

Section 6: Environment and Landscape (including Green Space and Biodiversity)

Biodiversity and the network of green and blue infrastructure

Purpose

- 6.1. This policy seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of green spaces and corridors within the parish – including their importance in combating pressure on wildlife, habitats, biodiversity and geodiversity and in off-setting the effects of air pollution - are recognised and enhanced. This applies particularly where individual spaces have a greater collective value as part of wider chains of green infrastructure. This will serve to support the requirement to conserve and, where possible, provide a net gain in biodiversity through planning policy whilst accommodating sustainable development.

Justification

- 6.2. The NPPF states that planning policies should seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity including by identifying and mapping habitats and networks. The Environment Act includes a provision for a mandatory requirement for new developments to provide a biodiversity net gain of a minimum of 10%, either on-site, off-site or as a combination of the two.



Looking North-East towards the Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley

- 6.3. The Environment Act also recognises the need to protect what it describes as “Nature Recovery Networks”, joined-up system of places important for wildlife on land and at sea. It is considered important, therefore, to seek to enhance the green infrastructure assets (green spaces, wildlife sites, access routes and historic sites) of the Neighbourhood area where possible.

The [Defra biodiversity metric](#) has been designed to determine and quantify existing biodiversity value in terms of habitats and the consequent measures required to ensure measurable net gain. Net gain involves a post development increase in biodiversity units of 10%. Natural England considers this to be the most appropriate mechanism for determining current ecological value and delivering biodiversity net gain. Ecological assessment by suitably qualified people must utilise this metric on all habitats to determine net gain.

Ecological reports must be consistent with BS 42020 Biodiversity – code of practise for planning and development.

- 6.4. The landscape of the parish has been formed over many centuries by the geology and climate of the natural and human interactions. These influences have resulted in a diverse pattern of land use that, along with the emotionally engaging natural landscape, provide the rural sense of place for the communities in rural areas of the parish. Defined as Woodland and Heathland mosaic in the [Landscape Character Assessment](#), the area is dominated by an east-west orientated, heathland ridge and characterised by varied topography, from flat plateau areas to steeply undulating slopes. Woodland is a key component in the varied and attractive land cover mosaic, giving it a distinctive role in providing a rural setting.
- 6.5. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 identifies on a map the green stepping-stones and, importantly, the unbroken green corridors within the area. It has been informed by the Landscape Character Assessment and biodiversity work undertaken by the AONB unit, WBC and the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC). It should be noted that Local Wildlife Sites boundaries are subject to change and should be obtained from the TVERC.
- 6.6. These are important spaces for the local community for recreational purposes and for visitors to the area, threading through the villages themselves. Access to open spaces is important for well being and mental health. They also provide critical spaces as wildlife refuges and routes for wildlife, such as bats, to prevent species becoming isolated.
- 6.7. The green and blue infrastructure assets of the Parish should be maximised and made properly accessible, where feasible. Development proposals are encouraged to facilitate improved connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces that are used by the community. If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for instance by locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- 6.8. Planning permission should also be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats such as veteran trees and trees of a high conservation value, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. In this instance, substantial compensation as quantified by the Defra biodiversity metric will be considered.

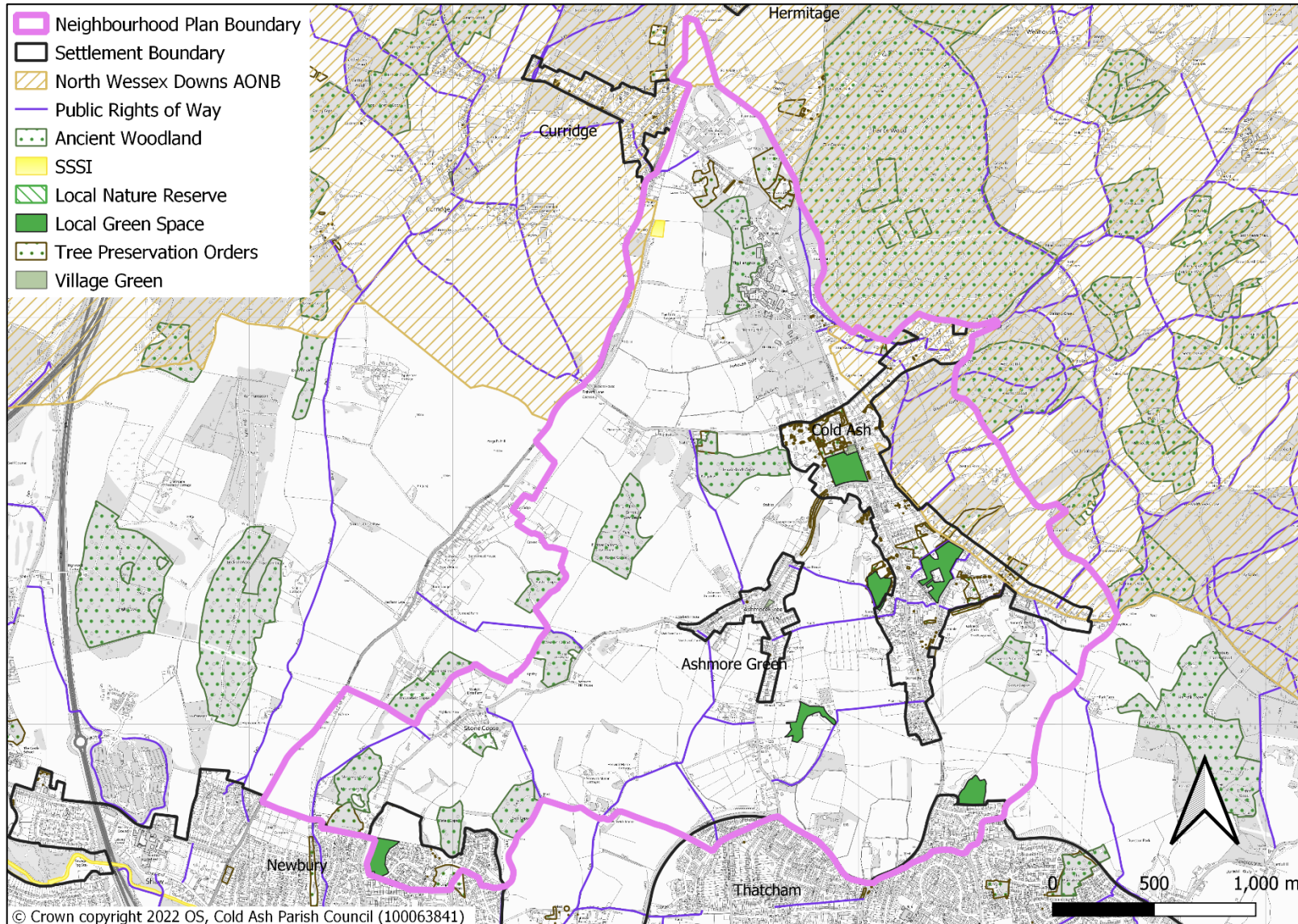


Figure 6.1: Green infrastructure (Parish wide)

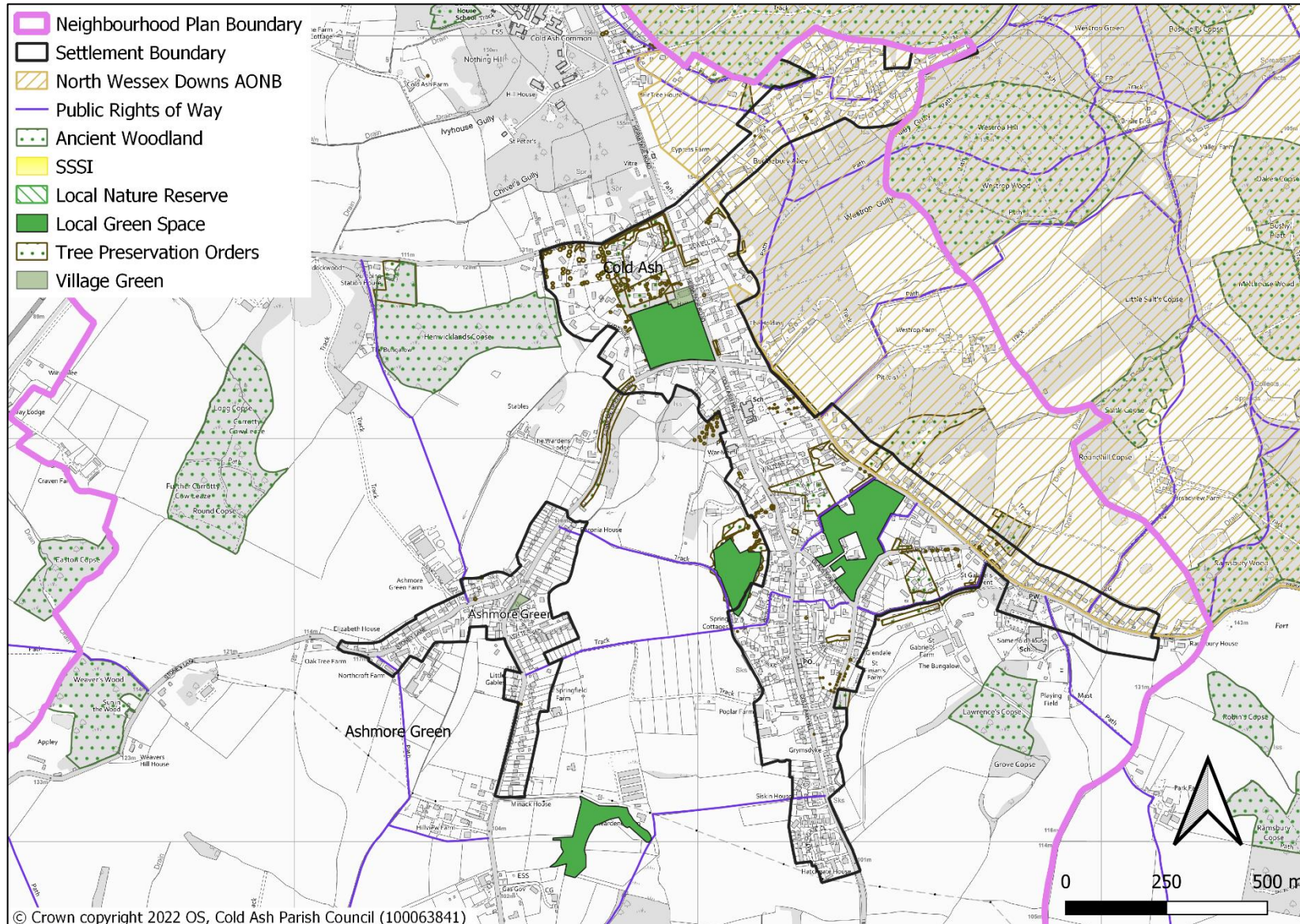


Figure 6.2: Green infrastructure (villages)

Trees and ancient woodland

- 6.9. The parish retains a significant number of trees and woodland – including veteran trees and ancient woodland – many of which are protected through Preservation Orders. As noted in the NPPF at paragraph 131, trees play a vital part in dealing with the effects of climate change and managing pollution. They provide shade, reduce flood risk, enable carbon capture, improve air quality and contribute to the purification of water. They also contribute to local character. While the parish has many existing Tree Protection Orders (TPOs), the Parish Council encourages all residents to come forward to recommend, and even apply for, new TPOs where it would benefit the parish.



Tree Preservation Orders along Ashmore Green Road and Weaver's Wood ancient woodland

- 6.10. Ancient woodland and veteran trees are irreplaceable habitats, which have both heritage and cultural value. Natural England advises that development which would result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient woodland and ancient or notable trees will not be permitted except in wholly exceptional circumstances, as set out in paragraph 180 of the NPPF. They also advise that it is preferable to link up fragmented areas of woodland, which might be divided by development, with green bridges or tunnels. Also, to buffer ancient woodland and notable/veteran trees by leaving an appropriate zone of semi-natural habitat between the development and the woodland, providing wildlife corridors, and balancing new developments and residential areas with green infrastructure and allowing space for trees.

Biodiversity opportunity areas within Cold Ash Parish

- 6.11. Many developments are able to deliver biodiversity gain on-site, which might include the provision of sustainable urban drainage systems. Whilst developments are encouraged to deliver in this way, this is not always possible; equally there may be opportunities to enhance other parts of the Parish in need of attention. It is therefore useful to consider where Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) exist within Cold Ash. BOAs do not represent a statutory designation or a constraint upon development, rather, they are the areas where biodiversity improvements are likely to have the most beneficial results at a strategic scale. There is one BOA that has been identified by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership and recorded within the [TVERC](#). The parish intends to continue to explore BOA opportunities for the Local Green Space sites, and other green space within the parish, with local landowners. Once potential sites are identified, we will aim to establish the necessary baseline data against which any Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) can be tracked and managed. Should we, in time, achieve any BNG, we will aim to establish the appropriate BOA(s) enabling the relevant landowner(s) to sell the BNG.
- 6.12. Within 18 months to two years, the Habitat Recovery Network for Berkshire will be in place. This process is being managed by the Berkshire Nature Partnership.



Restoring lowland meadow and woodland is important for the area

- 6.13. **Bucklebury Plateau** – Covering much of the northern part of the parish, including those areas falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB, this plateau extends between the Kennet Valley and the Pang Valley, incorporating, in the Cold Ash area, small patches of glacial deposits. The BOA extends across the Cold Ash Quarry, Site of Special Scientific Interest, and habitats include lowland meadow and woodland and, to a lesser extent in Cold Ash, heathland. Particular enhancements sought to the area are heathland management and restoration, lowland meadow management, restoration and re-creation, and woodland management. Woodland planting should be restricted to forming links but needs to carefully consider the value and potential of land for other habitats. This chimes with the priorities for the AONB for this type of landscape.
- 6.14. As associated action will be to consider the development of a Biodiversity Action Plan to set out preferred planting and habitat management principles.

Policy CAP6: BIODIVERSITY AND THE NETWORK OF GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE

- 1. Proposals should be designed from the outset to create, conserve, enhance and manage green spaces and connect chains of green infrastructure, as identified on the Policies Maps, delivering a measurable net gain in biodiversity of a minimum 10% using the most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England for local people and wildlife. Development which would result in the loss of ancient woodland, aged trees or veteran trees will not be supported unless there are wholly exceptional reasons as envisaged in the NPPF and a suitable compensation strategy exists.**
- 2. Subject to their scale, nature and location, proposals for development must be supported by a biodiversity appraisal, which must demonstrate how negative impacts would be minimised, mitigated and biodiversity net gain achieved.**
- 3. Proposals that seek to improve the connectivity between wildlife areas and green spaces will be encouraged in order to enhance the green infrastructure of the Neighbourhood area. In particular, proposals that support the enhancement and management of the identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas will be supported. Conversely, proposals which threaten to damage such connectivity will be strongly resisted.**
- 4. The planting of additional native species trees and/ or continuous hedgerows to provide wildlife corridors and to offset the effects of air pollution and to provide cooling and shelter for people as well as a habitat for wildlife will be supported.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS17, CS18; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 174, 175, 176, 179, 180

Managing the environmental impact of development

Purpose

6.15. This policy seeks to ensure that development proposals have considered how they can enhance the natural environment – both flora and fauna – including the features of it that are particularly distinctive to Cold Ash. This is particularly important in the context of the Parish being located within the setting of the North Wessex Downs AONB. It also seeks to ensure that development proposals contribute to the provision of adequate open space.



Fishers Lane to Selsmore Common

Justification

6.16. The NPPF, at para 180, stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment including requiring net gain in biodiversity. The landscape of the parish comprises:

- generously scaled rolling landscape with some pronounced wooded ridges;
- a complex pattern of landscape, dominated by woodland; coniferous, or mixed with beech and birch;
- pastures;
- heathland and woodland habitats – deciduous and mixed woodland to pasture and arable, some of which is ancient;
- linear settlements within wooded areas; clustered farmsteads and private residences;
- road pattern with complex winding sunken lanes (see 'Sunken lanes') with banks and hedgerows; and
- a comprehensive network of Public Rights of way (see Public Rights of Way), including a network of bridleways

6.17. The area abounds with natural drains, issues and sinks, all of which help to ensure natural drainage and control the run-off of excessive rainfall. These are particularly evident in the local gaps between Cold Ash and the neighbouring parishes and are marked on larger scale Ordnance Survey maps. Further strategic SuDS sites should be sought.

6.18. There are many natural assets within in the parish (Table 6.2), some of which are afforded a level of statutory protection.

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
North Wessex Downs AONB	The north-eastern part of the parish lies within the AONB. The remainder of the parish contributes to the setting of the AONB.	Protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Cold Ash Quarry SSSI – a 0.4-hectare Geological Conservation Review site. The quarry is unique in Britain for the collection of fossil plants and insects which occur in a layer of silt and clay within the Reading Beds.	An area of particular interest to science due to the rare species of fauna or flora it contains - or even important geological or physiological features that may lie in its boundaries. Owners <i>must</i> manage the site appropriately to conserve its special features.
Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	11 sites in the Parish: SU46Z01 Messenger's Copse SU46Z03 Yate's Copse SU46Z04 Stone Copse SU46Z05 Sett Copse SU46Z06 Weaver's Wood SU46Z08 Carrotty Cow Leaze/Round Copse SU56E01 Cleardene Farm Wood SU56E04 Lawrence's Copse SU57A02 The Hangings SU57A05 New Farm Gully SU46Z01 Messenger's Copse Proposed Extension	While they have no direct legal protection, Local Wildlife Sites are recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which gives them some protection from being developed.
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNR)	The TVERC are currently reviewing road verges that are important for wildlife in West Berkshire.	They are not non-statutory sites but are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. 20% of the Road Verge Nature Reserves

Designation	Sites	Level of protection
	See Figure 6.3.	(RVNR) across the whole region were classified as high risk.
Ancient woodland	<p>Areas of ancient woodland, as shown in Figure 6.4:</p> <p>Big Copse / Round Copse</p> <p>Hardwick Copse</p> <p>Lawrence's Copse SU56E04</p> <p>Messengers Copse SU46Z01</p> <p>Sett Copse SU46Z05</p> <p>Stone Copse SU46Z04</p> <p>The Hangings SU57A02</p> <p>Weavers' Wood SU46Z06</p> <p>Yates' Copse SU46Z03</p>	Protected landscape within the NPPF. See advice note: Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions
Local Green Spaces	As set out in Policy CAP9 (Local Green Space)	Protected to the level of Green Belt, once designated.
Priority habitats	See Figure 6.5	Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

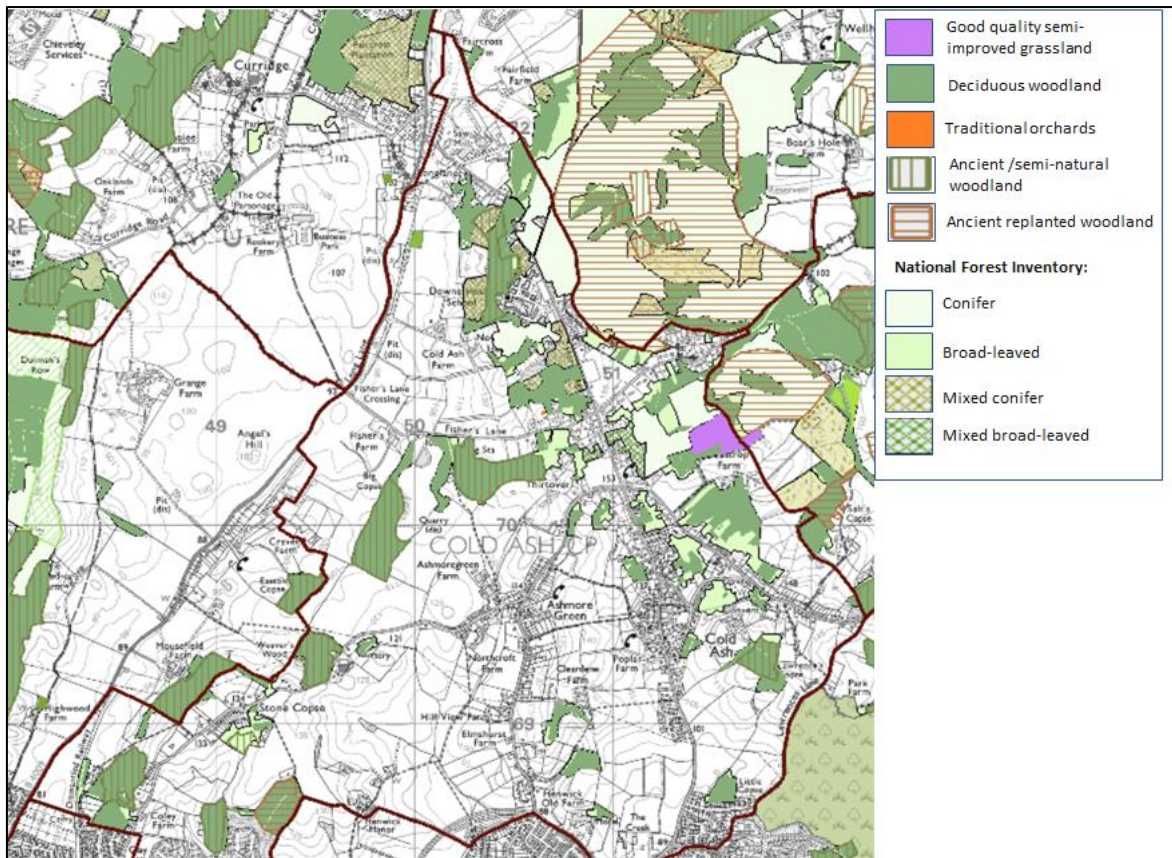


Figure 6.3: Priority habitats in Cold Ash Parish (Source: Magic Map, Defra)



Looking from Drove Lane into Fence Wood

- 6.19. Further distinctive natural features particular to Cold Ash Parish that are not protected, yet provide vital habitats for flora and fauna, include veteran and mature trees and established woodland, hedgerows, mature planted gardens, agricultural and grazing land and small waterways. Such features form vital corridors for many animals and birds, especially those migrating, to safely navigate around their domains.
- 6.20. **Trees, woodland, and hedgerows:** These are dominant natural feature in this area and help to maintain the rural nature of the parish. The gravel plateau, for instance, is very acidic, and has created a typical landscape of Pine and Birch. The area along and round Hermitage Road is densely

treed and provides a contrast to the more open Oak dominated landscape of the clay soils that surround The Ridge. The main tree species are Ash, throughout the parish; Beech in Ashmore Green Road; Oak in Ashmore Green Road, Bucklebury Alley, Collaroy Road, Stoney Lane and The Ridge; Hornbeam in Stoney Lane; Scots Pine at Downe House and on Hermitage Road and Slanting Hill; and the occasional Sweet Chestnut and Cherry. Hedgerow species found locally include Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Beech.

- 6.21. These features provide important habitats and green corridors for the movement of a wide variety of wildlife: Dormice, Badger, Fox, Hedgehog, Muntjac and Roe Deer can often be seen, as well as Rabbits, Grey Squirrels and the occasional Weasel and Stoat. Adders, Grass Snakes and Slow Worms can also be observed in certain parts. It is critical, therefore, that the interconnectivity between trees and hedgerows is maintained.
- 6.22. It is noticeable that the older parts of the villages are more wooded and have larger and more mature species than the newer parts. This arises largely from the earlier dates of planting and the larger gardens usually associated with the older properties. This creates a different character from the newer areas where the houses are more visible and where cypresses tend to dominate the vegetation.
- 6.23. The smaller gardens and open space areas mean that most of the native trees such as Oak, Ash and Beech cannot be established, especially on the clay areas where set distances have to be maintained to avoid root damage to properties. The lack of large trees could have an adverse effect on the parish if sufficient open space is not provided in new developments to allow for planting larger trees. For these reasons, it is essential that a significant proportion of the mature trees in the parish be protected. There has been limited use of Tree Preservation Orders to date; this is something that will be rectified as part of this planning process.
- 6.24. **Small waterways and ponds:** Although there are no permanent streams or rivers, small waterways run most of the year. The Environment Agency advises that a suitable buffer strip is retained along the banks of these waterways to protect their corridors, surrounding habitats and encourage their use as a wildlife corridor. The use of leaky dams and woody debris to retain water up stream is also advisable. These waterways provide a suitable environment for frogs and toads, which also make use of garden ponds.
- 6.25. Ponds also provide an important habitat locally, supporting a range of freshwater species. WBC has a district licence enabling them to closely study Great Crested Newts, which are found across the area. This licence will increase the numbers of ponds in the district and the Newts terrestrial habitat connectivity.

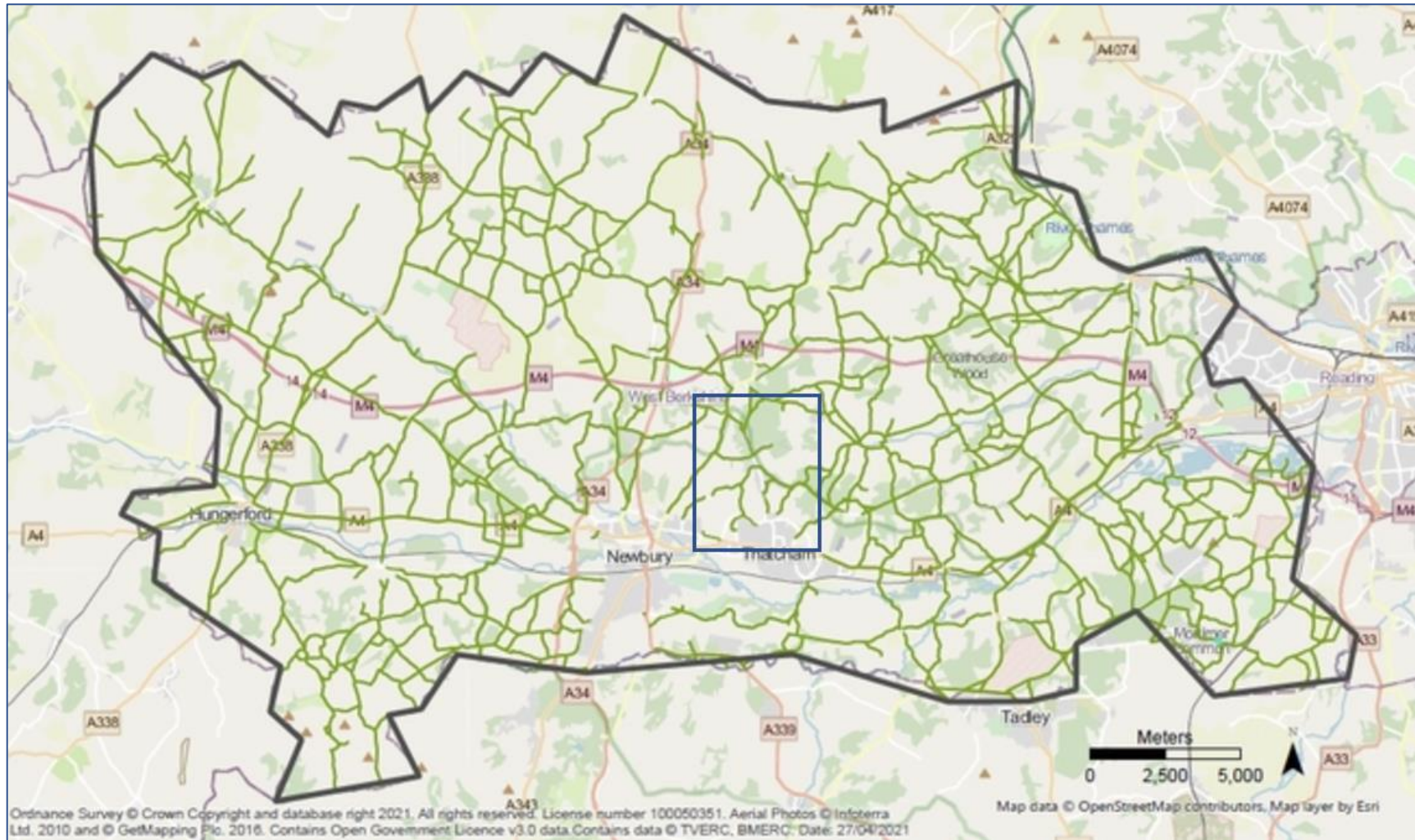


Figure 6.4: Roadside Nature Reserves in West Berkshire, with Cold Ash highlighted (source: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT)) – source: <https://www.bbowl.org.uk/west-berkshire-wild-verges> - it is recommended that the BBOWT is engaged for up-to-date mapping.



Small waterways are a feature of the landscape; Looking north from Footpath 8 - red kite in flight

- 6.26. **Ancient turf and road verges:** St Mark's Churchyard retains an area of ancient turf with its rare wildflowers. A wide selection of wildflowers can also be found along the road verges, particularly where these are uncut.
- 6.27. Each of the features also supports the wide variety of birds found in the parish. Sightings include Green and Greater Spotted Woodpeckers, various finches, Jays, Herons, Magpies, Skylarks, Sparrow Hawks, Buzzards, migrating Thrushes such as Fieldfare and Redwing, and the re-introduced Red Kite. Night birds include tawny and barn owls. Ground nesting birds are found in the area too and are often the most affected by development.
- 6.28. Development proposals are expected to retain, protect, and enhance both the protected habitats and natural features that are important to Cold Ash. Where appropriate they should include a landscape and ecological management plan including a list of trees and shrubs to be planted to ensure the rural and green character of the parish is enhanced and which should involve the planting of new trees and hedgerows of native and locally sourced species in gardens, communal areas or on roadsides where practical.

POLICY CAP7: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENT

Development proposals should maintain and, where practicable, enhance the natural environment, landscape character, and the rural setting of the parish. This includes both designated sites and important landscape features including woodland, trees, hedgerows, waterways, verges and ponds. Proposals should demonstrate that they have addressed the following matters, as appropriate to their scale, nature and location:

- a. The guidance and advice contained in the [Quality Design West Berkshire SPD](#), the [North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan](#), and the West Berkshire Council Landscape Character Assessment for the Cold Ash woodland and lowland meadow landscape;
- b. Existing natural features, including grass verges, ditches, ponds and open spaces should be conserved and enhanced in order to improve the habitat for wildlife and to maintain the rural beauty of the area;
- c. Providing wildlife-friendly features, for instance hedgehog holes in new residential fencing and bird and bat nesting boxes;

Trees, hedgerows and planting

- d. Existing trees shall be retained unless sufficient evidence is provided (in the form of a Tree Survey or Arboricultural Assessment) to justify their removal. Where there is an unavoidable loss of trees on site, replacement trees will be required to be planted on site at the rate of three trees for every one lost.**
- e. Proposals which include additional native tree or woodland planting will be supported, in particular where this enables public access;**
- f. Development that would result in the loss of, or the deterioration in the quality of, hedgerows will not be supported, with the exception of removal for vehicular access; in this case, the access should include trees at either end of the retained hedgerow to aid wildlife to cross overhead from crown to crown;**
- g. The use of non-native evergreen plants (such as laurel and leylandii) is discouraged.**

Incorporate open space that is:

- h. in usable parcels of land and not fragmented and that design layout does not enable land grab post development.**
- i. safe, easily accessible and not severed by any physical barrier.**
- j. is accessible to the general public.**
- k. creates a safe environment considering lighting and layout.**
- l. complemented by high quality landscaping schemes.**

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS14, CS17; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 170 to 182

Iconic views

Purpose

6.29. This policy details a series of views in and across the parish, which have been identified by the community as being important to safeguard from inappropriate development. This is because they are considered to incorporate locally important features, such as landscape and historic features that are characteristic of the Parish.

Justification

6.30. Views and viewpoints are important; they provide a sense of place to local people, enabling enjoyment and appreciation of the features of an area. They can also act as way markers, where they take in notable features or historic assets.



View 6 from Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common

6.31. Development in the parish has been focussed on the centre because of the topography and nature of the landscape. Cold Ash has some of the highest points in Berkshire and parishioners are afforded views of both the parish and its villages, as well as longer-distance views to the four counties beyond, and this is greatly valued. Any development that breaks up the aesthetic qualities of the landscape, its flowing patterns and colours, would have a major detrimental impact.

6.32. The engagement process revealed nine favourite views that hold particular local significance and which should be safeguarded from detrimental development. Full details of the views, including photographs and text explaining why they are special, are included in Appendix B. A map, illustrating the views, is shown in Figure 6.5. The views, all from publicly accessible points, are:

1. From St Mark's Churchyard - south and west
2. From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Gulley
3. From footpath 15 looking SW, towards Newbury
4. Looking NE towards Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley
5. From St Finian's Farm towards Watership Down
6. From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common
7. From Footpath 15 looking south
8. From Footpath 16 looking south
9. From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill

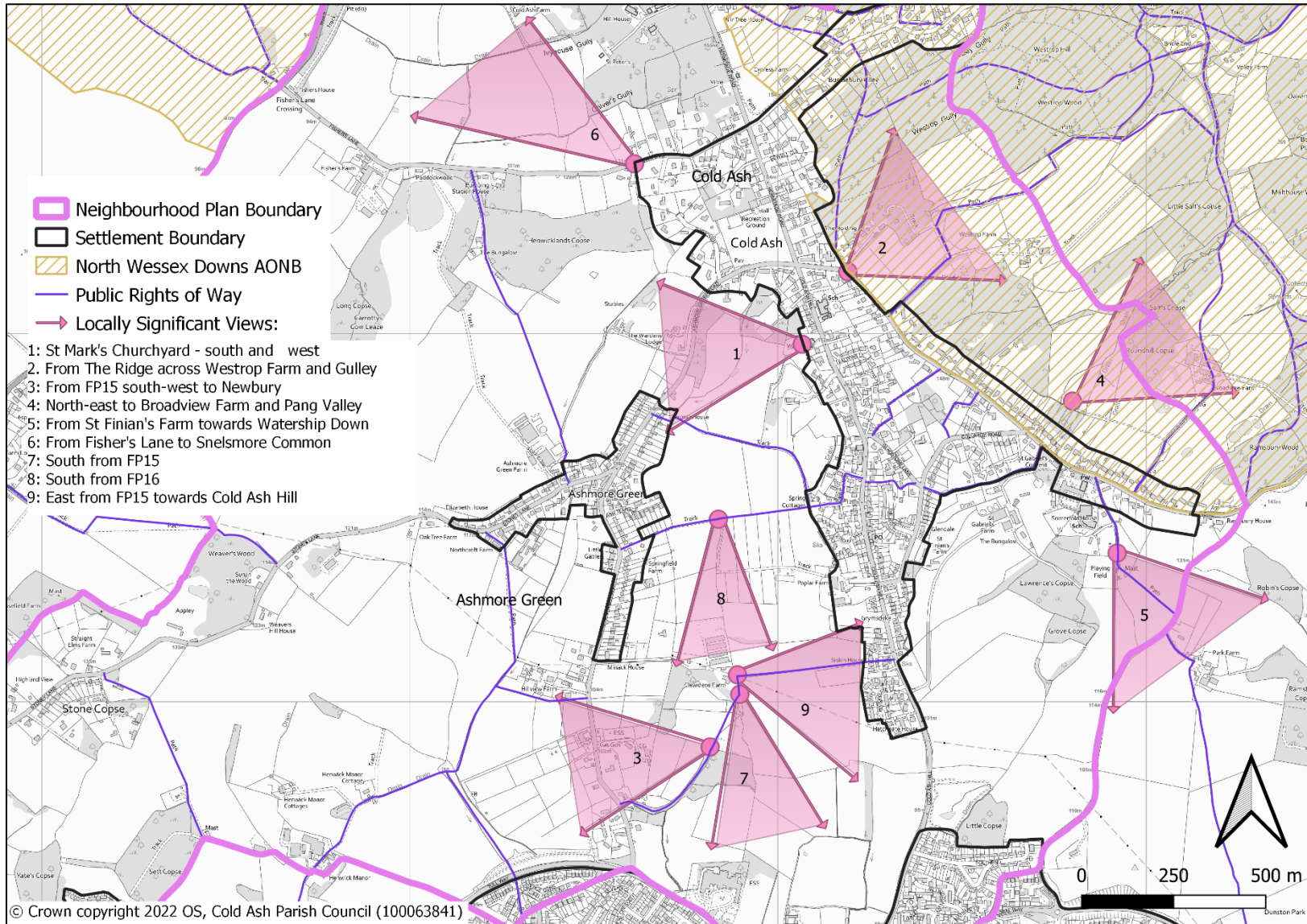


Figure 6.5: Map showing the location of the iconic views relating to Policy CAP8

- 6.33. Policy CAP8 requires that development proposals should be designed in a way that does not significantly harm the iconic view or views concerned, identified from publicly accessible locations. It attempts to provide the flexibility required for the wide range of development proposals which will come forward within the Plan period.
- 6.34. It should be noted that the NDP policy is only relevant to sites within the neighbourhood boundary. Some of the views extend beyond this boundary, as illustrates on Figure 6.5, and in these cases the Parish Council will liaise with neighbouring parishes to consider if there is support to safeguard the views in those part of the neighbouring parishes.
- 6.35. In the majority of cases proposals will be of a minor nature and will have little or no effect on the identified views. In circumstances where the proposed development would be likely to have an impact on any identified key view, the planning application concerned should be accompanied by a landscape and visual impact assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development proposed. Any appropriate mitigation measures – for instance retaining view corridors or glimpses, or considering the impact of building height, scale and colour - should be incorporated within the design of the development proposed and captured in the assessment.

POLICY CAP8: ICONIC VIEWS

Development should be located and designed in a way that does not significantly harm the iconic view or views concerned, identified from publicly accessible locations. Proposals will not be supported if potential impacts on landscape cannot be adequately mitigated through design and landscaping. Particular sensitivity should be shown for the iconic views, as listed below and identified on Figure 6.5:

- 1. From St Mark's Churchyard - south and west**
- 2. From The Ridge across Westrop Farm and Gulley**
- 3. From footpath 15 looking SW, towards Newbury**
- 4. Looking NE towards Broadview Farm and the Pang Valley**
- 5. From St Finian's Farm towards Watership Down**
- 6. From Fishers Lane to Snelsmore Common**
- 7. From Footpath 15 looking south**
- 8. From Footpath 16 looking south**
- 9. From footpath 15 looking east, towards Cold Ash Hill**

Development proposals that could affect the above Iconic Views should be supported by a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment that is proportionate to the scale of the development.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: ADP5, CS19; Local Plan Review: SP7, SP8, SP9; NPPF: 130

Local Green Spaces

Purpose

6.36. Protecting green spaces was revealed as a top priority for residents in the engagement process for the CAPNDP. This policy seeks to designate a series of Local Green Spaces that are demonstrably special, so that they can be safeguarded from inappropriate development.

Justification

6.37. Under the NPPF, Neighbourhood Plans can designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to them. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances. Paragraph 102 of the NPPF says that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.



Woodland Leaves Local Green Space

6.38. The following six areas (shown on Figure 6.6 and described and mapped in greater detail in Appendix C) are considered to fulfil all of the criteria of the NPPF:

1. Cleredene Wood
2. Wildlife Allotment Garden
3. Woodland Leaves
4. Little Copse
5. Hermitage Road Recreation Ground
6. Waller Drive Recreation Park

POLICY CAP9: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following six green spaces, as shown on Figure 6.6 and defined in Appendix C, are designated as Local Green Spaces:

1. Cleredene Wood
2. Wildlife Allotment Garden
3. Woodland Leaves
4. Little Copse
5. Hermitage Road Recreation Ground
6. Waller Drive Recreation Park

Development proposals within the designated local green space will be consistent with national policy for Green Belt.

Conformity Ref: CAPNDP Objectives: 2; Adopted Core Strategy: CS18; Local Plan Review: SP10, SP11; NPPF: 101 to 103, 137 to 151

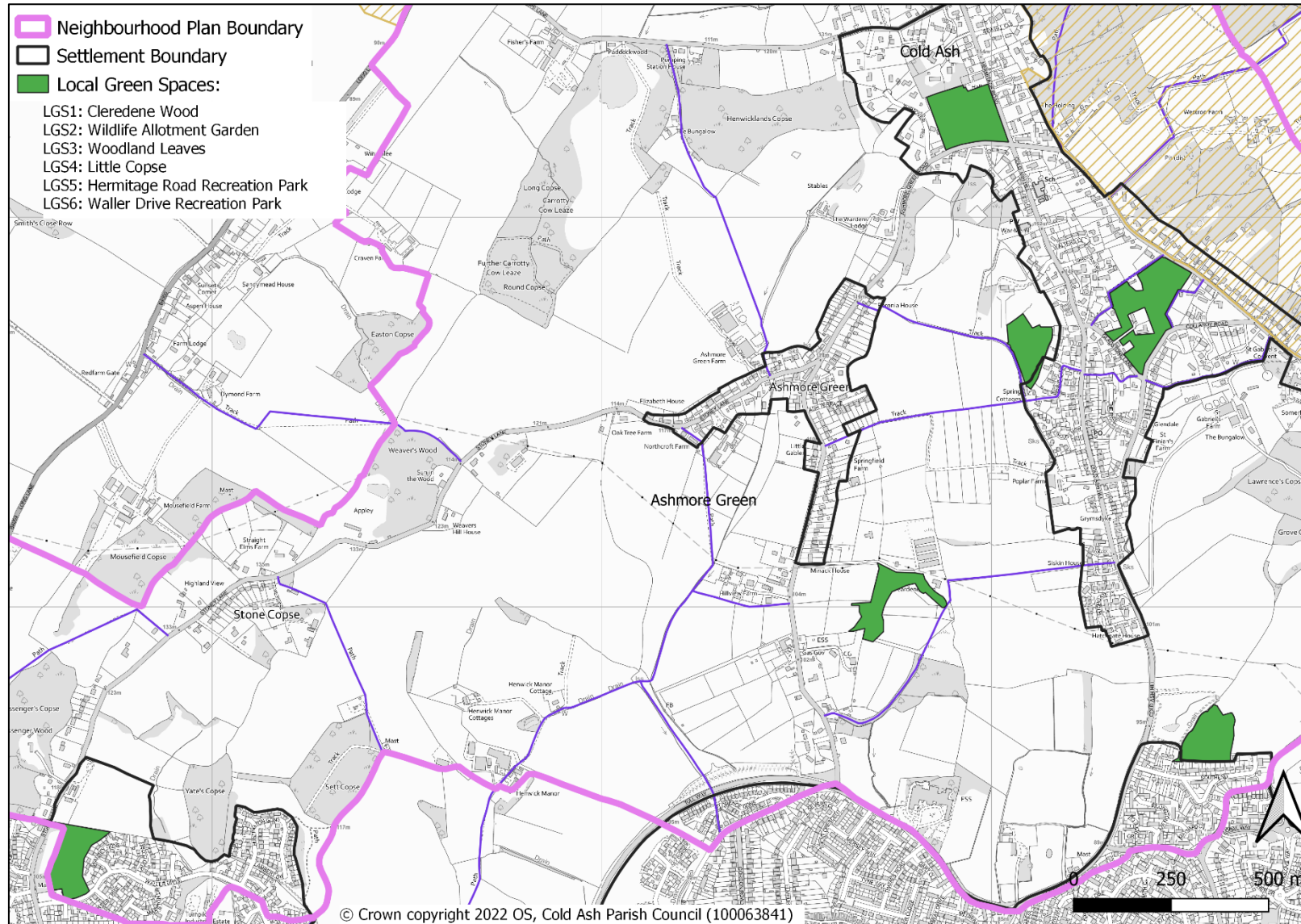


Figure 6.6: Local Green Spaces

Dark skies

Purpose

6.39. Cold Ash, being one of the higher parts of West Berkshire (it is approximately 150 meters above sea level) and a predominantly rural parish, provides an ideal location from which to enjoy dark skies and naturally lends itself to stargazing. The dark skies support both nocturnal and diurnal wildlife and provide enjoyment for parishioners. Policy CAP10 seeks to ensure that development does not encroach on this valued aspect of parish.

Justification

6.40. Cold Ash is still largely unlit, with very few streetlights outside the main villages. The dark night skies are predominantly unspoilt, and it is important that they are kept that way. An additional consideration is that parts of Cold Ash, to the north and east, lie within the North Wessex Downs AONB and light spill is detrimental to this area of outstanding natural beauty and to its wildlife. The AONB supports dark skies, seeking to be a place where a sense of remoteness and tranquillity predominates and where vast night skies can thrill the eye, unaffected by light pollution

6.41. The benefits derived from the prevention of light pollution include:

- Enjoyment and appreciation – improving quality of life and providing creative inspiration
- Health – promoting better sleep patterns and reducing stress
- Wildlife – supporting a more natural environment for both nocturnal and diurnal animals
- Energy efficiency – reducing wastage from unnecessary or excessive lighting, thus reducing the parish's carbon footprint.
- The Parish Council is working with the Newbury Astronomical Society to undertake a star count in the parish. It will add additional detail to the Countryside Charity's (CPRE) existing data on dark skies, which reveals that Cold Ash Parish affords some of the darkest skies in the wider region (Figure 6.7).

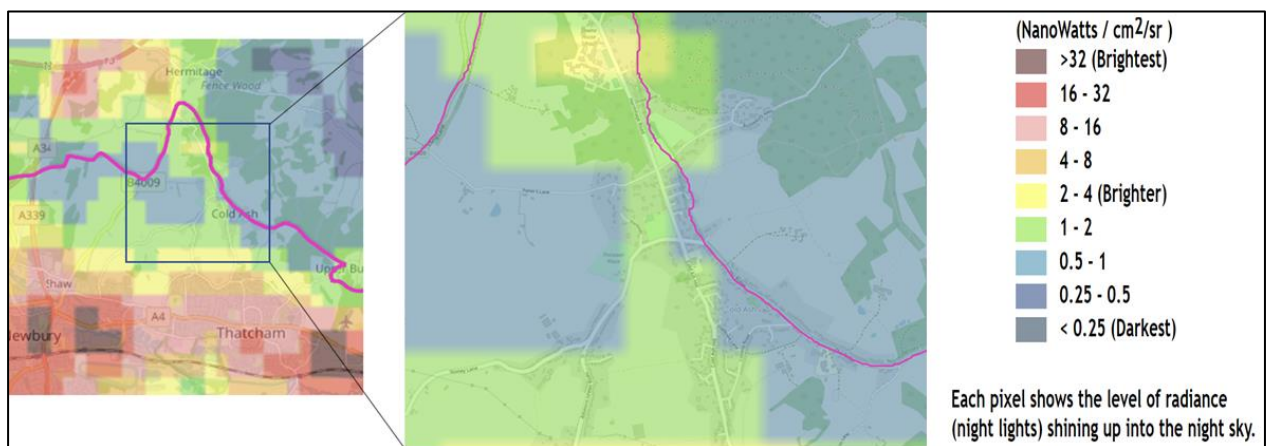


Figure 6.7: Map showing levels of radiance for Cold Ash Parish (source: CPRE, www.nightblight.cpre.org.uk)

- 6.42. The Steering Group has identified a dark sky zone for the parish (Figure 6.8), based on the CPRE mapping, but broadening it slightly to assist in retaining – and where possible – reversing light pollution. This area should be safeguarded from superfluous night lights.
- 6.43. The creation of artificial light is a factor that threatens the survival of protected and threatened local wildlife. In the case of security and other outside lighting on private and public premises, including floodlighting, encouragement will be given to ensure that it is neighbourly in its use:
- lighting should be deflected downwards rather than outwards or upwards and should be switched off after midnight at the latest; and
 - any movement-sensitive triggers should be regulated to reduce illumination periods to a minimum.
- 6.44. These guidelines should be applied to all public premises and will be strongly encouraged on private premises by ensuring that businesses and householders are aware of the adverse effects of outside lighting on the environment and their neighbours. The Parish Council will continually seek to inform and educate businesses and householders to respect the Parish’s dark skies policy.

POLICY CAP10: DARK SKIES

Development should not detract from the area identified as a ‘dark sky zone’ within the Parish, shown on Figure 6.8. Within this zone, proposals for development will be supported where it is demonstrated that, if external lighting is required, it protects the night sky from light pollution, where:

- a. the lighting is necessary for operational, safety or security reasons**
- b. any light spillage beyond the application site is eliminated, or reduced by measures such as timing and proximity controls, orientation, screening, shielding or glazing**
- c. there is no adverse impact on nearby residential properties, wildlife, local heritage assets or the wider landscape**
- d. the guidance on lighting provided in the [Institution of Lighting Professionals \(ILP\) Guidance Note GN01: The Reduction of Obtrusive Light](#) (and any subsequent revisions) is adhered to. Proposals should consider carefully, and provide details of, the light source and intensity being used, the luminaire design, height, and angle, adding baffles and cut-off shields where required, and details of control mechanisms to dim or switch off lighting schemes when not required. Where appropriate, lights should be controlled by passive infrared detectors so that they only come on when needed.**