

Biodiversity Corridors Policy –

Review of Walberton Neighbourhood Plan

Biodiversity Corridors

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) has taken account of the NPPF and the Arun Local Plan where they encourage parishes to safeguard components of the natural environment. It is important that Neighbourhood Plans should, where necessary, protect important habitats; it is just as important that individual habitats are not isolated but there should be connectivity so that wildlife can spread and migrate through the countryside. This aspect is of particular importance in response to Climate Change.

Accordingly, the Review of the Walberton Neighbourhood Plan has led to the adoption of new policies to identify and protect biodiversity corridors from harmful developments. This illustrated report identifies and describes key wildlife links which must be recognised and protected as sustainable development plans are being considered to ensure the structure and connectivity of the natural environment is not compromised.

Walberton Parish is floristically rich and has a range of different habitats which include extensive ancient woodlands and smaller isolated remnants of ancient woodland; mixed farmland including a network of historic hedgerows; old parkland; ancient/veteran trees; and a series of chalk streams that flow south into watercourses through wet pastures.

The identification of the Corridors

To identify the corridors, the main habitats have been recognised and are well illustrated on a habitats map produced for the Parish Council by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC). By recorded information, local knowledge, aerial photographs, habitat maps and local inspections, the most important biodiversity corridors have been identified and have been superimposed on the SBRC habitat map.

Nationally, a leading authority on this work is the Centre for Biological Diversity which strongly supports the identification of corridors in Neighbourhood Plans. It recommends that normally the corridors should be no less than 30 metres in width: in effect that means that no development would be supported within 15 metres of the centre of the corridor. However, harm can be caused to the corridor further afield – e.g. artificial lighting, contaminated drainage into the feature or the introduction of high levels of noise.

The prime importance of biodiversity corridors is in their function in connecting important habitats and providing cover for animals and flora migrating through the environment. The corridor is not necessarily itself biologically rich.

A spin-off has been the opportunity to highlight a network of “chalk streams” crossing the parish, carrying surface water from the chalk downs to eventually drain into the River Arun catchment. Arun DC has identified chalk streams as a priority habitat for protection in its Local Plan. Some of the chalk streams feature in the identification of corridors. Neighbouring parishes have embarked on a similar path and, in

due course, these corridors will have a wide perspective as the various Neighbourhood Plans complement and link with each other.

Description of the Corridors

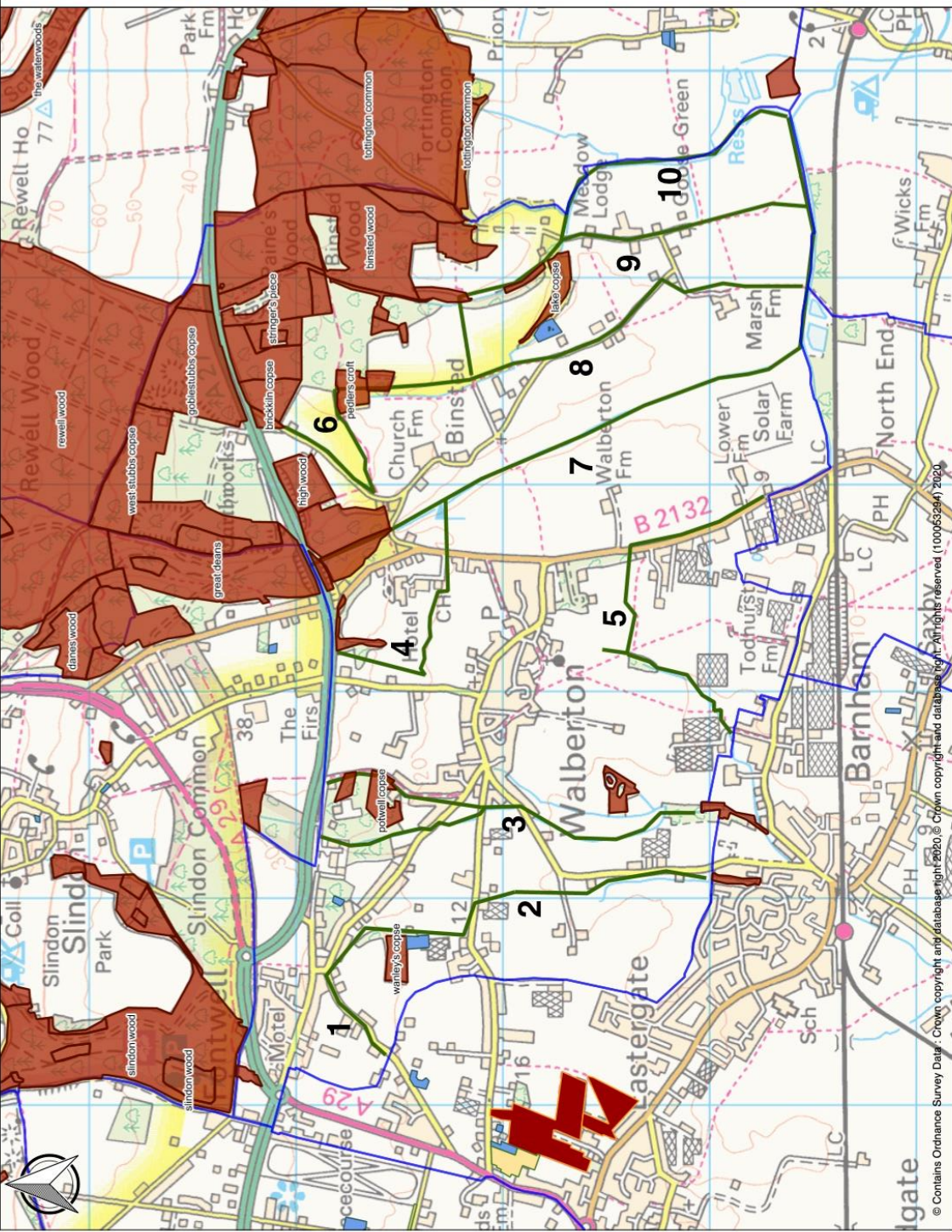
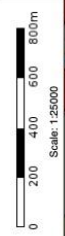
The corridors are described in the following list: the numbers refer to the attached map; in each case there is a brief description of the corridor and a description as its function as a link between habitats.

A number of the corridors are chalk streams and other watercourses, some are important hedgerows, and some are prominent lines of mature trees – all forming a network. Insects, birds and small mammals take advantage of them to travel safely from one habitat to another; some are also important feeding areas: e.g. swallows and bats use them as routes and feeding areas with the abundant insect populations.

Biodiversity corridors

Walberton CP

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Date: 24/02/2020



Traditional Orchards HAP

- Excellent
- Good
- n/a
- Poor

Ancient Woodlands



Parish



Biodiversity Corridors



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The list broadly reads from west to east:

1. Wandleys Lane: The lane is lined with mature oaks and connects with Ash Beds ancient woodland in Slindon parish and provides a continuous route past the mature oaks on Woodfield Farm, to Barnham and the area around Eastergate Church. It is particularly important for the rare Barbastelle bats from the major maternity colony in Slindon.



Wandleys Lane – Corridor 1

2. Wandleys Copse: This chalk stream emerges behind the houses in Wandleys Lane, flows past the Fontwell Copse remnant ancient woodland – rich in ancient woodland plant indicators and dormice. The stream passes close to open water and across farmland with diverse grassland and ponds – with watercress, wild iris and kingcups – with many species of bats having been recorded. The ponds support a range of reptile species and amphibia.



Wandleys Copse – Corridor 2



Walberton Pond – Corridor 2

3. Copse Lane chalk streams: several streams come together as the streams emerge from areas of ancient woodland and old coppice near Clear Springs Farm and Copse Lane, with a number of small ponds, where kingfishers have been recorded. Barbastelle Bats use this as an unlit crossing of the A27 trunk road near Potwell Copse. The streams cross Eastergate Lane at Walberton Green and are associated with hedgerows and trees along their banks and connect with Stemps Wood woodland fishery and Nunny Copse. The chalk stream flows south into an important wildlife habitat south of Barnham Station.



Choller Stream – Corridor 3

4. Avisford Park stream and ponds: A north/south line of trees and woodland connect into a stream running west/east through four ephemeral ponds providing breeding habitats for birds, insects and amphibia – including Great Crested Newts. All within Avisford Park Golf Club.

5. St Mary's Church and Walberton Park: a natural woodland corridor from St Mary's Churchyard, Walberton Park and a major stream down the side of woodland; this links with a dominant shaw (woodland belt) alongside Yapton Lane. The stream connects southwest to meet the previous corridor no. 4. There is a large well documented colony of soprano pipistrelle bats in the church roof. A rich environment running through intensive arable cultivation.



Woodland shaw, west side of Yapton Lane – Corridor 5

6. Scotland Lane (west) and Binsted Lane(north): Binsted Lane here forms a tree tunnel; it passes close to chalk fed Sandy Hole Pond and it joins a hedgerow along the north side of Scotland Lane. They are both important links between two blocks of ancient woodland.

7. Binsted Rife Valley: this chalk stream emerges from Hundred House Copse into open farmland where it forms a deep valley through the golf course and pasture land. A wet valley with many insects and feeding area for bats and birds, known as a “flushed fen” habitat. It flows south to connect with the wet grazing meadows of Marsh Farm.



Binsted Valley – Corridor 7

8. Copythorn West Hedge: an ancient north/south hedgerow connecting Pedlar’s Croft on the edge of Binsted Woods ancient woodland passing to the east of Binsted Nursery, where it connects with Lake Copse to the east, and to the hedges along Binsted Lane and then south along streams through Marsh Farm to the wet grazing meadows.

9. Lake Copse Connections: at the rear of Binsted Nursery, a replanted hedgerow (by volunteers) connects corridor no. 8 with Binsted Woods at Spinning Wheel Copse, Lake Copse and The Shaw; it then connects in to the wet woodlands by Manor House, then down Binsted Lane East and Hoe Lane sunken footpath.



Hoe Lane, Binsted – Corridor 9

10. South of Manor House: forming the eastern boundary of the parish. a deep wet and wide valley connects the ancient Binsted Woods with the wet unimproved grazing land along the southern boundary of the parish.

11. Little Tortington Stream: corridors 7,8, 9, and 10 all connect into this wet valley which flows to the east and in due course becomes a direct tributary of the River Arun. New ponds and woodland have been established along the other side of the southern parish boundary.