W)	UTT60W	SV-UTT60	W	TL587403	TL586402
Ashdon – Water End (E)	UTT60E	SV-UTT60	E	TL588406	TL587404

The majority of these designated assets are ancient woodlands, one of the richest, most biodiverse habitats in the UK, and a habitat which takes 100s of years to develop, but now only covers 2.5% of the UK. **Shadwell wood** is an Essex Wildlife Trust reserve open to the public and **Hales wood** is a National Nature Reserve. Both woods are actively managed by coppicing.

Most of the County Wildlife Sites also represent fragments of ancient woodland but in these management is variable depending on the landowners, and most have no public access.

Other non-designated, important woods – The Brues (TL582 423) and Harecroft Grove (TL572 424). The Brues is well known locally for its Bluebells.

Two sites, **Ashdon meadows SSSI** and **Burnt House meadow**, were designated for chalk grassland, and in the case of Ashdon Meadows also for marshy calcareous plants (sadly this SSSI was considered to be in poor condition when last assessed).

4. FEATURES OF THE HABITATS AND GREEN LANDSCAPE FOUND IN THE PARISH

Ancient Woodland

For the maximum number of species to thrive woodland needs to be actively managed. Shadwell and Hales woods are managed by coppicing on a rotation and mowing of open rides to promote the flora and butterfly populations. In the past and today this method of managing the woodland generates a sustainable supply of building and gardening materials and of firewood. The whole of Shadwell reserve now has deer fencing to maximise the regeneration of the coppice stools.



Oxlip



Coppicing

One of the most iconic plants of the chalky boulder clay woods is Oxlip (*Primula elatior*), and many of the ancient woods listed here support populations of this Nationally Scarce plant. Indeed, northwest Essex, east Suffolk and south Cambridgeshire is a stronghold for oxlip. All Oxlip woods should be considered to be of regional if not national importance. A less conspicuous companion in chalky boulder clay woodlands is Herb Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*).

The typical canopy of many of the ancient woods on the boulder clay comprises Ash, Field Maple, Hazel and Pedunculate Oak, providing for a rather lighter and open canopy structure compared with the Hornbeam-dominated woods of south Essex.

The Ash trees are currently under attack from Ash dieback and the full impact of this devastating disease is yet to be seen. Some Ash are resistant and these are being propagated so that in the future our woodlands and hedgerows can be repopulated.



Herb Paris (centre)

In the past the woodland, hedgerows and boundaries were decimated by Dutch Elm disease but other trees have filled the gaps that were left. Small Elm trees still populate the hedgerows but are unable to reach maturity due to the disease. Resistant Elm trees are also being propagated and one has been planted at the Moor Pasture Cottage in Ashdon.



Elm

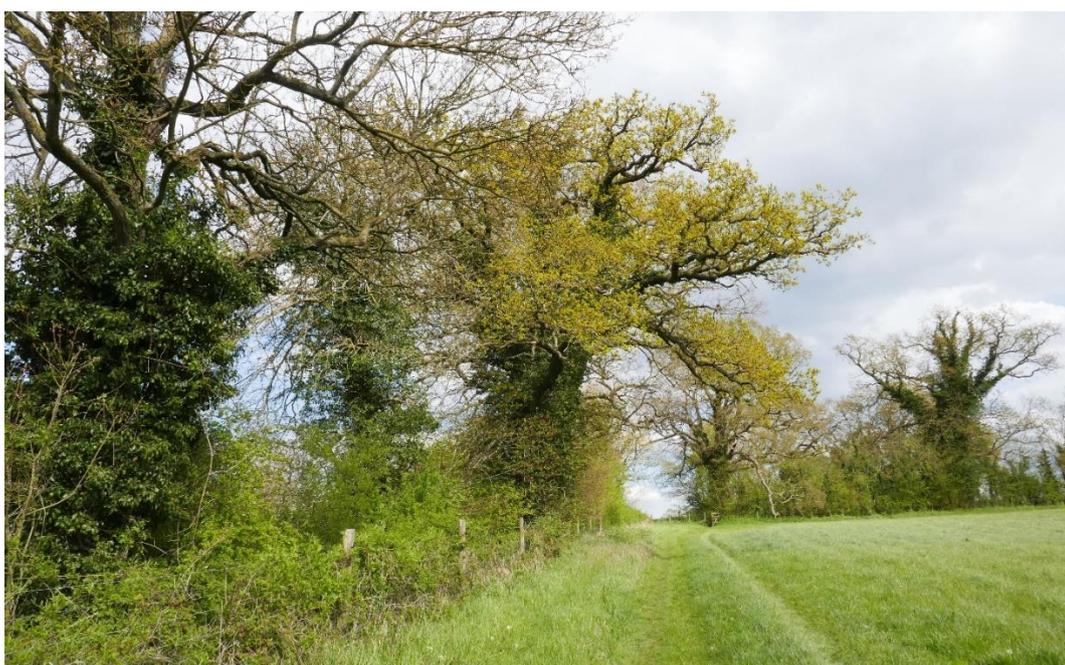
Ancient Hedgerows

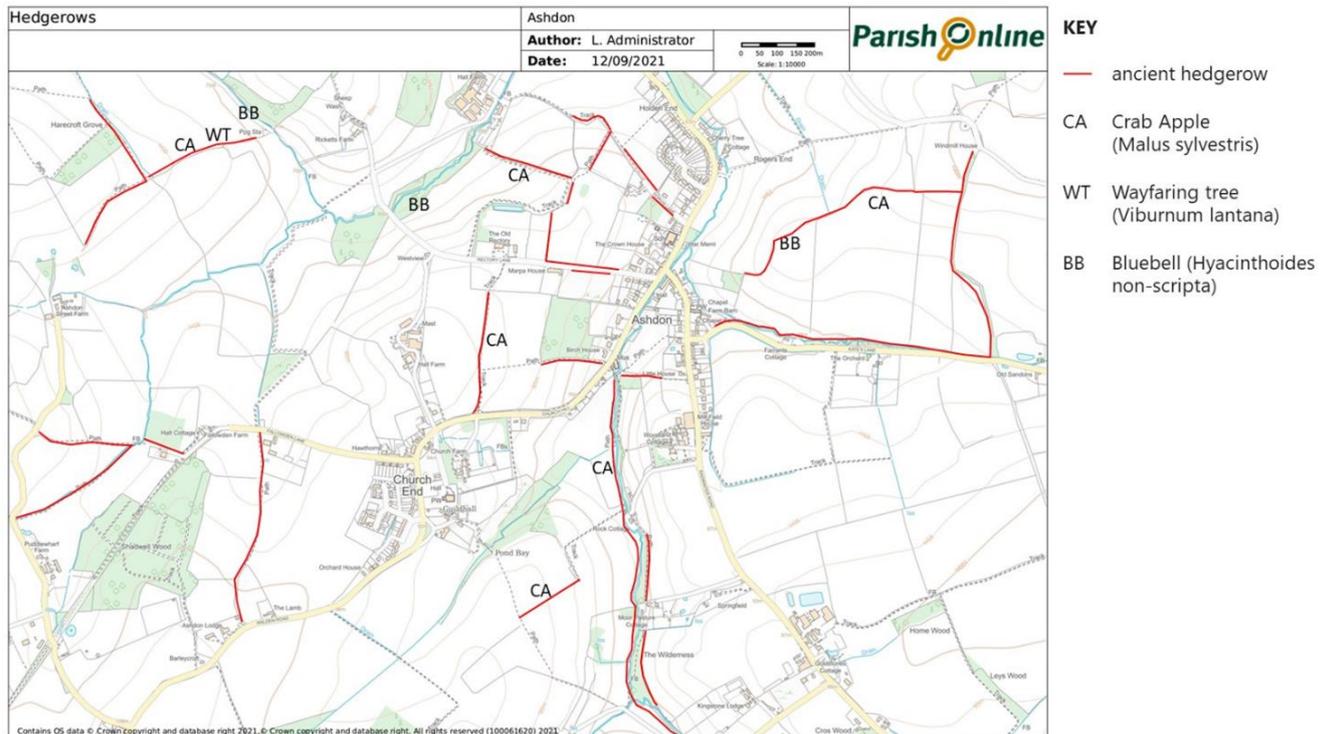
A limited survey of the hedgerows was conducted as a full survey was unavailable due to the Pandemic. The criteria used to identify ancient hedgerows (shown in Map 2):

- Present in the Parish on old maps and beside Rights of Way or Parish boundary (see Map 4);
- Flora present indicative of ancient woodland – Oxlip, Bluebell, Dog's Mercury, Wood Anemone, Primrose, Cowslip;
- Wide range of tree and shrub species including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Dogwood, Spindle, Bramble, Field maple, Oak, Ash, and most notably Crab Apple and Wayfaring tree;
- Presence of veteran or ancient Oak trees.



Wood anemone





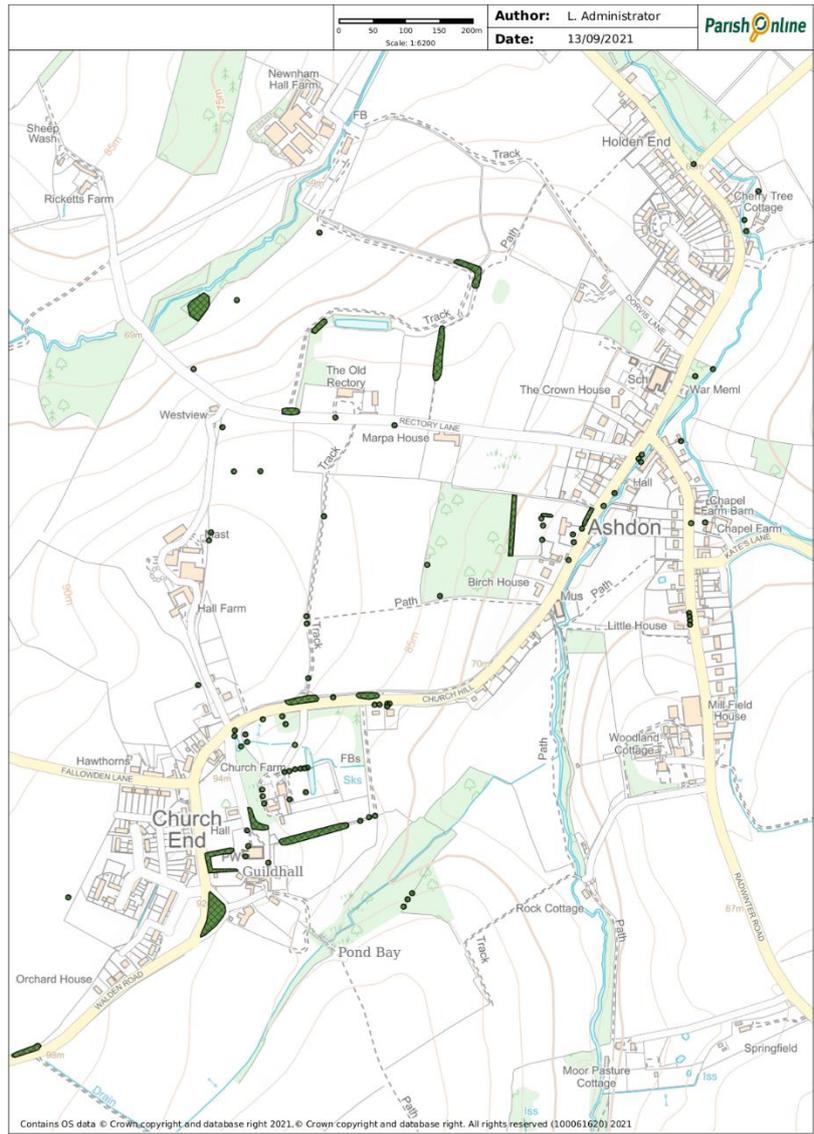
Map 2 – Ancient hedgerows (partial survey)

Notable trees and Tree Preservation Orders



Ancient Oak at Ashdon Hall

Ashdon is a well-treed village, when viewed from the higher ground it is largely hidden in the green canopy of the valley. There are a significant number of Tree Preservation Orders (shown in Map 3) throughout the village and especially in the two Conservation Areas. There are a range of species but notable are Oak, Scots pine, Yew, Horse Chestnut and the unusual Holme Oak at the Old Rectory.



Map 3 - Location of trees with Tree Preservation Orders

The Parish is well populated with Oak trees especially along field boundaries. Many of the old trees still found in Ashdon can also be found on the village map from 1880 (Map 4) when, presumably, they were already mature. The use of oak from this area to build King's college chapel in Cambridge has meant that few of these are 'ancient'. Oak are classed as ancient from 400 years onwards, although many will have ancient characteristics from around 300 years. Typically, a veteran oak is 150-300 years of age and a notable oak is 150-200 years old (Woodland Trust).

An ancient Oak stands in the grounds of Ashdon Hall and another on New House lane has the reduced crown typical of ancient oaks, but in this case partly due to pollarding.





'Notable'



'Veteran'

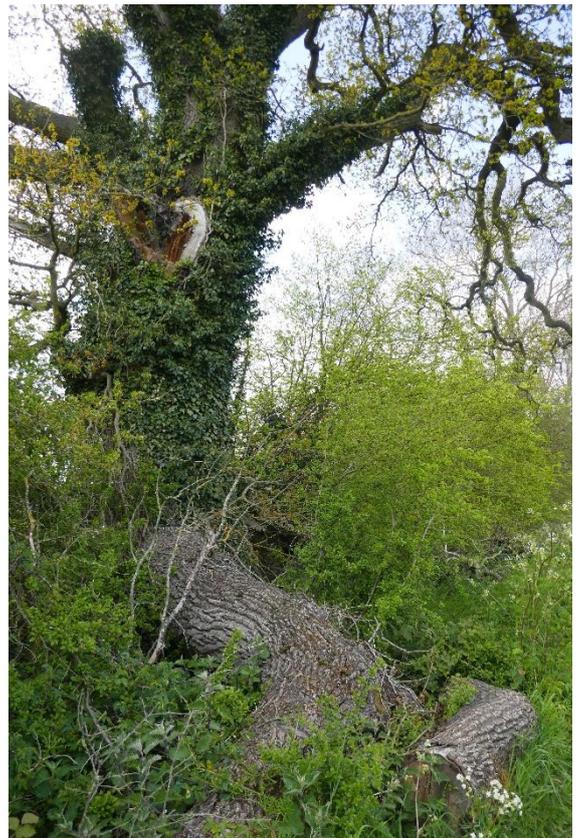


'Ancient'

(Pictures courtesy of the Woodland Trust)

Veteran trees are a precious resource for wildlife they support many invertebrates and therefore also birds and bats, also a wide range of fungi and lichens which can be slow growing. They provide roosting and nesting sites for many birds but Owls, Woodpeckers and others require dying limbs or hollow trunks. Bats use hollow trunks for their roosts and breeding colonies, especially the rarer large bats.

Therefore, it is essential that a veteran tree is NOT felled simply because one limb may be split or dying. A wildlife assessment should be made as well as considering safety concerns; a less drastic solution may be possible.



Landmark Scots pine at Hill farm



Map 4 – 1880 map showing trees along the hedgerows. Blue arrow indicates the Glebe footpath where many veteran oak trees can be found (Source: Historic Maps Scotland).

Veteran and landmark trees in the Parish (not a complete list):

- Ancient Oak, Ashdon Hall;
- Ancient Oak, New House lane;
- Veteran Oaks along the Glebe footpath between Church Hill and Rectory Lane
- Row of four Oaks below Hill farm (TL585 415) (see below);
- Millennium Oak, landmark tree for the future, planted in the Donkey Field by the Women's Institute in 2000;
- Triangle of Scots Pine at the village entrance in Church End;
- Veteran Scots Pine at Hill Farm visible as a landmark from the surrounding higher ground (see photo above);
- Scots Pine at the museum, on Church Hill, Sprigg's lane and in larger plantings beyond Sandons (TL601 418) and in Little Hales wood.



Chalk grassland

The Special Roadside Verges, Ashdon Meadow SSSI and Burnt house meadow are rare chalk grassland habitat of which over 97% had been destroyed in England and Wales by 1984 and losses have continued since that time.

Notable species found on these verges are Crested Cow Wheat (Nationally scarce), and Pyramidal and Bee Orchids.

These designated assets provide a very small reservoir of chalk grassland species which one day might be allowed to expand onto rewilded arable land.



Crested Cow Wheat (left) and Pyramidal Orchid (above) on Special Protected verges.

Marker post for Special verge.

Cowslips can be common where grass is mown more regularly and trees are sparse. Particularly good populations are found at the water treatment plant (TL577 423), the sewage farm (TL583 432), around the football pitch and in meadows adjacent to Springs in Water End and behind Chapel Farm Barn near the junction of Radwinter road and Kate's lane. Along the lanes on the arable plateau (New House lane and Puddle Wharf lane) the verges are rich with Cowslips, also along the banks of Windmill lane.

Chalk stream

Chalk streams are a rare habitat noted for the clarity of the water and the populations of aquatic plants, fish and invertebrates. The River Bourne is a chalk stream and sensitive to contamination from runoff. Any development proposals should be mindful of this.

It is a tributary of the River Granta/Cam and is fed from a spring line and from runoff. In Ashdon the streams are not always in the best condition due to agricultural runoff and other pollutants, but there are good populations of small fish, and current and historical records of the declining Brown Trout. Poor regular management of adjacent woodland is not helpful as too much shade and debris are counter indicated.



The watercourse ecosystem supports specialized birds and mammals, most notably kingfishers are a regular and exciting sight, and the recently resurgent otter may also be in the valleys.

The importance of the chalk streams in the wider local area is now being recognized – in 2021 the Government created a Chalk Streams Working Group following pressure from our neighbours – South Cambridgeshire MP, Water Resources East (<https://wre.org.uk/>) and the Cam Valley Forum (<https://camvalleyforum.uk/>).

Ponds

There are a variety of ponds and small lakes around the village. Most are associated with traditional farms and some are ornamental lakes. More recently recreational fishing lakes were dug on Goldstones farm. These are important for biodiversity not just for aquatic species but also for many species to drink. Care should always be taken when developing

sites or changing hard landscaping that the pond water is not contaminated with impure run off. Ponds should not be filled in and lost.

Goldstones	Ashdon Hall	The Moor Pasture Cottage	Sandons
Fishing lakes	Tudor Croft	Mortimers	Puddle Wharf farm
Waltons	Old Rectory	Spriggs farm	

5. BIODIVERSITY IN ASHDON PARISH

The rural environment of the Parish of Ashdon provides a sustainable habitat for a wide range of species. However, the Parish has suffered in the same way as much of England with serious declines in some species leaving them in danger of disappearing altogether – Hedgehogs, bats, Cuckoo and Water vole. The loss of individual species and a reduction in the abundance of nature means many of our ecosystems are not functioning as they should.

Barn Owl and Water Vole conservation projects are 2 major topics for Essex Wildlife Trust at present (also a survey of Toads which are present in Ashdon but again have declined). Barn Owls are definitely present in the village and water voles maybe; they certainly were in the past.

It is not within the scope of this document to provide a complete survey of the species present within the Parish, so the following is a brief summary:

Mammals - There are healthy populations of Hare, Fox, Badger, Fallow Deer, Roe Deer, Muntjac, and smaller mammals, despite the serious decline in Hedgehogs and Water Vole. The high deer populations do cause problems for biodiversity and regeneration of woodland resulting in the need for costly deer fencing in some areas. On a positive note, there is evidence for the return of Otters to all waterways in the south and east of England.

Bats – a 2021 survey of bats in All Saints church by the Essex Bat Group found the majority were Common Pipistrelles, with smaller populations of Soprano Pipistrelles and Brown Long-eared bats. In 2009 Serotine and Noctule were recorded, it is not known why they have left



but the usual reasons would be loss of a roost site or degradation of feeding areas. In the UK the bat population has dropped by 70% in 70 years. The structure of Essex churches favour good bat populations. The large numbers of jointed wooden beams and sometimes loose flint and brick walls make good roost sites for bats. The very rare Barbastelle has been recorded in Shadwell wood.

Bird species are too many to list; raptors and owls are well represented (Sparrowhawk, Kestrel, Buzzard, and Red Kite; Little, Tawny, and Barn Owls all breed). These have all recovered significantly in the last 30 years due to the ban of pesticide DDT and, in the case of Red Kite, reintroduction to the Chilterns, but many are dependant on woodland and large trees for their future breeding. Raven have also returned to Hales wood and the area.

Sadly, farmland birds have declined dramatically (by 30-90%) in the last 30 years, some only in the last 10 years. Some of the reasons for this are relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan: loss of hedges, drainage or removal of damp areas and ponds, conversion or replacement of farm buildings with modern structures, or residential, and degradation of existing protected land – SSSIs and verges. Nationally, a significant factor is thought to be the large reduction in invertebrate populations due to agricultural sprays and increased autumn cultivation resulting in few fallow fields over the winter, and habitat loss.

Many of the declining species are still present in Ashdon Parish – Corn Bunting, Spotted Flycatcher, Woodcock, Starling, Song Thrush, Bullfinch, Skylark, Cuckoo, so we have an opportunity to try and slow the decline with our local policies. Tree Sparrow, and Turtle Dove used to be present but are no longer recorded.

The River Bourne and its tributaries result in long standing records of Kingfisher and other water birds (Moorhen, Mallard....), also Grey Wagtail.

The ancient woods and valley woodland support Warblers, Woodpeckers, Nuthatch and Treecreeper.

Flora – again too many to list.

Characteristic of ancient woodland and hedgerows - Wood Anemones; Bluebells; Spurge Laurel; Oxlips; Early Purple Orchid; Common Spotted Orchids; Helleborines; Dog's Mercury; Wild Garlic; Herb Paris.

Characteristic of chalk grassland – Crested Cow Wheat (Nationally scarce); Cowslip; Bee Orchid; Pyramidal Orchid; Agrimony; Scabious; Oxeye Daisy; Bird's Foot Trefoil; Meadow Cranesbill; Red and White Clover.



6. WILDLIFE CORRIDORS - STRATEGIES FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT CONSERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

The main approaches to protection of the wildlife environment are nature reserves and designation of protected sites (see above). More visionary concepts address the problem of scattered populations that are unable to develop and spread due to their isolation in a sea of arable fields and roads. The living landscapes initiative (Essex Wildlife Trust) is about establishing wildlife corridors and coherent strategies within an area.

In Ashdon there are wildlife corridors now – the River Bourne and two tributaries extend out from the village core, their valleys populated almost continuously with woodland and hedgerows, in addition to well-used footpaths and lanes. Rock Lane, bridleway 76, along the Bourne from the village museum to Water End is lined by woodland all the way. In places this corridor has been widened by rough grassland sown to reduce runoff and flash flooding. The benefits of these areas to hares and barn owls are apparent. The old railway line is another wooded wildlife corridor, and it links Shadwell wood with the surrounding land.

Many fields are separated by hedgerow boundaries, often with mature trees scattered along their considerable length.

The corridor must be of sufficient habitat quality to support the species, albeit temporarily, whilst it spreads through the habitat hopefully ending up at point B, where there is sufficient habitat for permanent populations to become established.

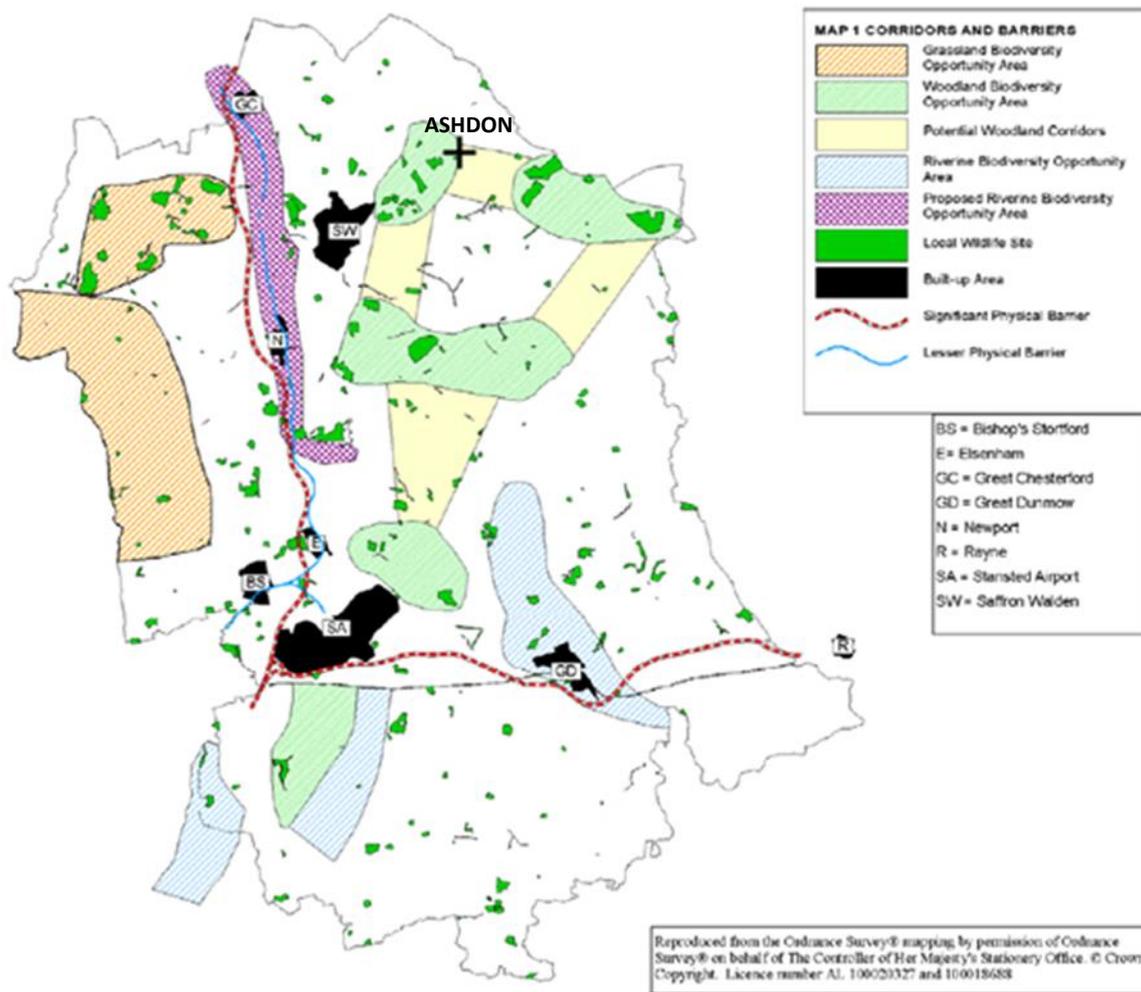
For the successful movement of Brown Hares, this corridor will need to be at a landscape scale, whilst for reptiles it may only be a few tens of metres wide.

Bats are obviously a very mobile species, but they have some requirements to use an area regularly. Habitually, they tend to spread from their roost sites along hedgerows, tree belts or similar features, feeding as they go, before arriving at a main feeding area. Most bat species will not cross large open areas whilst on nightly foraging activity. That said, bats are capable of moving large distances on a seasonal basis when they travel to and from winter hibernation sites and the overall presence or absence of bats in an area is probably more down to the presence or absence of suitable summer roost sites and good quality habitat capable of supporting the colonies when there. In summary, if the habitat is good enough, bats will probably find it (sooner or later). The speed at which it is found may depend on the quality of the matrix of hedgerows, woods and similar.

Woodland corridors have been promoted by Uttlesford District Council as a potential route to enhance wildlife habitat – see Uttlesford District Council Local Wildlife Site Review (2007).

Map 5 (below) shows a number of hypothetical corridor “bridges” between woodland clusters to illustrate the desire to enlarge the scale of connectivity. These corridors can be thought of as areas for “biodiversity opportunity”. Their biodiversity value can be enhanced by linking woodlands with belts of new planting or the strengthening of existing hedgerows, the creation of permanent grassland headlands adjacent to important road verge grassland strips and focussing effort on getting appropriate management regimes for the Local wildlife Sites within the area.

In the Parish of Ashdon, Shadwell, Hales and Little Hales woods are in close proximity and creating links would be feasible. A more tenuous woodland corridor is proposed to link to West wood to the south of the Parish and Langley wood just over the Parish boundary to the northeast.



Map 5 - Potential woodland corridors in Uttlesford

It is now well recognised that invertebrate populations have declined dramatically in the UK. Visible in the much reduced visits of butterflies and moths to our gardens and our clean windscreens and numberplates. Concern over loss of bees perhaps due to the use of pesticides has grown and a decline in bees threatens the production of food.

The conservation charity 'Buglife' has determined 3km wide corridors 'B – lines' across UK where existing green landscape is favourable to improved habitat sites and new areas could be allocated to promote insect diversity and spread. This is crucial to our bee populations and hence the success of agriculture and food provision. One of these 'B-Lines' runs west to east just south of the Parish of Ashdon, adjoining the boundary along New House Lane.

Natural England have established datasets during 2019/2020 recording the existence of many different habitats and associated biodiversity throughout England. Part of this project has been to identify the potential for habitat creation or recovery in specific areas.

A significant area of land in the Parish of Ashdon as been identified by Natural England as having potential for upland calcareous grassland. This land runs in a wide band from Church End in the north towards New House Lane in the south and is designated as Network Enhancement Zone 1 (further details and map in Appendix).

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND WOODLAND

'The UK is staring down the barrel of twin existential crises; climate change and biodiversity collapse. This country needs to take urgent action to prevent irreversible damage. Woodland expansion on a massive scale will play a huge role in addressing these challenges.

Trees capture carbon and woodlands provide habitats where biodiversity can flourish.....The UK can help to tackle both its local biodiversity collapse and the global climate crisis by protecting, restoring and massively expanding its native woodland and tree cover. And well located tree cover can also reduce the risk of flooding; create thousands of new jobs; provide sustainable timber; and of course, make people happier, and healthier.'

This is a quote from the Woodland Trust Emergency Tree Plan for the UK, three of their key recommendations are

- Protect and restore existing trees and native woodland;
- Set new country annual targets on a path to reach 19% UK woodland cover by 2050;
- Combine quantity and quality targets for new tree cover to ensure it stores carbon; supports the recovery of wildlife and benefits people.



Young and old oak trees



Fine Scots pine in Little Hales wood

8. THE FUTURE

- Extending/widening wildlife corridors and linking woodland;
- Include provision for increased invertebrate populations – increase unsprayed field margins, consider insect corridors – ‘B’ lines;
- Encourage individuals and developers to establish wildflower meadows, native hedgerows, ponds;
- Consider the impact of climate change, increase the provision of shade and carbon capture, preserve water sources and damp areas;
- Avoid creating unnecessary light pollution which is likely to affect nocturnal wildlife and has recently been shown to affect moth populations;
- On a larger scale consider establishing habitat recovery and/or rewilding schemes.

Further discussion of green issues and strategies for the future relating to Essex can be found in the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy (2020).

Our Vision for Habitats and Biodiversity

- Natural habitats to be conserved, protected and managed as part of the Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy;
- Woodland, hedgerows and valley habitats to be maintained and enhanced as wildlife corridors;
- Degraded areas such as roadside verges and field margins to be proactively restored;
- Seek to identify and develop new habitat areas on suitable sites;
- Monitor protected and unprotected species;
- Develop plans and take actions to maintain and increase variety of flora and fauna.

These aims are addressed in the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan Policies ASH10, ASH11 and ASH15 and in linked Community Aspirations.

9. APPENDIX

Species summary:

Trees

Most common species are to be found, including

Ash, Alder, Beech, Birch, Blackthorn, Hazel, Hawthorn, Holly, Hornbeam, Field Maple, Horse Chestnut, Oak, Lime, Sycamore, Walnut, Goat Willow, Crack Willow, Spruce and Yew. In gardens are Scot's Pine, Holme Oak, Birch, and a variety of fruit trees – Apple, Plum, Pear, Greengage, Damson & Cherry.

Reptile/Amphibian: Grass Snake, Frog, Common and Crested Newt, Common Toad

Mammal: Fox, Badger, Bats (Common and Soprano Pipistrelles, Brown Long-eared, Barbastelle), Hare, Rabbit, Hedgehog, Water, Common and Pygmy Shrew, Short-tailed Vole, Muntjac, Fallow and Roe Deer, Grey Squirrel.

Mustelid: Stoat, Weasel

Otters have been observed in adjoining local waterways

Bird species

Garden and hedgerow birds: House Sparrow, Blackbird, Coal Tit, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Long-Tailed Tit, Marsh Tit, Robin, Dunnock, Song and Mistle Thrush, Greenfinch, Chaffinch, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Siskin, Wren, Pied Wagtail, Collared Dove, Goldcrest, Blackcap, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Willow Warbler, Chiffchaff

Other birds (field & woodland): Pheasant, Red Legged Partridge, Cuckoo, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Treecreeper, Nuthatch, Rook, Jackdaw, Raven, Crow, Jay, Magpie, Lapwing, Sky Lark, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Fieldfare, Redwing, Wood Pigeon, Swallow, House Martin, Swift

Water-associated birds: Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail, Moorhen, Mallard, Grey Heron, Little Egret

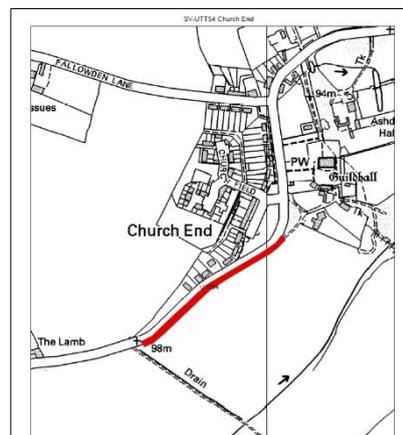
Raptor: Sparrowhawk, Red Kite, Buzzard, Barn , Little and Tawny Owls, Kestrel



Special Protected Verges - Details of site location and flora found:

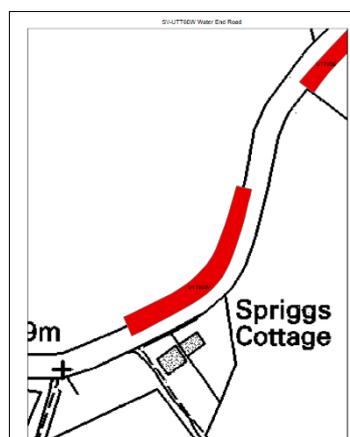
UTT54 Ashdon – Church End

Agrimony, Hedge Bedstraw, Bugle, Creeping and Meadow Buttercup, Wild Carrot, Centaury, Cowslip, Red and White Clover, Oxeye Daisy, Fairy Flax, Goatsbeard, Common Knapweed, Mugwort, Ribwort Plantain, Primrose, Hoary Ragwort, Bird's-foot trefoil, Hop trefoil, Hairy St. John's-wort, Field Scabious, Selfheal, Smooth Tare, Tufted vetch, Meadow Vetchling, Great Willowherb.



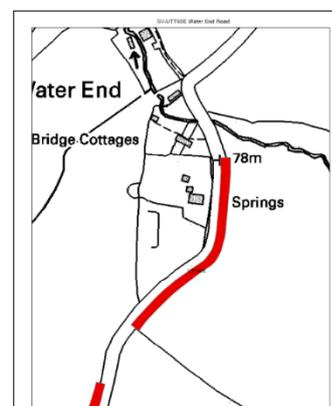
UTT60W Ashdon – Water End (West)

Nationally Scarce Plant Crested Cow-Wheat, Agrimony, Meadow Buttercup, Creeping Cinquefoil, Meadow Cranesbill, Oxeye Daisy, Common Knapweed, Cowslip, Germander Speedwell, Hedge Bedstraw, Hedge Woundwort, Dog's Mercury, Herb Robert, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Hop Trefoil, Bush Vetch, Tufted Vetch, Meadow Vetchling, Ribwort Plantain, Hairy and Perforate St. John's-wort, Violet species, Red and White clover, Yarrow.



UTT60E Ashdon – Water End (East)

Pyramidal Orchid, Common Spotted Orchid, Bee Orchid, Agrimony, Creeping and Meadow Buttercup, Creeping Cinquefoil, Meadow Cranesbill, Oxeye Daisy, Common Knapweed, Germander Speedwell, Hedge Bedstraw, Hedge Woundwort, Herb Robert, Meadowsweet, Bird's-Trefoil, Hop Trefoil, Tufted Vetch, Meadow Vetchling, Ribwort Plantain, Hairy and Perforate St. John's-wort, White clover, Yarrow.



foot

Citations two SSSI woods from Essex Wildlife Trust and from Natural England:

Shadwell wood - A true wonder in spring and summer when the woodland floor is brimming with colourful flowers. A deer fence around the reserve has allowed the extremely rare Oxlip to thrive as well as a huge host of other flowers.

In early spring the Oxlips are joined by Wood Violets and Wood Anemones emerging from the woodland floor, that are then followed by Early Purple Orchids and areas of Bluebells.

Into summer you will start seeing Common Spotted Orchids, Meadowsweet and Sanicle, making this reserve a fantastic place to visit to see the changing seasons.

Traditional coppicing methods have encouraged many summer visiting birds to nest. Listen out for the sound of Warblers, Blackcaps or Whitethroats that spend their summer here.

Nunn Wood is an ancient Pedunculate Oak-Hornbeam coppice-with-standards woodland situated to the north of Saffron Walden on the Chalky Boulder Clay of north-west Essex. It supports one of the largest known colonies of Early-purple Orchid *Orchis mascula* together with the nationally uncommon Oxlip *Primula elatior*, which is restricted to East Anglia. The woodland is dominated by Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* coppice, forming almost pure stands in the south, while Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Field Maple *Acer campestre* coppice tend to dominate in the north-eastern corner. However, both Hornbeam and Ash occur throughout. There are relatively few standards, which are mostly Ash with some Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*. Aspen *Populus tremula* is occasional along the sides of the shallow stream that cuts west-east through the wood. The ground flora is dominated by Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* and Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis* with occasional Bramble *Rubus* sp. Rough Meadow-grass *Poa trivialis* is dominant in damper areas, replacing Bluebell. Locally abundant Ramsons *Allium ursinum* borders the stream. Both Oxlip and Early-purple-Orchid are occasional throughout the wood. The open rides are herb-rich with Wild Strawberry *Fragaria vesca*, Hairy St. John's-wort *Hypericum hirsutum*, Bugle *Ajuga reptans*, Red Bartsia *Odontites verna*, Ragged-Robin *Lychnis flos-cuculi*, Soft Rush *Juncus effusus*, Hard Rush *J. inflexus*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* and Wood-sedge *C. sylvatica* and provide valuable additional habitat for invertebrates and birds.

Essex Tree Palette - Recommended native species for planting

Acer campestre Field maple

Alnus glutinosa Alder

Carpinus betulus Hornbeam

Corylus avellana Hazel

Crataegus monogyna Quickthorn / Hawthorn

Ilex aquifolium Holly

Populus nigra betulifolia Black poplar / Water poplar - Floodplains. Not suitable for most hedgerows.

Prunus avium Wild cherry

Prunus spinosa Blackthorn

Quercus petraea Sessile oak

Quercus robur Common oak

Salix alba White willow Several introduced varieties including the 'cricket-bat willow'

Salix fragilis Crack willow

Taxus baccata Yew

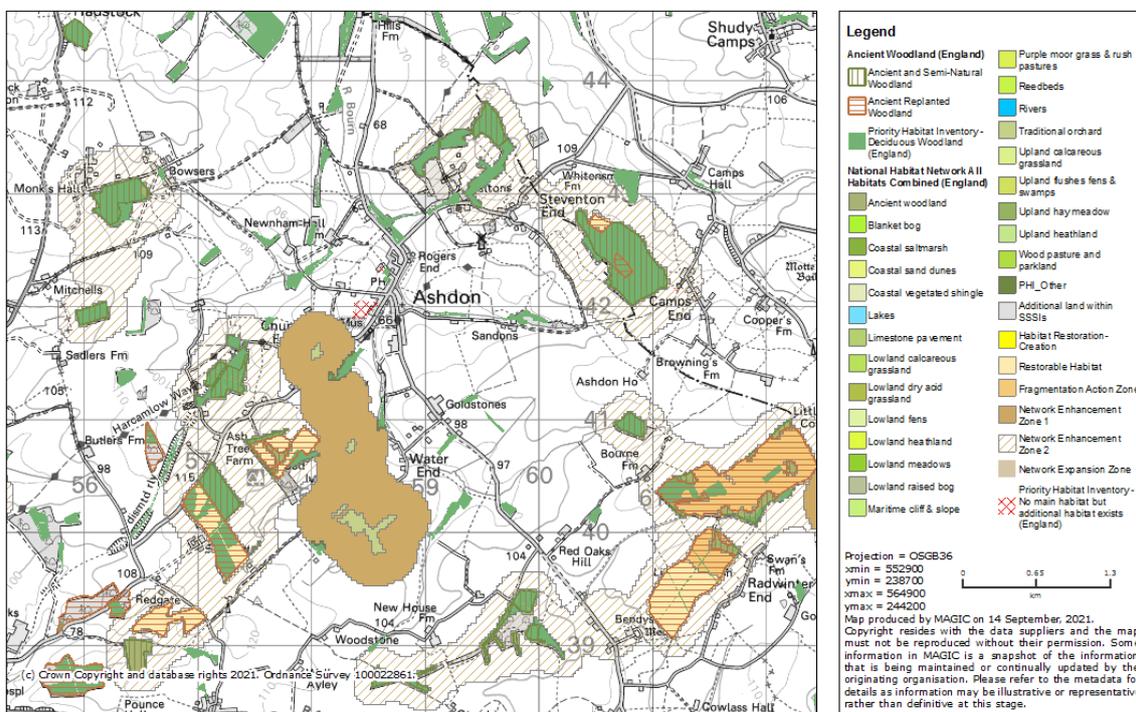
Viburnum lantana Wayfaring tree

Natural England survey of existing habitats and future potential.

Map from <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx> showing existing woodland and grassland habitats in the Parish and the potential for habitat creation or recovery.

MAGiC

Woodland and Habitat Network



The pale green areas are Upland calcareous grassland on map above.

'Network Enhancement Zone 1' - Land within close proximity to the existing habitat components that are more likely to be suitable for habitat re-creation for the particular habitat. These areas are primarily based on soils but in many cases has been refined by also using other data such as hydrology, altitude and proximity to the coast. (marked in brown on map above).

'Network Enhancement Zone 2' - Land within close proximity to the existing habitat components that are unlikely to be suitable for habitat re-creation but where other types of habitat may be created or land management may be enhanced including delivery of suitable Green Infrastructure (diagonal pale brown shading on map above)

10. REFERENCES

Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan www.ashdonplan.co.uk

Ashdon Landscape Appraisal (Alison Farmer Associates, 2020) (see website above)

Woodland Trust

Local Wildlife Site Review (Uttlesford District Council, 2007)

Essex Wildlife Trust

Natural England

Uttlesford District Council

British Trust for Ornithology

Buglife - <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/>

Essex Green Infrastructure Strategy (2020) - Essex County Council – www.essex.gov.uk

Essex Tree Palette (2018) <https://www.placeservices.co.uk/resources/natural-environment/essex-tree-palette/>

