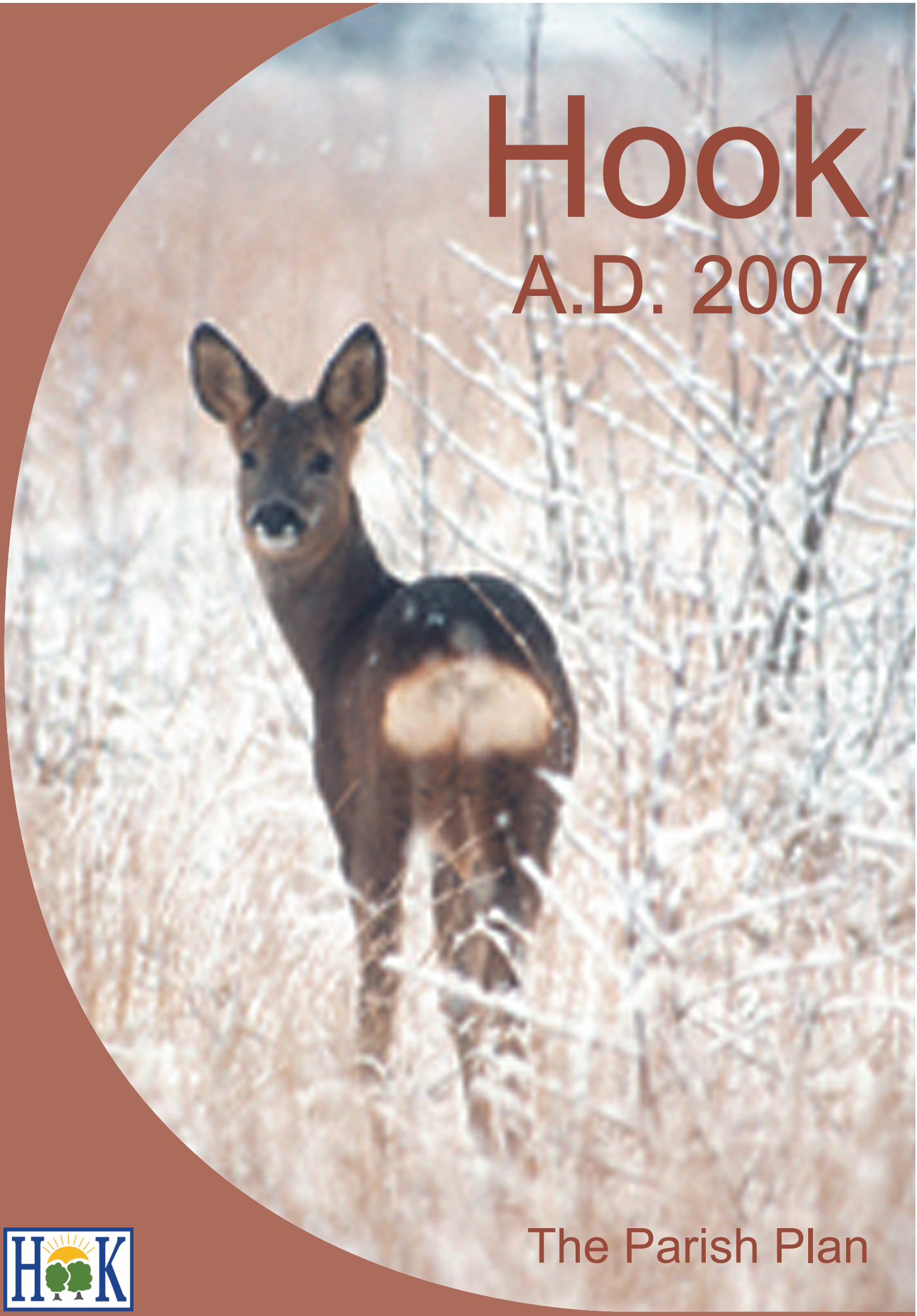
Hook

A.D. 2007



The Parish Plan

The Approach From Reading

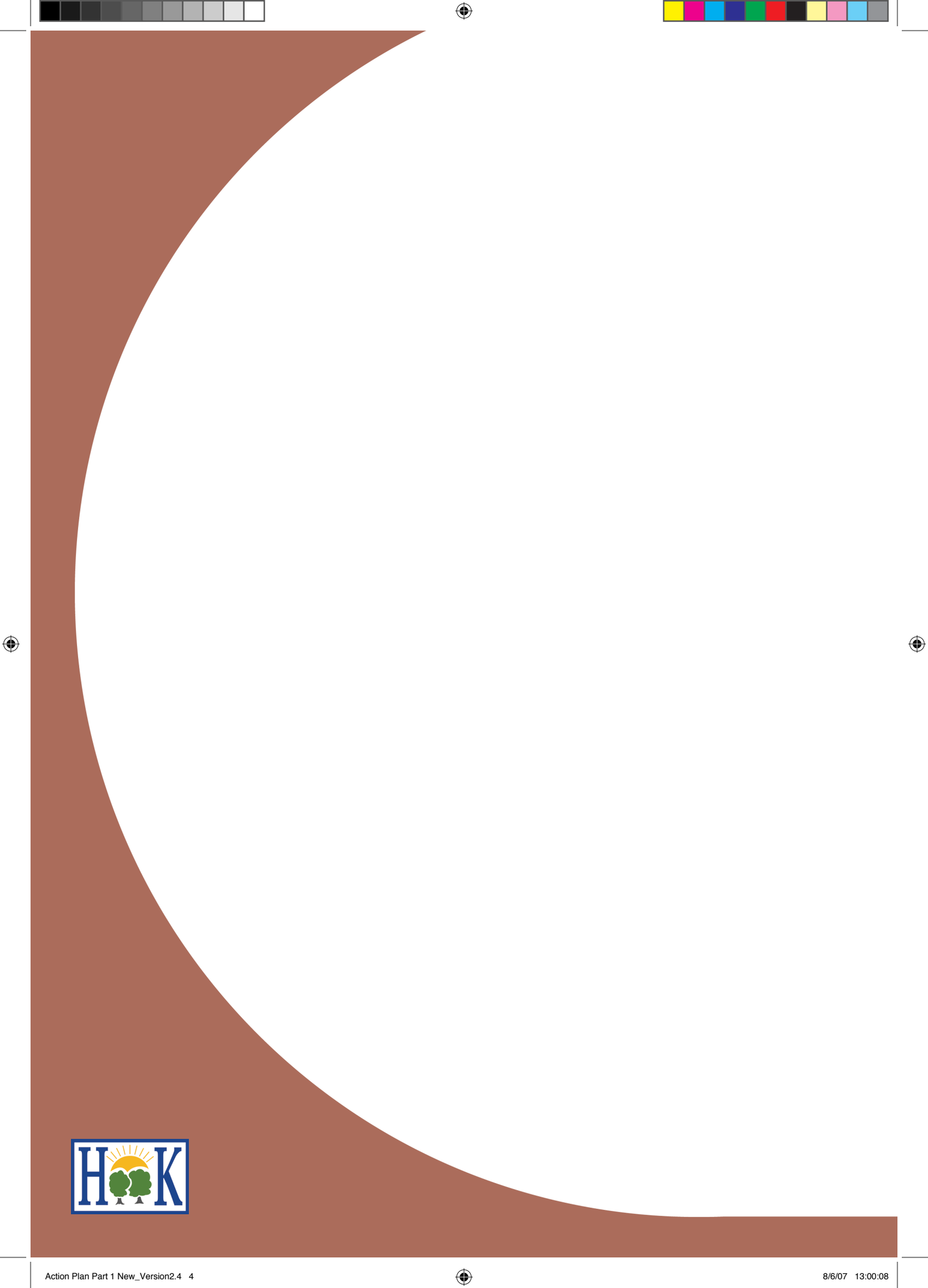
Foreword

The Parish of Hook

Today we live in a typical example of a non-urban Hampshire Parish that is set in a unique country landscape, with a populated area that contains attractive and comfortable housing. During past periods of rapid expansion, Hook only just maintained what many have not, a “sustainable community.”

It is our responsibility to ensure, that in the future, we preserve the special qualities of Hook for future generations.

The Hook Parish Plan presents a set of guidelines, as a blueprint, to maintaining sustainability in the future.



Acknowledgements

Hook Parish would like to thank:

A. The residents of Hook who completed questionnaires, took part in workshops and meetings, photographed the Parish, and contributed their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways

B. NOP World for donating the coding of the questionnaires, the data entry and the data processing of the responses

C. Hart District Council for their help and advice

D. In particular we are very grateful for the following assistance:

Design and Layout by Beverley Walter of Orange Ink
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Photography by Steve Bright
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Printed by Wizard Print
01256 769111

References
The following documents were used in the production of this plan, and are listed for those who may wish to refer to the original text for greater detail on the appropriate topic.

The South East Plan – SEERA
A Biodiversity Plan for Hook Parish – Hampshire Wildlife Trust
Hook Parish Questionnaire and Analysis – NOP World
Newnham, a History of the Parish – Nigel Bell

Cover picture
Deer in the Snow on Bartley Heath – Photograph by Steve Bright

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Biodiversity Action Plans For Hook

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Introduction

Hook Through the Years

Although there is evidence of Roman occupation in Hook, the earliest mention found so far in historical documents was in relation to a land dispute in 1223 at “Hoc”. The village of Hook did not, at that date, exist, but there were a few scattered houses and farms alongside the main road to the south-west of England – which is now the A30. That main road grew in importance over the centuries until by the eighteenth century it had become the main stagecoach route from London to Exeter.

By the eighteenth century, a number of inns had sprung up to cater to the travelling public, and small hamlets had grown up around them. In the late eighteenth century a turnpike road was constructed to aid the navigation of the steep Scures Hill, to the west of the village. This was one of a series of turnpikes throughout the country, which enabled stagecoach travel to become faster and more regular. Travelling became more commonplace as a result, and the inns that catered for the travellers prospered. Several of them still exist in the village: The White Hart, the Old White Hart in Hook itself and the Crooked Billet at the hamlet of Holt predate the turnpike, while the Dorchester Arms was built to serve it.

By the 1830s, railway travel was in the ascendant. One of the new railway lines that was built passed through Hook on its way from London to Basingstoke and the south-west, but there was no station built at Hook. A number of local landowners campaigned long and hard for a station at Hook, so that timber and crops grown in the area could be sent away for sale. In 1883, their campaign was successful and Hook railway station was opened amidst general public rejoicing.

The opening of the railway station signalled the birth of the modern village of Hook. Houses were built for the railway workers, and for the workers in the businesses that sprang up around the station. Some workers began commuting by train to Basingstoke, and later to far-away London. A village began to grow up around the station.

By 1932, the village of Hook had become large enough to be formed into its own civil Parish, created by carving away parts of the Parishes of Odiham, Newnham and Nately Scures. This was followed a few years later by the building of Hook’s own Anglican church, St. John’s. The new building replaced the old “Tin Church” – itself erected around the end of the 19th century to spare the inhabitants of Hook the long walk to services in Newnham. The first council housing in the village was constructed at Rectory Road in the late 1930s – development of that was completed post-war.

After the Second World War, Hook was one of a number of areas considered by the then London County Council as a possible site for one of their overspill New Towns. The Hook New Town, if it had ever been built, would have swallowed Odiham and Greywell to the south, and Winchfield and Hartley Wintney to the east, as well as large tracts of open countryside. The plan even featured a heliport. However, in 1958 it was decided to develop the new town at Basingstoke instead of Hook.

While the bulldozers were busy in Basingstoke, Hook wasn’t completely spared. The Hook Township Plan was drawn up in 1966 and a large area to the north and east of the railway station was zoned for housing. This became the Bell Meadow estate, which was constructed during the 1960s and 1970s.

Meanwhile, developers also had their eyes on the village centre. The architectural vision that was turning Basingstoke from a country market town into a concrete jungle also spawned a miniature version for Hook, in the shape of Grand Parade and Hook Parade.

In the early 1980s, a housing boom coupled with lax planning legislation caused many developers to turn their eyes towards Hook. Hart District Council's Local Plan was late being put into place and developers won appeal after appeal for planning permission for major housing developments.

The effect of this on the village was exacerbated by substantial delays in constructing the last of the developments zoned by the Hook Township Plan, which were only completed in the early 1980s. Between 1981 and 1985, new house building from both these sources doubled the size of the village.There were other major housing developments in the later 1980s that brought even more new housing, bringing the village to its present population of around 7,500 people.

One major development scheme, however, never got off the ground. An ambitious plan by Charles Church Developments for Hook Mini-town: several thousand additional houses (the proposed number varied between 2,000 and 7,000 at various times) in the area between Hook, Rotherwick and Newnham, was defeated on appeal in 1988 and again in 1991 after a lengthy and vociferous public protest campaign.

The Mosaic

Charles Church, like other developers before and since, had been attracted by Hook's excellent communications. With access to a good railway service, the M3 Motorway and the A30 trunk road, developers knew that large executive houses would always be saleable in Hook. That in itself has subsequently brought other difficulties: a shortage of smaller "starter homes" that prevented local young people from making their homes in the village is only now being addressed by recent housing developments.

The village was left to provide most of the facilities that all these extra people needed. Hook Community Centre and Hartletts Park were created in the 1980s by Hook Parish Council to serve the needs of the enlarged village. The Elizabeth Hall, originally built in 1953, had some refurbishment at around the same time, but has now reached the end of its life and plans to rebuild it are well advanced.

The village has continued to grow steadily until the present time. Development continues to this day with a further 400 houses nearing completion. This will bring the total to over 3000 houses by the end of 2007. In 2001 the population was predominantly White (97%) and Christian (77%) with a slowly increasing number of other nationalities and religions.

Economic and Social Factors

The resident population of the Hook Ward, as measured in the 2001 Census, was 7,378 of which 50 percent were male and 50 percent female. The Hook Ward also includes Rotherwick. However, the small numbers and the economic and social factors within Rotherwick do not greatly affect the balance of population within the Parish of Hook.

The general economic climate in Hook is strong. The building of many new houses and businesses has added to the area's prosperity, and the already large population of young professionals is growing. Hook has residents employed in industries such as aerospace, transportation equipment, health services, computer software, and biotechnology. A number are self-employed.

Hook road marker

The majority of the residents of Hook live in a total of 2,500 households with a small number, statistically, in communal establishments such as rest homes.

Table 1 - House occupation

	Hook
Owner occupied	80.4
Rented accommodation	19.6

Population Age Range

The average age of the residents of Hook is rapidly approaching 50, this is higher than the UK average. The largest statistical group identified by the Census is 30 to 59 years old, which at nearly 50%, is considerably higher than the UK average (41.5%).

Table 2 – Population age range

	Hook (%)	England and Wales (%)
Under 16 years	22.0	20.2
16 to 19	4.6	4.9
20 to 29	10.4	12.6
30 to 59	49.1	41.5
60 to 74	8.9	13.3
75 years and over	5.1	7.6

Economic Activity

The number in paid employment is, generally, higher than the average for the UK, however, the average age is also higher and therefore in the next ten years the number of retired people can be expected to grow.

Table 3 – Population economic activity

	Hook (%)	England and Wales (%)
Employed	73.4	60.6
Unemployed	1.8	3.4
Economically active full-time students	2.8	2.6
Retired	9.0	13.6
Looking after home/family	7.0	6.5
Economically inactive students	2.6	4.7
Permanently sick or disabled	1.5	5.5
Other economically inactive	1.8	3.1

Population Overview

The population of Hook is economically well provided for, is stable and continues to grow as new houses are built. House prices are high. It is anticipated that the population will grow by in excess of 1500 by the end of 2007. Subject to the overall state of the economy remaining sound, disposable income is likely to remain high and the need for leisure facilities will continue to increase.

Meadows North East of Hook

Biodiversity in Hook Parish

If we take a journey back through history we can look at how the biodiversity of Hook Parish has been strongly influenced by the actions of man. The long timescales of change allowed species to adapt to their new surroundings. At our starting point at around 5,000 BC the landscape is covered by dense woodland. Sea levels have risen since the last Ice Age, separating the UK from the rest of mainland Europe. Species that had managed to spread northwards following the retreating ice, before this separation, became the UK's native flora and fauna.

Hook Common

At the start of the Neolithic period the country was covered by 'wildwood'. Man learned how to clear the woodland and begin keeping stock. Small clearings were made in the wood, and once a site had used up its fertility they would move to the next. Species which once took advantage of the natural clearings in the woodlands, when a tree fell over, began to utilise these man made clearings.

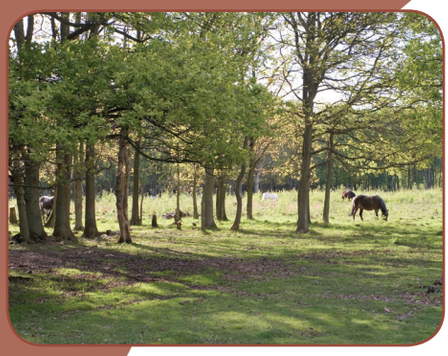
By the Iron Age around 700 BC, there was an established farming system. Farming was dictated by the underlying geology and drainage patterns. In Hook Parish the lighter soils on the London Clay were cropped. On the poorer soils animals such as ponies and pigs were grazed, and a heathland flora and fauna developed. Woodlands were left in-situ where the drainage was impeded, but a system of coppicing replaced the wildwood to provide fuel and timber for the local farmsteads.

The Roman occupation brought many new crops and livestock to the British Isles and many species, which have become naturalised into the countryside such as sweet chestnut. They brought about intensification of agriculture and removal of more of the woodland. They also encouraged trade and this probably strengthened the route between London and Exeter.

War, disease and famine during the Saxon period, caused huge declines in the population and thus in the need for agriculture. Much of the land became abandoned and reverted back to woodland. Many of these woods exist around Hook as our ancient and semi-natural woodland of to-day. The Norman conquest, like the Romans bought many new species in to Britain including the rabbit, pheasant and fallow deer, all three of which have had a marked influence on the development of our countryside and are to this day living in considerable numbers throughout the Parish.

The countryside of the middle Ages was made up of small subsistence farms and we have records of a few scattered dwellings in Hook Parish from around 1200 AD. As in the Iron Age there would have been fields for crops on the fertile land, grazing on the heathland commons, and coppicing of the woodland. This pattern of agriculture has certainly led to the distribution of habitat types seen in Hook Parish today. The practice of enclosure from 1400 AD added to the diversity by creating miles of hedgerow across the landscape. The distribution of the land in most of the Parish is clearly shown on the Survey of Nately Scures (1562) of which part lay in present day Hook. They are further shown on the first true map, The Tylney Hall Map of 1774.

By the 18th Century Hook was becoming a thriving hamlet serving the stage coaches and their travellers. This prosperity continued into the 19th Century with the coming of the railways and the building of a railway station in 1883. During this time small farmsteads would have continued to maintain the landscape. This would have been a low intensity system, grazing animals on the common and floodplain hay meadows, and growing low input crops. Evidence of the



Bartley Heath

Bee on Comfrey

River Whitewater

A beautiful Demoiselle

drainage and flooding system along the River Whitewater in the eastern half of the Parish still exists.

After the Second World War changes in farming practices saw the intensification of agriculture and a loss of traditional management techniques. Coppicing ceased, fields were fertilised and grazing stock reduced or moved onto highly productive sown grasslands.

Since the 1970's the biodiversity of Hook Parish has been under increasing pressure from development, including the M3 and a twenty-fold increase in housing. Lack of management, over-development and poor planning remain the greatest threats to today's biodiversity.

Designated Sites

Designated sites represent the most important areas for biodiversity in Hook Parish. These key areas conserve the species and habitats within them, but also act as a "pool" for biodiversity. Within Hook Parish itself the designated sites are mostly on the periphery or spill over the Parish boundary.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

In Hook Parish there is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), called Hook Common and Bartley Heath SSSI, this site is situated between the urban area and the M3 Motorway and virtually fills the southern outskirts of the Parish. It represents one of the best examples of wet heathland habitat based on national criteria and is managed by The Hampshire Wildlife Trust. English Nature is responsible for recording this site condition and has powers under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to ensure that sites are maintained in favourable condition.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are non-statutory designations identified because of their importance to wildlife on a county scale. There are 14 SINCs within or directly adjacent to Hook Parish, all of these are situated in the Northern half of the Parish. These include 11 woodland sites, 1 river and floodplain, 1 grassland site and 1 heathland site. These sites form part of the core biodiversity area and are recognised as such in Hart's Local Plan

It is important to consider the urban built environment alongside the habitats of the wider countryside. Open spaces, gardens, brown field sites and churchyards can all provide useful habitats for wildlife. Many species have adapted to share our living space, for example a colony of great crested newts are known to exist in Elms Road and Kingfishers are a common sight in the gardens along Newnham Brook to the north of the Parish and Buzzards have returned to the skies above. House Martins have colonised housing areas in the Parish.

Development

Pressure from development has been particularly significant in Hook Parish, and it has a direct and visible effect on the environment, but also knock on

effects including the need within the district for more landfill, mineral extraction and abstraction from, and discharges into, watercourses, particularly the River Whitewater, which is on the border line of suffering irreparable damage.

Biodiversity Plan

A complete Biodiversity Study and Action Plan is at pages 15 to 67.

The Parish Plan Initiative

The Government Rural White Paper “Our Countryside - the Future” published in late 2000 proposed the introduction of Parish Plans to “identify key facilities and services, set out the problems that need to be tackled and demonstrate how distinctive character and features can be preserved”. The following year The Countryside Agency’s “Vital Villages” programme set out how the Department for Agriculture and Rural Affairs would implement the White Paper. The Minister for Rural Affairs stated that Parish Plans could provide blueprints for the future survival of rural communities; “The Government” , said the Countryside Agency, wants “local communities to take more control of their own lives; to say what they want doing in their own neighbourhood and to engage with others to get it done”. Parish Plans, it continued “ will give the evidence to help inform policy-making by a range of organisations, from the local planning authority to police and health services”.

During 2003/4 representatives of Hook Parish Council attended a series of meetings organised by the Environment Agency and Hart District Council to advertise Parish Plans. Regrettably by this stage, national funding was no longer available to Parishes the size of Hook. The proposal to produce a Parish Plan was then discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting in April 2004 and a questionnaire was circulated to every household with the annual Village Report. Responsibility for guiding the Plan to fruition was given to the Parish Development Strategy Working Group which had the ability to co-opt volunteers as and when available. Thereby mixing Parish Council and residents to ensure as much interaction as possible.

There were over 400 (14%) responses to the questionnaire, which was then analysed by NOP World on behalf of the Parish. The results were published in late 2004. In parallel with the questionnaire, Hampshire Wildlife Trust were contracted to provide a Biodiversity Plan and environmental Action Plan for Hook Parish with the intention that it would be incorporated within the Parish Plan thereby incorporating all aspects of Parish life. This was completed in July 2004.

Following the publication of the answers to the questionnaire a public meeting was held in January 2005 to discuss the results. This led to the incorporation of an initial high-level Parish Action Plan to chart the way ahead. The Parish Council, the community and relevant agencies will be developing more specific project proposals where appropriate to take the current actions forward at a more detailed level once further work has been completed to define the requirement..

Following detailed editing in April and June the draft plan was updated and the whole document was displayed on the wall in the Village Hall and on the Parish Website. On July the 16th 2005 after considerable publicity the community were invited to review the document and make their comments using post-it notes. The turn out was over one hundred. Following final editing, discussions with Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council and printing, the Parish Plan will be submitted to Hart District Council for adoption in Summer 2007.

Community Consultation

The Parish Questionnaire

The questionnaire was circulated to every household in the Parish with the Annual Parish report in March 2004 with a return date of 30th April 2004. The results from the first-ever Hook Parish Questionnaire were compiled from the 376 questionnaires returned prior to the 30th April 2004 cut-off.

Questionnaire Format

The questionnaire consisted of five main sections:
- Selection of the respondents' three most important attributes
- Satisfaction rating of 42 attributes
- Overall Satisfaction rating with Hook as a place to live
- Respondent demographics
- Open-ended question, one change to make Hook an even better place to live.

Questionnaire Response

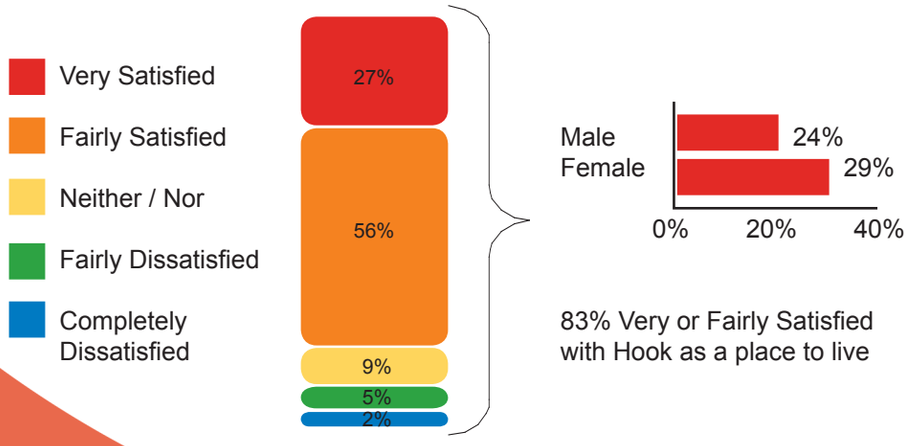
Overall 14% of households responded to the survey. From the respondent demographics, the average age was 50, with nearly two thirds of respondents being female.

The number of questionnaires returned covered a good cross section of the Hook population. The questionnaires being completed in-home, and are likely to have been a combined effort on behalf of the household.

Findings from the Questionnaire

This report summarises the findings into the following sections:
1. Overall satisfaction
2. Areas of highest satisfaction
3. Areas of lowest satisfaction
4. Attributes important in making Hook a good place to live
5. Hook's primary strengths
6. Areas of weakness identified for possible future action
7. Future improvements

1. Overall Satisfaction



2. Areas of Highest Satisfaction

Medical services (highest satisfaction)
Veterinary services
Recycling services
Trains
Pre-school facilities
Parks and open spaces
Christmas event
Education provision
Footpaths and Bridle ways
Reliability of household waste collection

Top ten for satisfaction

Ranked by mean score

3. Areas of Lowest Satisfaction

Public toilets (lowest satisfaction)
Cycleways
Bus services
Coaches
Disabled facilities
Commercial leisure facilities
Adult education facilities
Teen activities
Availability of rented housing
Library service

Bottom ten for satisfaction

Ranked by mean score

4. Attributes Important in Making Hook a Good Place to Live

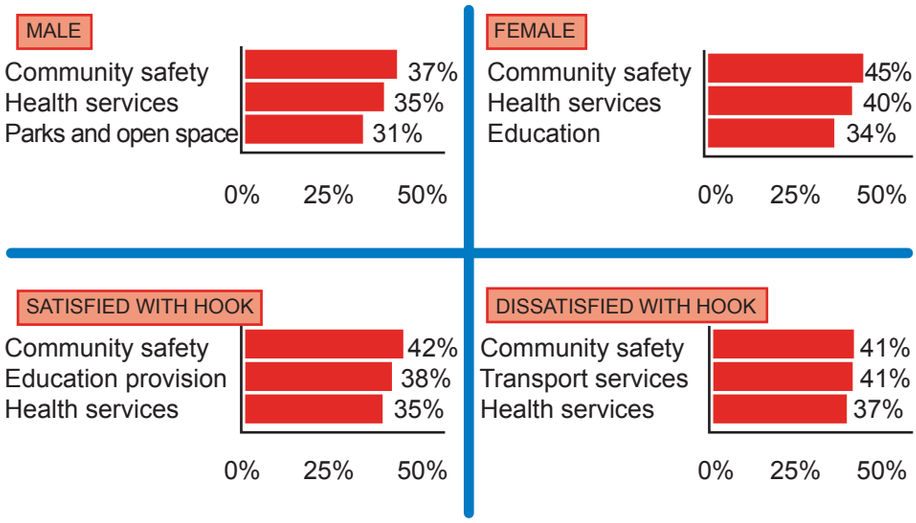
When asked directly "What is most important in making Hook a good place to live?" the results indicate the most important attributes are:

- Community safety
- Education provision
- Health services

This was based on a list of 12 attributes where respondents were asked to select the three attributes which were most important to them.

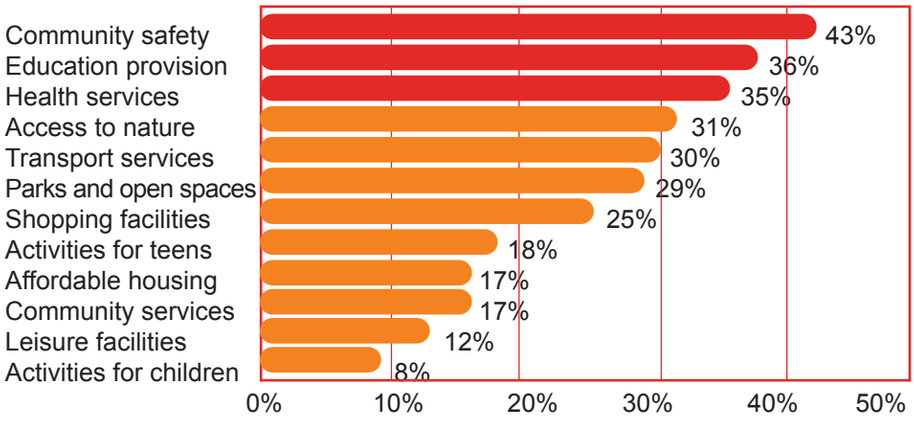
Community Safety and Health Services were selected most frequently by both Male and Female respondents.

Ranking based on stated importance...



Ranking based on derived importance...

When the importance of the attributes is calculated statistically from the responses, the importance ranking is as follows:



This ranking is based on a broader battery of attributes and shows more clearly the influence of attributes such as planning services and recreation and leisure (activities and open spaces), in residents' overall satisfaction with living in Hook.

5. Hook's Primary Strengths

When assessing Hook's Strengths and weaknesses, both stated importance and derived importance have been used together with the satisfaction ratings.

HIGH

TOP 10 RANKING STRENGTHS

Planning services
Outdoor recreation areas
Community safety
Child activities
Disabled facilities
Education provision
Trains
Community leisure facilities
Medical services
Pedestrian safety

(further ranking from high to low in table opposite)

LOW

Veterinary services
Christmas event
Reliability of household waste collections
Sports / Leisure facilities and events
Recycling facilities
Parks and open spaces
Professional and commercial services
Coaches
Traffic management
Community information centre
Complimentary medical services
Disabled Parking and Transport (Cango)
Support groups e.g. CAB
Footpaths and bridleways
Adult education facilities
Library services
Indoor recreation services
Car parking
Shopping facilities
Pre-school facilities
Nurseries / parent and toddler facilities
Commercial leisure facilities
Bus services
Teen activities
Traffic speed control
Childcare facilities
Dental services
Public toilets
Availability of rented housing
Cycleway
Facilities for senior citizens
Employment opportunities

This chart below shows that Hook's primary strengths (shaded in green) are Outdoor Recreation, Education Provision, Trains, and Medical services. These attributes are all important to Hook respondents and have relatively high levels of satisfaction.

The action on these important attributes is to ensure where possible satisfaction levels do not deteriorate. The Parish Council has a key influence and role to play in protecting the open spaces in Hook. The open-ended comments included reference to litter in the parks and graffiti which the Parish Council need to track.

Also for education, satisfaction levels are lower for "Adult education", and "Library service". The suggestion is that residents are reminded of the extent of the library services currently existing in Hook.

	Derived Importance	Q1 Stated Importance	Satisfaction	Possible Action Areas
Planning services	1			X
Outdoor recreation areas Access to nature	2	4 + 6		
Community safety	3	1		X
Child activities	4	8 + 12		X
Disabled facilities	5			X
Education provision	6	2		
Trains	7	5 (transport)		
Community leisure facilities	8	11		X
Medical services	9	3		
Pedestrian safety	10			X

(* Answered by 144 respondents)

Although the Trains are a strength of Hook, there is generally lower satisfaction with other transport such as the Coaches, Buses and the Cango.

6. Areas of Weakness Identified for Possible Future Action

The attributes shaded in yellow and red are areas for possible future action. These are all important attributes which perform less well for satisfaction. These include Planning Services, Community Safety, Child Activities, Disabled Facilities, Community Leisure Facilities and Pedestrian Safety.

Planning Services

The low satisfaction does not seem to be a reflection of the performance of the Parish Council Planning Committee. It reflects statistically a more general concern over the number of new houses being built in Hook and the negative impact this is having on the Parish.

Satisfaction tends to be lower amongst those respondents placing a higher importance on "Shopping facilities", "Facilities for teenagers" and "Sports and leisure activities".

Verbatim comments included...
"No more new housing"
"Increase sports and leisure facilities"
"Re-build Grand Parade"

"Grand Parade is an eyesore, needs bulldozing and starting again"
"Somewhere safe for young people to meet and play sports"

Action for the Parish Council is to continue to communicate with residents regarding forthcoming planning applications and encourage community feedback and input on any contentious planning applications.

Community Safety

Although the crime rate in Hook is very low in comparison to other areas in Hart, this is still an important area for addressing. Only 6% of respondents were Very Satisfied with Community Safety.

Satisfaction levels may be low due to respondents perceptions of what might or might not happen, rather than real experience of community safety deficiencies in Hook. For example if incidents of nuisance crime and anti-social behaviour are not being dealt with in an effective manner, this not only generates negative word of mouth but also can raise concerns of how the police would deal with incidents of a more serious nature.

Satisfaction levels are relatively low for "Traffic Speed Control" and "Pedestrian Safety". Satisfaction tends to be lower amongst those placing a higher importance on "Community Safety", "Transport services", and also "Activities for teenagers"

Verbatim Comments included... "Try to improve/eradicate the problems of anti-social behaviour" "Increase police presence"
"I worry about my teenage son's safety when he walks around the village"
"More police presence to deter vandalism and stop the graffiti"

Action for the Parish Council is to encourage the Police to play a more committed role in Hook including attendance and participation in Council and Community Safety meetings.

Child activities

Although satisfaction levels were higher for "Pre-school facilities" and "Nurseries/Parent and Toddler facilities", lower satisfaction was recorded for "Childcare facilities", "Child activities" and "Teen activities".

Only 7% of respondents claimed to be Very Satisfied with "Child Activities", reducing to 4% for "Teen Activities". Satisfaction with "Child activities" tends to be lower amongst those placing a higher importance on "Sports and leisure activities" and "Activities for teenagers".

A typical verbatim comment was...
"Provide something for teenagers to do, rather than hanging about around the shops"

Action for the Parish Council is to ensure the needs of teenagers in particular are explored and incorporated into future plans.

Disabled Facilities

Only 2% of respondents claimed to Very Satisfied with "Disabled Facilities" which was one of the lowest scoring attributes on the questionnaire.

Satisfaction tends to be lower amongst those placing a higher importance on "Shopping facilities", "Affordable decent housing" and "Sports and leisure activities". Action for the Parish Council is to investigate ways of ensuring less able residents are not excluded from enjoying the amenities available in Hook.

Community Leisure Facilities

Only 3% of respondents were Very Satisfied with Community Leisure Facilities.

Within the theme of Leisure, levels of satisfaction were also low for "Teen activities", "Sports/leisure facilities and events" and "Commercial leisure facilities".

Satisfaction tends to be lower amongst those placing a higher importance on "Activities for teenagers", Sports and leisure activities" and "Community activities"

Verbatim Comments included... "Provide permanent library facilities"
"Build a large public indoor swimming pool"
"Build a leisure centre. Fleet and Basingstoke are a long drive away....we pay the high rates and do not get the leisure services"

Action for the Parish Council is to reinforce the frequency of visits and times and locations for the mobile library and also create an appreciation amongst residents of the expense involved with providing a swimming pool.

Pedestrian Safety

Although incidents of pedestrians being injured in Hook are very low, there is a concern for pedestrian safety, particularly amongst those respondents placing a higher importance on "Activities for teenagers". Perhaps there is a fear of the risk to unaccompanied teenagers as they wander around Hook. Only 10% of respondents were Very Satisfied with Pedestrian Safety.

Verbatim Comments included...
"Tackle speeding in residential areas" "More traffic speed calming"

Action for the Parish Council is to reinforce how safe Hook is as a place to live and to work with the police to tackle the issues of fear of crime and incidents of speeding motorists.

7. Future Improvements

The chart below summarises the results of coding the open-ended responses to the question - What one thing could the Hook Parish Council do to make Hook an even better place to live?

What one thing would could HPC do to make Hook an even better place to live?

"Put a stop to large housing development projects"	9% (33)
"Prevent anti-social behaviour of youth/teenage gangs hanging around"	8% (29)
"Control graffiti and vandalism"	6% (22)
"Prevent and deal with litter"	5% (20)
"More visible police presence/more police patrols"	5% (19)
"Reduce speeding through village/control traffic speed"	5% (19)
"Provide sport/recreational facilities for youths/teenagers"	5% (19)
"Improve shopping parade/more High Street shops/banks"	5% (17)
"Provide a permanent library"	4% (14)

Parish Action Plan

The Action plan, with the exception of Elizabeth Hall, has been compiled from the responses received to the Parish Questionnaire and, in particular, the one factor that the residents considered would most improve Hook. The requirement to rebuild the Elizabeth Hall was first raised, and approval to rebuild requested from the Residents at the annual meeting in 2003. Progress and agreement to continue was reaffirmed in 2004 and progress was on show at the Summer Fete in 2004 and the Annual Meetings in April 2005 and 2006.

The Hook Parish Plan was explained, demonstrated and discussed at an open meeting of the residents of the Parish in January 2005. The main issues that arose, following statistical analysis by NOP World, were as follows:

A **Concern about over development and the inability of the Parish inferstructure to manage the ever increasing population.**

B **Anti-social behaviour – Litter, graffiti and vandalism.**

C **Lack of a visible Police presence.**

D **Excessive traffic speeds through the centre of Hook.**

E **Insufficient facilities for teenagers.**

F **The lack of a Bank and Library, together with a need to improve the selection of shops.**

Paragraphs on policing and traffic speed are being referred to the relevant services. The Post Office is expanding its facilities to move some way to providing banking facilities. Provision of an improved library service is on its way.

The Action Plan reflects the remaining future needs of the Parish and Volunteers were requested to participate in the Action Plan. Names are already available for the future.

On completion of this Parish plan, it is anticipated that the District Council will consider adoption of the Parish Design Statement as supplementary planning documentation in the future.

The Plough

Action No.	Description	Implementation	Actioned by	Dates
1	Monitor and participate in all new development in, and around, Hook	Parish Council to liaise with Hart District Council on all aspects of development, through Parish Council Development Strategy Committee	Parish Development and Strategy Committee and Associated Working Groups	Development Strategy Committee and first Working Group established 2004
2	Monitor and try to alleviate anti-social behaviour in Hook	Residents to work with the Parish Council, Hart District Council and the Police, to establish ways and means to improve the current level of anti-social behaviour	Residents to join Parish, Hart and the Police on the Parish Safety Committee	Safety Committee to meet in first quarter of 2005
3	Demolish and Rebuild Elizabeth Hall (EH)	Residents and Hook Parish council to work together to replace the EH which is uneconomic to repair	EH Redevelopment Committee was established in 2003 under the auspices of the EH Management Committee. The committee became a Parish Council Committee in early 2005. Final planning permission and financing achieved 2006	Project manager was appointed 1st qtr. 2005. Build contractor to be selected 4th qtr. 2006. The rebuild to commence May 2007
4	Provide a permanent Library in Hook	Continue discussions with the Hampshire Library Services, to ascertain feasibility, likelihood and cost. Hampshire Library Service are evaluating card entry libraries	EH Management Committee and the Parish Council	Initial discussions took place in 2003. Awaiting further invitation from Library service
5	Provision of additional Teenage facilities in Hook	There is a need for additional teenage facilities. Lead in work to establish need, cost and feasibility is required	Committee of residents to be established to advise the Parish Council on the overall requirement. EH is currently absorbing all manpower and resources	Committee to be set up middle 2008 or on completion of EH
6	Protection of the environment surrounding Hook	Six areas of the environment require monitoring and work in the future if they are not to be damaged irretrievably.	Action Plans are incorporated to this Plan. Residents are being approached by the Parish Council to fulfill these tasks.	During 2007/2008

Hook Parish Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Produced July 2004 Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Company limited by guarantee and registered in England, no. 676313.
Registered charity no. 201081.

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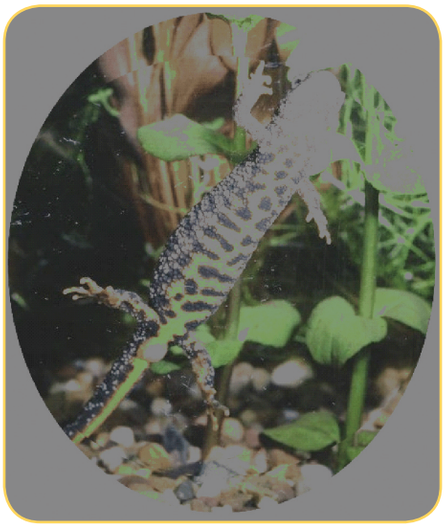
Introduction

Biodiversity has become integrated into the UK's vocabulary. All sectors of society including National and Local Government, statutory agencies, non-government organisations, wildlife recording groups and education institutions, have due regard for biodiversity in setting their objectives.

"*Biodiversity is a quality of life issue. It is an integral part of our surroundings, giving us pleasure, interest, knowledge and understanding. It is an aspect of the overall aim of sustainable development to ensure a decent quality of life for all, now and for generations to come, and will be one key test of the success of this aim.*" **(UK sustainable development strategy)**

In order to achieve these objectives there needs to be a bottom up as well as a top down approach. Strategies and policies are instrumental in driving forward legislation, but this needs to be translated into action on the ground. This is best done by the implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP).

Particular recognition must go to Hook Parish Council who have funded Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust to produce this plan. They have recognised the wealth of biodiversity in their Parish, and the need to produce a Local Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure its continued survival. Work is already on-going in Hook Parish to protect its biodiversity. This review of the biodiversity within Hook Parish is designed to identify how that biodiversity can be protected, enhanced and maintained in the future.



The main functions of this plan is :

- To translate national, regional and county biodiversity targets into effective action at the local level.
- To consider species and habitat priorities at the local level, in terms of rarity or their importance to the local community.
- To co-ordinate a partnership of individuals and organisations, to deliver action in the most cost effective way, without duplication.
- To raise awareness with all sectors of society, including policy makers, about the importance of biodiversity.
- To map out and consider opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity in the future.
- To provide a framework for conservation and a means by which progress can be assessed.

How to use the Hook Parish LBAP

Background to biodiversity

What is biodiversity, and what part can we all play in ensuring that habitats and species are protected.

What is an LBAP?

Find out why a Local Biodiversity Action Plan has been produced for Hook Parish. Discover who is involved in the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. Find out how the plan will be implemented and reviewed.

An audit of the biodiversity of Hook Parish

Data has been gathered on designated sites, both statutory and non-statutory, priority species and habitats and land management schemes. This section provides a summary of the findings and maps out the key biodiversity areas in Hook Parish.

What issues are affecting the biodiversity of Hook Parish?

Consultation has been undertaken with individuals and organisations living and working in Hook Parish to identify issues and threats which will need to be addressed in order to protect the biodiversity of Hook Parish.

Actions for biodiversity in Hook Parish

Analysis of the audit and threats has resulted in the production of targets that will ensure that Hook Parish protects, maintains and enhances its wildlife alongside sustainable development.

Progress on the LBAP for Hook Parish

Short reports from partners, on the progress of the LBAP, which can be updated on a yearly basis.

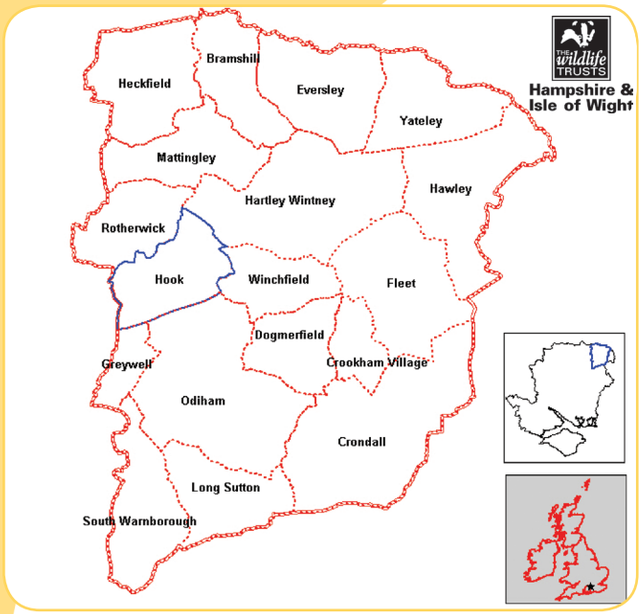


Figure: Location of Hook Parish in relation to Hart District, Hampshire and the South East Region

Who is Hook LBAP for?

This plan is aimed at anyone with an interest in the Biodiversity of Hook Parish:

- A local resident who wants to know about the wildlife on their doorstep.
- A land owner who is interested in the wildlife they are helping to protect.
- A conservation advisor who wants to know where to concentrate effort, in order to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity.
- A statutory agency who is trying to maintain habitats in favourable condition.
- A policy maker or planner, who needs to know about the biodiversity value of the landscape.

Background to biodiversity

What is biodiversity?

"Biodiversity includes all species of plants and animals, and the complex ecosystems that sustain them." **(Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan, 1998)**

Biodiversity is life - The web of life intrinsically links all species, from the smallest beetle to the largest mammal. The most common and more threatened species, with which we share our lives, rely on a healthy environment to ensure our survival.

Biodiversity provides our resources - From our environment we take food, clothing and raw materials for industry. We need to use these resources sustainably to ensure that we pass them on undamaged to future generations.

Biodiversity maintains our environment - Without a stable environment we are more at risk from floods, droughts, soil erosion and pollution. The soils, rivers, air and species within them are part of a giant natural cycle, cleansing waste and absorbing the impacts of progress. We can use biodiversity to measure how well these processes are working.

Biodiversity is valuable for recreation - Most of us spend part of our leisure time in the outdoors, in the countryside, in nature reserves or in a local park. We can promote these places and the plants and animals that are found within them, to help people understand why our environment is important.

Biodiversity gives us a sense of wellbeing - The expression 'Quality of life' describes how healthy we feel in our everyday lives. The health of our environment can have a positive effect on how we feel, whether it is access to green spaces, such as woodlands and parks, or birds visiting our garden.

Biodiversity is important to us - We can all appreciate how important our landscapes, the plants and animals within them are. The dramatic losses that occurred in the past were the result of damage and neglect. We now have the knowledge and means to ensure that we take better care of our planet.

45% reduction in the yellow-hammer population

50% of ancient broadleaved woodland is lost

90% of lowland heathland is lost

96% of Common Snipe territories are lost on the River Whitewater 1978-1991

98% of all chalk grassland is lost

From Rio to Hook Parish...!

1992

The convention on biological diversity

The UK is one of 150 countries to sign the Convention, at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, in 1992. The Convention recognised that biodiversity is under threat on a global scale. All signatories agreed to produce a national strategy for the 'conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.'

1994

Biodiversity: The UK action plan

The UK was one of the first countries to respond to the requirements of the convention. The government produced a broad strategy for the next twenty years to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the UK.

1995

The UK biodiversity group

Representatives from all agencies with a responsibility to biodiversity set about producing co-ordinated targets for biodiversity under the following objectives

- Developing costed action plans for key species and habitats
- Putting systems in place to manage information and data
- Raising awareness and involvement
- Producing Local Biodiversity Action Plans

1998

Hampshire biodiversity partnership

A partnership of local individuals and organisations was formed. 'The plan aims to ensure that national targets are translated into effective action at the local level, and that important local features are also fully included in strategies for action."

2002

Biodiversity strategy: The Loddon catchment

The strategy aims to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Loddon Catchment and implement the actions in the UK, Regional and Local Biodiversity Action Plans by using GIS mapping to identify key core areas for biodiversity, important buffer zones and ecological corridors.

2006

LBAP for Hook Parish

Production of a vision for the future of Hook Parish to ensure that biodiversity is protected and enhanced for our own health and well being, both now and for future generations. Hook Parish will be an important part of the global jigsaw for sustainable development.

What is an LBAP?

What is an LBAP?

'The 1994 UK Biodiversity Action Plan recognised that biodiversity is ultimately lost or conserved at a local level. It also recognised that achieving the Plan's goal of conserving and enhancing biodiversity would require a partnership approach. Nowhere is this more important than at a local level.' **(England Biodiversity Group, 2003)**

As a signatory of the Convention on Biological Diversity 1992, the UK had an obligation to outline a programme of biodiversity. The UK Action Plan suggested that Local Biodiversity Action Plans may be one way of translating national targets and creating local partnerships to gain wider public commitment. This has been taken on-board at a Regional, County, District and Parish level.

Despite LBAPs' non-statutory status, there are several delivery mechanisms, which can be used to add weight to the recommendations made in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

The plans are written through agreement with a partnership of organisations. All those who are members of the Hampshire Biodiversity Partnership have made a commitment to implementing the actions within the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan. These include Local Authorities, regional voluntary organisations, land managers, businesses, local records centres and specialist recorders. All of the actions within the Hook Parish BAP are translated from the County actions and targets.

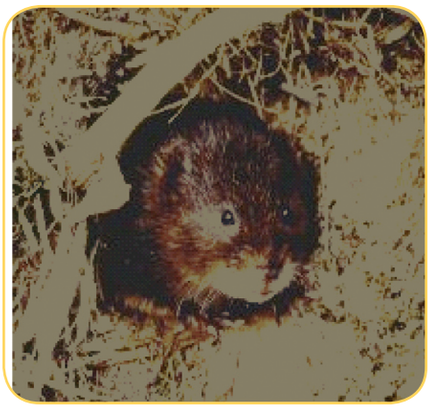
Each Local Authority must produce a Local Agenda 21 Plan to promote sustainable development within their area. Biodiversity is an important element of sustainable development. The World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in summer 2002, saw the call for Local Authorities across the globe to move from Agenda to Action! Launched at the Summit, Local Action 21 marks the next phase of Local Agenda 21, as it enters its second decade. This should see renewed action by Local Authorities to achieve their targets for sustainable biodiversity.

The Local Government Act 2000 requires each Local Authority to produce Community Strategies to promote "the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their areas...". In doing so they propose a vision for the future of the district, with arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the community strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act places a duty on Government departments, 'to have regard to the purpose of conserving biological diversity in the exercise of their functions'. Therefore, Local Biodiversity Actions can act as supporting information to local plans and policies, in addition to policies on protected sites and species, as stated in Policy Planning Guidance 9 (PPG9).

What will a biodiversity action plan for Hook Parish achieve?

Identifying key areas for Biodiversity: Key areas will be within or contributing to adjacent designated sites. A number of protected sites adjacent to one



another or a large designated area will be more valuable for biodiversity, and more resistant to damaging influences than isolated sites.

Ensuring that key areas for biodiversity are recognised in the relevant policy documents: Hart District Local Plan aims to "protect all such critical assets from inappropriate development, which could irreparably harm them, their location or setting." This plan identifies key areas for protection and enhancement, including those outside of designated sites. This plan also links to the other statutory and non-statutory documents highlighting the opportunities for sustainable biodiversity.

Influencing land use and planning to achieve sustainable development: A vision for the biodiversity of Hook Parish provides an overview of priority areas where management of land will have maximum benefits for biodiversity. This vision can be used to advise the planning process and to seek opportunities for habitat restoration.

Providing conservation advice to landowners to enhance/restore habitats: A Biodiversity Action Plan for Hook Parish provides landowners and residents with information about the BAP process, and demonstrates how work in one area forms part of a bigger picture. Grants such as Countryside Stewardship and Woodland Grant Schemes can provide funding for restoration work. Small scale changes in land management can also greatly increase the value of a site for wildlife. These changes are of maximum benefit where they create a wildlife corridor or where they buffer a site. Contacts details are given for those wanting more information.

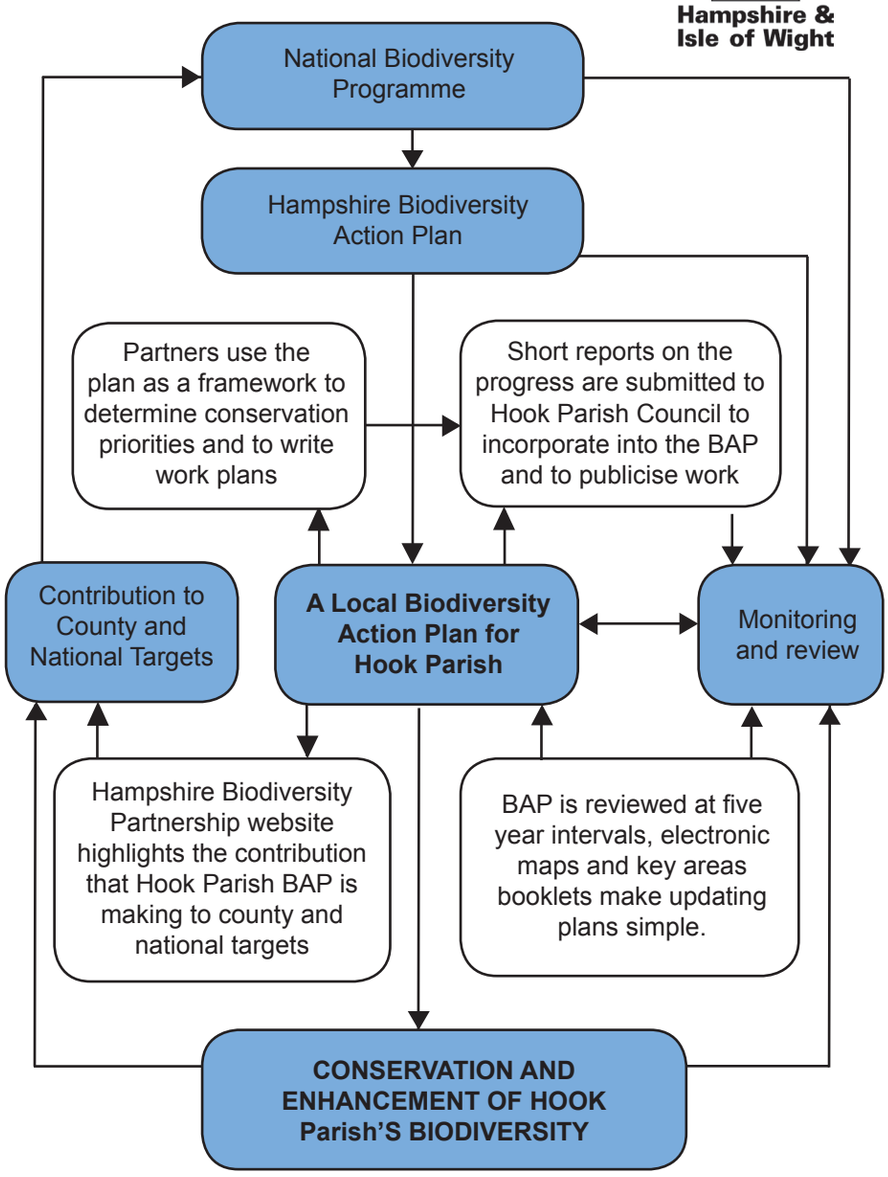
Working with communities on public land to enhance and restore habitats: Communities within Hook Parish want to take pride in the place where they live and work. This plan demonstrates how important the wildlife of Hook Parish is on a national and international scale. Information is given about how people can get involved.

Conducting surveys on species and habitats where there is a lack of information, to ensure that management decisions are based on the best available knowledge: Although a wealth of information has been collected about the biodiversity of Hook Parish there are still areas where insufficient data is known about the distribution and status of species and habitats, and the inter-relationships of certain areas with one another. Recording groups can use the suggestions within this plan to carry out future surveys.

Monitoring species and habitats to ensure that management is maintaining them in favourable condition: In order to ensure that this plan is up-to-date and representative of the work needed in Hook Parish to ensure sustainable biodiversity, all actions will be monitored and reviewed. Communication between conservation organisations, planners and individuals will be needed to ensure that the plan is successful.

Raising awareness of the ecological value of Hook Parish with the community: Providing information about the importance of the biodiversity of Hook Parish is a key to successful implementation of this plan. Information can be disseminated through guided walks, talks, site interpretation, biodiversity events, and discussions with stakeholders including the Parish council, local businesses, land owners, schools and community groups.

Flow diagram: How Will The LBAP Be Implemented And Reviewed



An audit of biodiversity in Hook Parish

If we take a journey back through history we can look at how the biodiversity of Hook Parish has been strongly influenced by the actions of man. The long timescales of change allowed species to adapt to their new surroundings.

At our starting point, at around 5,000 BC, the landscape is covered by dense woodland with large grazing animals maintaining open clearings. Sea levels have risen since the last Ice Age, separating the UK from the rest of mainland Europe. Species that had managed to spread northwards following the retreating ice, before this separation, became the UK's native flora and fauna.

At the start of the Neolithic period the country was covered by ‘wildwood’. Man learned how to clear the woodland and begin keeping stock. Small clearings were made in the wood, and once a site had used up its fertility they would move to the next. Species which once took advantage of the natural clearings in the woodlands, when a tree fell over, began to utilise these man made clearings.

By the Iron Age around 700 BC, there was an established farming system. Farming was dictated by the underlying geology and drainage patterns. In Hook Parish the lighter soils on the London Clay were cropped. On the poorer soils animals such as ponies and pigs were grazed, and a heathland flora and fauna developed. Woodlands were left in-situ where the drainage was impeded, but a system of coppicing replaced the wildwood to provide fuel and timber for the local farmstead.

The Roman occupation brought many new crops and livestock to the British Isles and many species which have become naturalised into the countryside such as sweet chestnut. They brought about intensification of agriculture and removal of more of the woodland. They also encouraged trade and this influences the development of road systems.

During the Saxon period war, disease and famine caused huge declines in the population and thus in the need for agriculture. Much of the land became abandoned and reverted back to woodland. Many of these woods exist as our ancient and semi-natural woodland today. The Norman conquest, like the Romans, brought many new species to Britain including the rabbit, pheasant and fallow deer, all three of which have had a marked influence on the development of our countryside.

The countryside of the Middle Ages was made up of small subsistence farms and we have records of a few scattered dwellings in Hook Parish from around 1200 AD. As in the Iron Age there would have been fields for crops on the fertile land, grazing on the heathland commons, and coppicing of the woodland. This pattern of agriculture has certainly led to the distribution of habitat types seen in Hook Parish today. The practice of enclosure from 1400 AD added to the diversity by creating miles of hedgerow across the landscape.

By the 18th Century Hook was becoming a thriving hamlet serving the stage coaches and their travellers. This prosperity continued into the 19th Century with the coming of the railway and the building of the station in 1883. During this time small farmsteads continued to maintain the landscape. This was a low intensity system, grazing animals on the common or floodplain hay meadows, and growing low input crops.

After the Second World War changes in farming practices saw the intensification of agriculture and a loss of traditional management techniques. Coppicing ceased, fields were fertilised and sprayed, and cattle were grazed on highly productive sown grasslands.

Since the 1960’s the biodiversity of Hook Parish has been under increasing pressure from development including the M3 and several Major Development Area (MDA) proposals. Lack of heath and woodland management together with development are now the greatest threats.

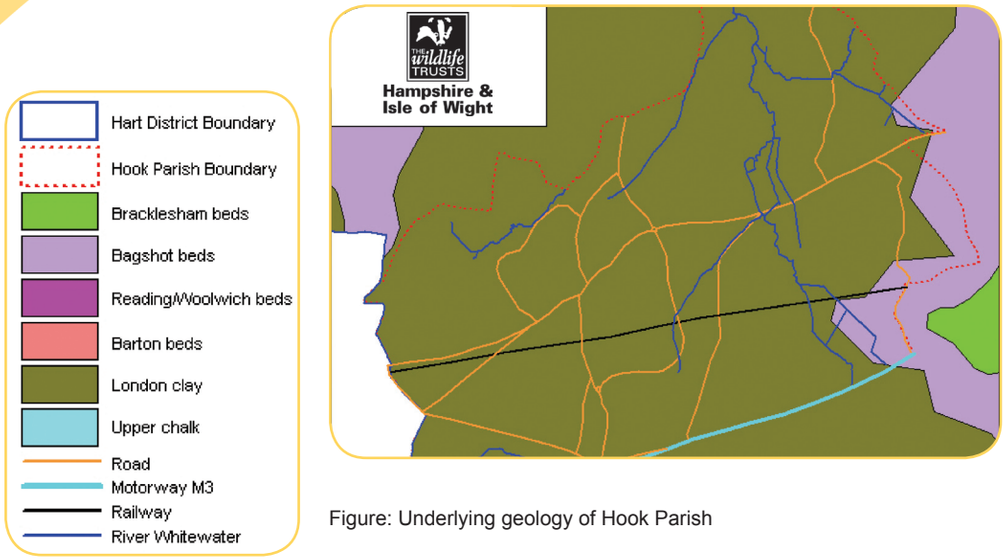


Figure: Underlying geology of Hook Parish

Designated sites in Hook Parish

Sites designated for wildlife conservation, are the key areas for biodiversity in Hook Parish, provided they are protected and managed. These key areas conserve the species and habitats within them, but also act as a “pool” for biodiversity. Species and habitats can spread out into the wider countryside from these pools when favourable conditions allow. In unfavourable conditions these sites can provide a refuge, allowing species and habitats to survive until such time as favourable conditions return.

It is essential that these sites are maintained in favourable condition. This requires long term management plans, with sustainable management options. For example, sites requiring conservation grazing must be based within a sound pastoral economy, to provide grazing stock and adequate layback land for the area of land being managed.

It is also important that these sites are managed as part of the wider countryside and not as isolated islands for wildlife. In order to achieve sustainable biodiversity there need to be wildlife corridors between conservation sites, so that species can move freely between them. This will ensure the exchange of genetic material between populations and will allow species to re-colonise areas, if there is population loss from a site.

Sites also need to be of an adequate size to be sustainable and should be buffered from adverse effects. A small site will have a larger edge to area ratio and will be under pressure from any outside influence, e.g. pollution. A series of sites joined by wildlife corridors are therefore stronger in ecological terms, rather than a number of isolated sites.

Within Hook Parish itself the designated sites are mostly on the periphery or split by the Parish boundary. These sites are part of larger designated blocks e.g. Hook Woods and Hook Common. Therefore for the purposes of the BAP the whole site has been considered rather than just the area within the Parish.

In Hook Parish there is one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), called Hook Common and Bartley Heath SSSI. It represents one of the best examples

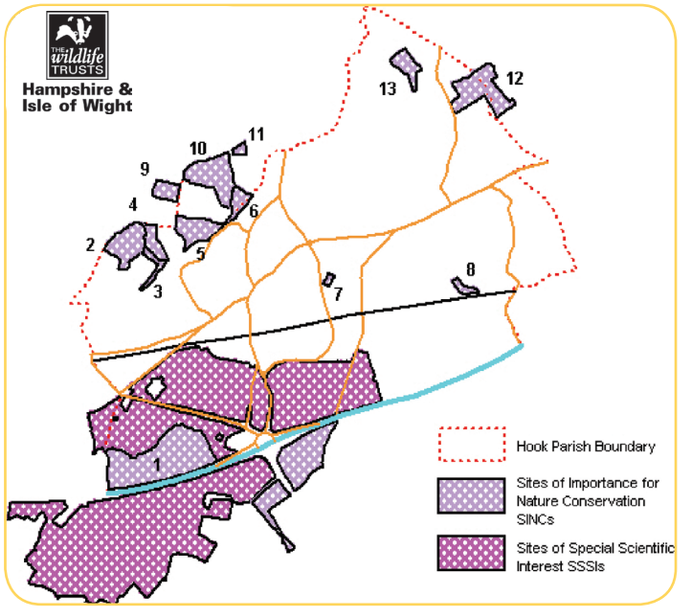
of wet heathland habitat based on national criteria. The South East England Biodiversity Forum (SEEBF) target, based on UK Government targets, proposes that all SSSIs should be in favourable condition by 2010.

English Nature is responsible for recording this site's condition and has powers under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to ensure that such sites are maintained in favourable condition.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are non-statutory designations identified because of their importance to wildlife on a county scale. There are 14 SINCs within or directly adjacent to Hook Parish. These include 11 woodland sites, 1 River and Floodplain site, 1 grassland site and 1 heathland site. These sites form part of the core biodiversity area and are recognised as such in Hart's Local Plan. Provision of management advice is important to ensure favourable management of these sites. A target has been set to offer advice on management and grants to all SINC owners by 2010 (SEEBF, 2002).

The figure below lists these SINCs, including their area and the criteria under which they have been designated. Hampshire County Council and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust in partnership with the local authorities, are responsible for assessing sites against the criteria and notifying the landowner of the importance of the designation. The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) has a rolling survey programme to monitor SINC condition.

There are additional areas outside of these designated sites which may meet the criteria for SINC designation. The airfield appears to be a species rich grassland and may qualify under criteria 2B or 2D.



Figures: Designated sites in Hook Parish

1A: Ancient semi-natural woodland. 1B: Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving. 2B: Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland. 2D: Grasslands which have become impoverished through inappropriate management but which retain sufficient elements of relic grassland to enable recovery. 3Bi: Areas of heathland which are afforested or have succeeded to woodland if they retain sufficient remnants of heathland vegetation would enable their recovery. 5A: Areas of open fresh water which support outstanding assemblages of floating/ submerged/ emergent plant species, invertebrates, birds or amphibians. 6A: Sites which support one or more notable species. 7A: Sites of nature conservation interest which occur in areas otherwise deficient in such interest, and/or are known to be of particularly high value to local communities

Site	Area (ha)	1A	1B	2B	2D	3Bi	5A	6A	7A
Hook Common and Bartley Heath SSSI	122.20								
1. Carleton's Gorse	29.33		X		X	X	X	X	
2. College Copse	8.35	X							
3. Owen's Farm Meadow	2.03			X					
4. Hill Copse	3.41	X							
5. Shirlens Copse	6.60	X							
6. Twelve Acre Copse	3.00	X	X						
7. Ashwells Copse	0.59	X							X
8. Totter Copse	1.28	X							
9. North Runten's Copse	2.10	X	X						
10. Great Nightingale Copse	11.17	X							
11. Little Nightingale Copse	1.00	X							
12. Dogtail Copse	11.96	X							
13. Borough Court Copse	4.03	X							

Priority habitats

Data on habitat and species distribution is held by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre. This data has been collated and grouped according to BAP categories. Figure 4 shows that Hook Parish can almost be divided into thirds. One third urban, one third improved land for agriculture and one third semi-natural habitats.

The habitat descriptions in the following section summarise why these habitats have been identified as a priority for biodiversity action at a county and regional level. More detailed descriptions of sites are included with the Hook Parish Action Plan booklets.

Ancient and semi-natural woodlands: are those which have been in existence since at least 1600. They are important for their rich assemblages of ground flora, lichen, fern and fungal communities. An estimated 50% of woodland has been lost in Hampshire over the last 50 years.

Unimproved grasslands: These grasslands have evolved over the centuries from continued use by man, primarily for grazing livestock. These grasslands are rich in plants including nationally rare orchids. This flora supports a rich invertebrate community, which in turn provides a food resource for breeding and migratory bird species. In Hampshire 98% of this habitat type has been lost, therefore any remaining habitat is a priority for conservation.

Heathlands: Describes a habitat dominated by heathers and dwarf shrubs. Within this landscape there is a mosaic of wet heaths grading into valley mires and bogs, and open commons dominated by acid grasslands. In Hampshire this habitat has declined by over 50% in the last 200 years and it is rare across Europe. Heathland is very important for plants, reptiles and bird species which are restricted and often exclusive to this habitat type, such as the Dartford Warbler.

Wetlands: are those habitats which are dependent on high water levels such as fens, marsh, carr, swamp and reedbeds. They also include ponds and lakes which were once a feature of natural river valleys.

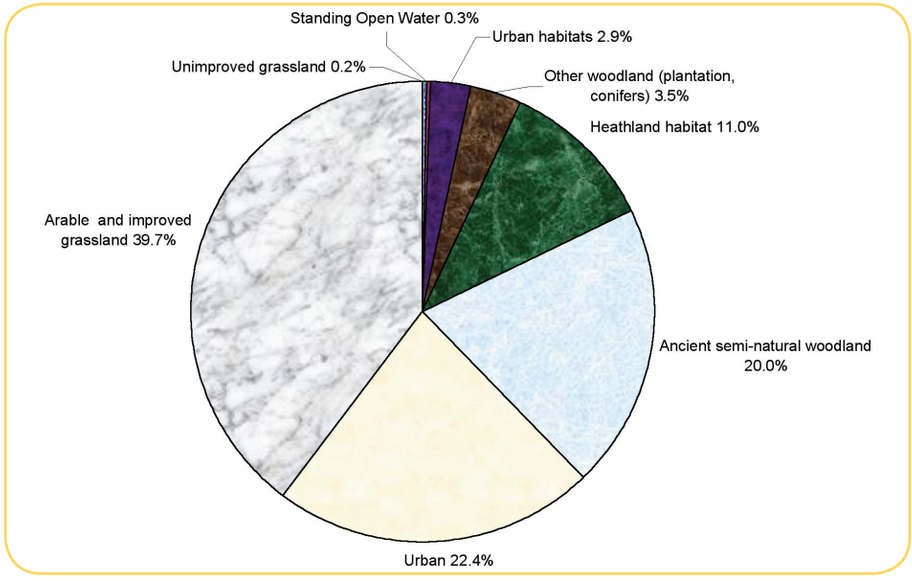
For the purposes of this BAP the River Whitewater has been included in this generic habitat type because it too is under pressure from the need for water resources, including abstraction for domestic and agricultural purposes.

Arable land: Although nearly 40% of the land use in Hook Parish is arable or improved grassland there are opportunities for biodiversity. Hedgerows are often remnants of ancient woodland and can provide a habitat for a diverse range of species including butterflies, birds and bats. Some species have evolved alongside man's use of the land for agriculture and have found a niche within the cultivated landscape.

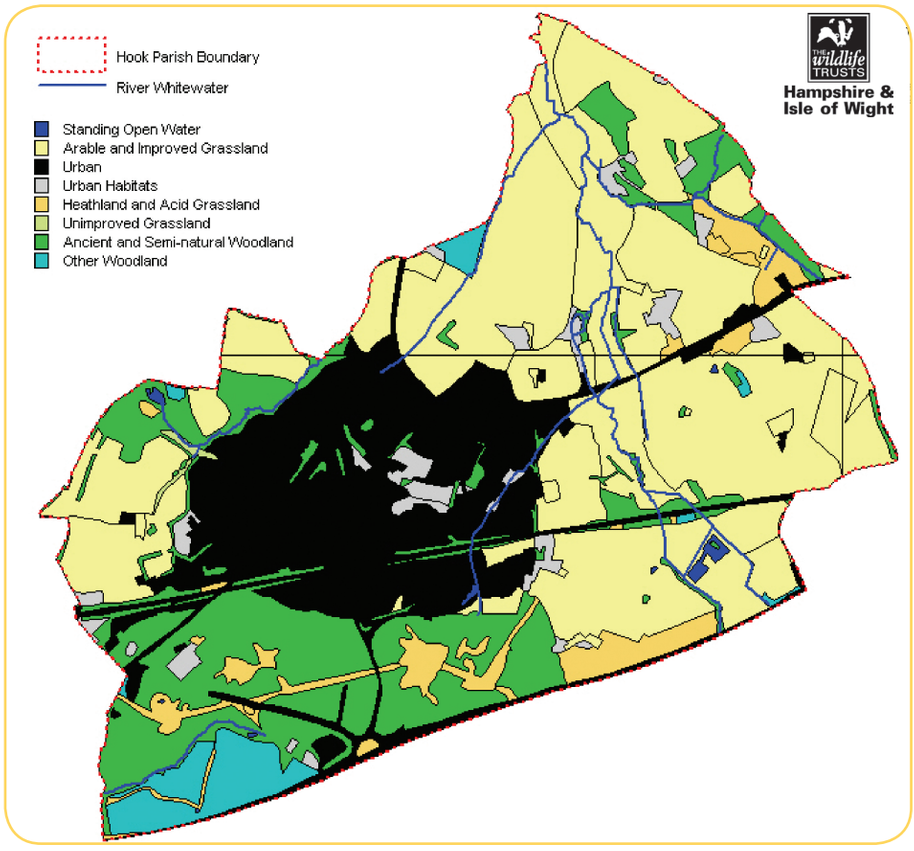
These include rare arable plants, small mammals and ground nesting birds. Intensification of agriculture has resulted in declines of these species. However they often survive within field margins, where fertilizers and chemical inputs are reduced. Agri-environment grants such as the countryside stewardship scheme are available to increase the opportunities for wildlife across farms. Small changes in management without the need for grants can provide major benefits to biodiversity.

Urban habitats: It is important to consider the built environment alongside the habitats of the wider countryside. Open spaces, gardens, brownfield sites and churchyards can all provide important habitats for wildlife. Many species have adapted to share our living space. Simply having a pond in the garden, or a wildlife area within a local park or school can provide an important resource for butterflies, birds, amphibians and bats. There are many opportunities for the public to get involved with conserving wildlife in your Parish. See Booklet 4 of 6 for more details.

Development within urban areas should consider the potential for integrating wildlife within the design brief, for example retaining eaves that can be used by birds such as swallows and sparrows. Developers should also consider the opportunities for supporting the local economy when sourcing materials, such as timber, to provide a market for traditional management practices.



Figures: BAP habitats in Hook Parish. Data on the distribution and extent of habitats in Hampshire, supplied by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC).



Priority species

The habitats in Hook Parish support a multitude of species. Collation of data on the distribution of priority species is essential in determining the success of conservation initiatives.

A full list of all the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan species recorded within the Parish have been listed on the following page. At the end of each of the Hook Parish Biodiversity Action Plan booklets there are lists of species which are relevant to the habitat type. These include species which are important at the local level.

To review all species individually is beyond the scope of this document, and many species will maintain a healthy self-sustaining population if the habitat they depend on is in favourable condition. However, there are certain species which are worth mentioning because they meet one or more of the following criteria:
1. They have statutory protection
2. They have been identified as an indicator of sustainable development
3. They are a flagship species for a habitat type

1. Bats: All species of bats are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is illegal to disturb bats or the places where they roost. Bat populations are threatened not only by loss of habitat, affecting roosting sites and feeding grounds, but also by deliberate killing.

The woodland, farmland, river and residential properties of the Parish are important for a wide range of bat species. Identifying foraging and roost sites and determining the effects of existing management schemes on bats can help to strengthen populations. The results of surveys must be widely disseminated to support the popularisation and understanding of bats with the general public and landowners.

2. Populations of wild birds: The status of populations of wild birds has been identified as a biodiversity indicator in the Sustainable Development Framework. Birds have been recorded systematically for a long time, and we have information about whether their populations are increasing or declining. They are a good indicator of the health of our environment because if numbers of a particular species are declining, we know that there is something wrong with the habitat. Bird populations are a feature for many of the national and international designations, but are equally important in the countryside as in our towns.

Data on bird species are collected by the Hampshire Ornithological Society and disseminated to national bird conservation organisations. It is important that information also reaches local conservation organisations to inform management decisions.

3. Butterflies: Butterflies are good indicators of the health of some habitats. If a habitat is in good or favourable condition then it should have a good complement of associated butterfly species. Different habitat types support different butterflies. Populations are vulnerable to local extinctions and require a network of habitats to allow individuals to move back into areas where populations have been lost. The Butterfly Conservation Trust is monitoring populations over time to determine the area and distribution of suitable habitat, but also to provide a picture of long term environmental change.

Species occurring in Hook Parish which are listed in Hampshire BAP

Triturus cristatus	Great crested newt	Amphibian
Lucanus cervus	Stag beetle	Beetle
Alauda arvensis	Sky lark	Bird
Caprimulgus europaeus	Nightjar	Bird
Carduelis cannabina	Linnet	Bird
Cettia cetti	Cetti's warbler	Bird
Dendrocopos minor	Lesser spotted woodpecker	Bird
Falco subbuteo	Hobby	Bird
Lullula arborea	Woodlark	Bird
Miliaria calandra	Corn bunting	Bird
Muscicapa striata	Spotted flycatcher	Bird
Perdix perdix	Grey partridge	Bird
Pluvialis apricaria	Golden plover	Bird
Pyrrhula pyrrhula	Bullfinch	Bird
Streptopelia turtur	Turtle dove	Bird
Turdus philomelos	Song thrush	Bird
Vanellus vanellus	Lapwing	Bird
Apatura iris	Purple emperor	Butterfly
Argynnis paphia	Silver-washed fritillary	Butterfly
✽Boloria selene	Small Pearl-bordered fritillary	Butterfly
✽Euphydryas aurinia	Marsh fritillary	Butterfly
Strymonidia w-album	White letter hairstreak	Butterfly
Austropotamobius pallipes	White-clawed crayfish	Crustacean
Cordulia aenea	Downy emerald	Dragonfly
Orthetrum coerulescens	Keeled skimmer	Dragonfly
Cottus gobio	Bullhead	Fishes
Lampetra planeri	Brook lamprey	Fishes
✽Damasonium alisma	Starfruit	Flowering plant
Gentiana pneumonanthe	Marsh gentian	Flowering plant
Apodemus flavicollis	Yellow-necked mouse	Mammal
Arvicola terrestris	Water vole	Mammal
Eptesicus serotinus	Serotine bat	Mammal
Lepus europaeus	Brown hare	Mammal
Micromys minutus	Harvest mouse	Mammal
Muscardinus avellanarius	Dormouse	Mammal
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Pipistrelle	Mammal
Apoda limacodes	Festoon	Moth
Eligia similella		Moth
✽Hemaris tityus	Narrow-bordered bee hawk	Moth
✽Oria musculosa	Brighton wainscot	Moth
✽Rheumaptera hastata	Argent and sable	Moth
Shargacucullia lychnitis	Striped lychnis	Moth

✽ Species now thought to be extinct in Hook Parish

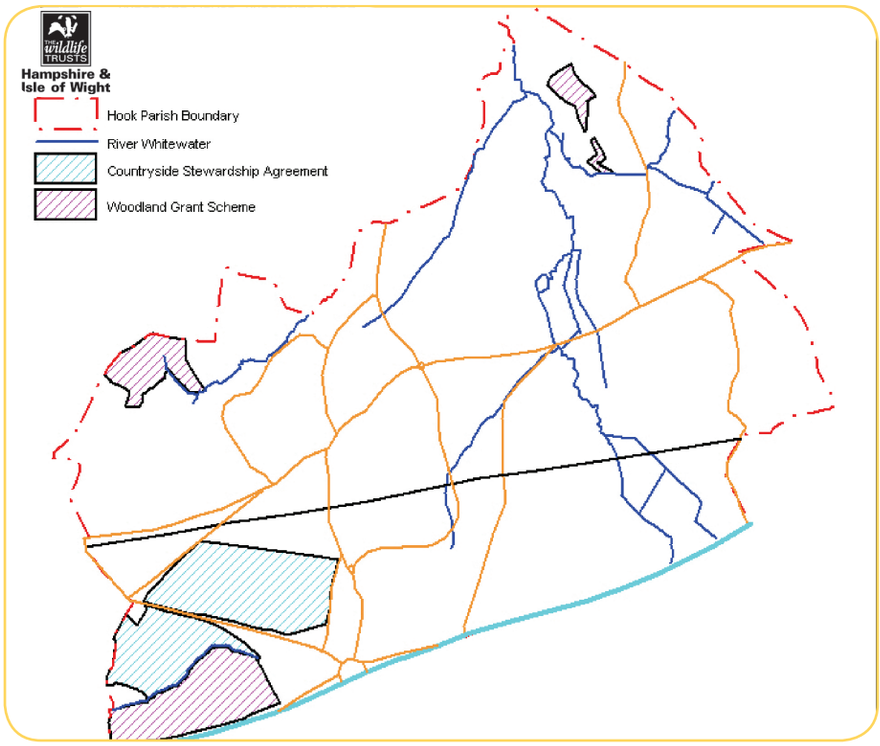


Figure: Land management schemes in Hook Parish

There are grants available to undertake works that will benefit biodiversity both within and outside of designated sites. Land adjacent to a designated site that is under an agri-environment scheme can help to buffer the sensitive site from adverse impacts along its perimeter. Figure 5 shows land that is currently under one of these schemes.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme is the Government's main scheme for the wider countryside, which aims, through the payment of grants, to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside, enhance, restore and recreate targeted landscapes, their wildlife habitats and historical features, and to improve opportunities for public access. This scheme is being replaced by the Environmental Stewardship Scheme in 2005. The new scheme has a lower and higher tier option giving more choice to landowners and more opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

The Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) provides grants to create new woodlands and to encourage the good management and regeneration of existing woodlands. The Scheme also aims to encourage good management of woodlands, including their well timed regeneration, particularly looking after the ancient and semi-natural woodlands; provide jobs and improve the economy of rural areas and other areas with few other sources of economic growth; and to provide a use for land instead of agriculture The amount of funding will increase under the England Rural Development Programme.

Agri-environment schemes are not always appropriate because of the length of the management agreements, the amount of grant available and limitations on how the money can be spent. However, small changes in management practices without the need for grants can have enormous benefits for biodiversity (see booklet 6).

Threats to biodiversity of Hook Parish

In order to ensure that biodiversity is protected, we need to look at the issues that have caused a decline in the number of species and habitats, as well as the factors which need to be resolved in order to restore habitats and populations in future. These issues may be able to be resolved at a local level, but many are issues affecting the whole of the UK or even on a global scale. Understanding these issues will help us to plan what conservation measures we need to take in the future.

Loss of species and habitats

Human influence has had a marked effect on biodiversity over the last 100 years. Differing intensities of farming systems within the Parish have determined what semi-natural habitats remain, or whether there's a mono-culture of arable and improved grassland. Remaining habitats are under pressure from the loss of mixed farming and declines in the pastoral economy.

Traditional management techniques were in regular use until the beginning of the 20th century. The British flora and fauna has adapted to live alongside and often benefited from these management practices. However, in the last 100 years the rapid developments in the agricultural sector and cessation of traditional techniques have had a devastating effect on native wildlife. Species have not been able to adapt and have become isolated or extinct.

Although many of the remaining habitats have been designated as local wildlife sites for their high biodiversity value, some are not under positive management. Sites designated as SSSI may also be in unfavourable condition. In order to maintain most wetlands and woodlands there needs to be some form of active management. In wetland sites, this is often best achieved through reinstatement of water levels and grazing. In woodlands, a range of options should be considered including thinning, grazing, ride widening, removal of conifers and reinstatement of coppicing.

There is a need to promote sustainable farming that uses methods beneficial to species and habitats. At a local level this can be through sale of local products, such as coppice goods, meat from conservation grazing herds, and crops from farms that are supporting wildlife. At a national level, reforms in agricultural policy which improve agri-environment schemes will make it possible for more land owners to run a successful business which also benefits biodiversity.

Development

Pressure from development is particularly significant in Hook Parish, and it has a direct and visible effect on the environment, but also knock-on effects including the need for more landfill, mineral extraction and abstraction from and discharges into watercourses.

Legislation is in place which requires protection of sites with statutory designation such as SSSIs, as well as protection of species listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. There is also government guidance for protection of locally important wildlife sites (SINCs). These policies are recognised within Hart District Local Plan.

Planning decisions and other strategic documents should be based on sound ecological data to ensure that the key areas for biodiversity are protected from

development. There is a need to improve the policies relating to protection of species and habitats beyond those statutory designations: species that have a high biodiversity value but not necessarily protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. If a proposal is likely to have a direct or indirect effect on any feature of conservation interest, then there must be a plan of action to ameliorate the effects of the development, as well as to enhance and monitor adjacent habitats.

Habitat fragmentation

Loss of habitats leads to isolation and fragmentation of the remaining habitats, and creates obstacles to species dispersal. Small blocks of land are more susceptible to degrading influences along their perimeter which means that smaller and smaller fragments of habitat remain. Designated areas in isolation are not sufficient to ensure habitats and species are maintained at an optimum level. A buffer is needed around these sensitive habitats, and preferably corridors of habitat should be created between semi-natural habitats to ensure species dispersal and to allow genetic exchange. Where there is any doubt the Precautionary Principle should be applied.

Forward planning should prevent habitat fragmentation, with an emphasis on seeking opportunities to undertake habitat restoration, both as mitigation to development but also to strengthen areas which would benefit from management to enhance biodiversity. Use should be made of existing wildlife corridors such as hedgerows, field margins and road verges. Simple conservation measures such as cutting regimes can have potentially large conservation benefits to these habitats. Advice can be sought from conservation advisers on management techniques and available grants to increase the wildlife potential of these habitats.

Any restoration projects must be based on study of existing habitats and species. An area with apparently low biodiversity value may support priority BAP species with specific requirements.

Climate change

This global issue will have increasingly significant effects on biodiversity in the future. It is now accepted that our climate is changing. Current climate models predict that global temperatures could increase between 1.4 to 5.8^{o}C over the next 100 years. It has not been agreed why this is happening, although it is believed that the natural flux in temperatures may be being accelerated unnaturally by the build up of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere.

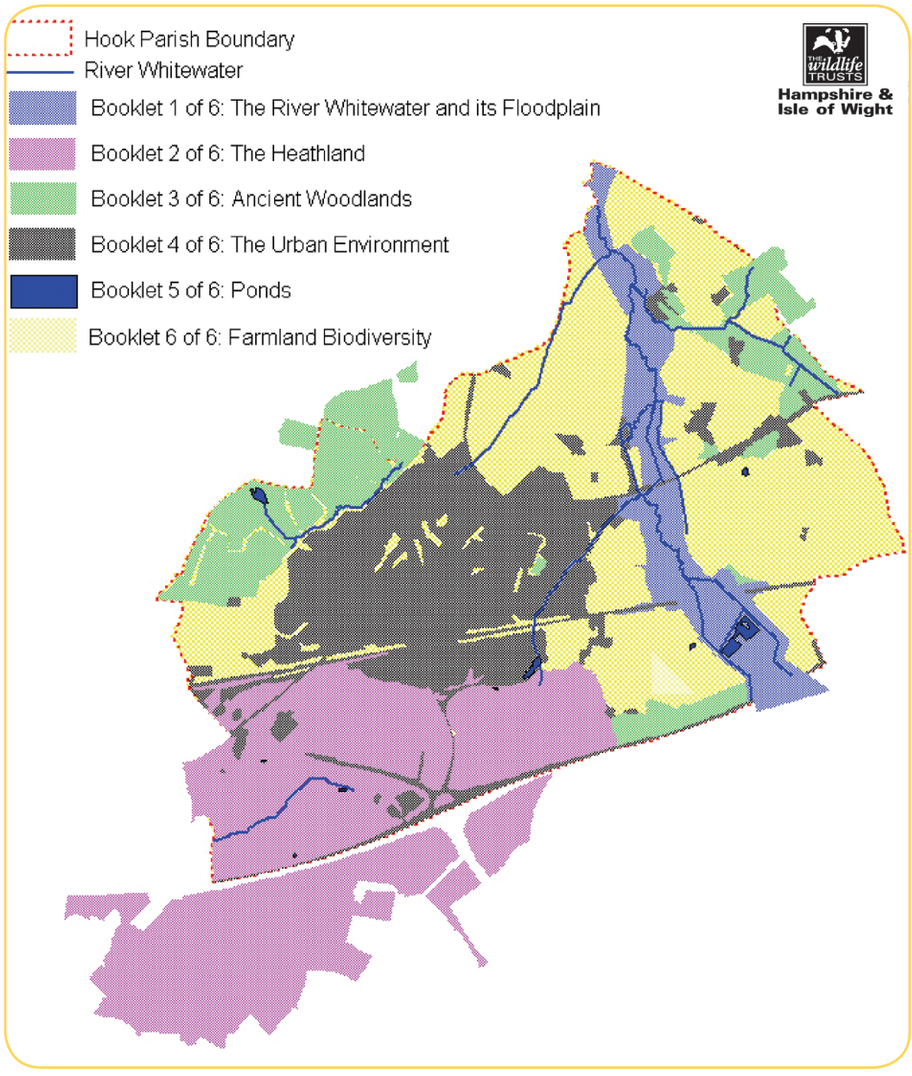
For us, climate change could mean more summer droughts, increases in winter rainfall (and therefore flooding incidents), and higher temperatures throughout the year. Habitats already under threat, such as wetlands, may be lost. Species unable to adapt to any new conditions will have to migrate, but due to habitat loss and fragmentation, may be unable to do so. In Hook Parish these changes will be particularly felt, because many of the species found here are on the edge of their range. Plans need to be put in place, which consider the hydrological regimes and habitats under threat.

Actions for biodiversity in Hook Parish

In the last 100 years there has been a dramatic loss in the number of species, and extent of good quality habitat, across the Parish. Wildlife has been pushed

into smaller and more isolated areas, under significant pressure from land use, development and the way we live our lives. Conservation initiatives in the last 50 years have identified the remaining sites that are important for wildlife and protected them through designation; a small proportion of the countryside is managed for wildlife. Unfortunately these small, isolated pockets are often under increasing pressure, and they will be un-sustainable in the long term if they are managed in isolation from the wider countryside.

To ensure a sustainable future for our wildlife we need to create and maintain key core areas for biodiversity. These areas will ensure species survival and should also be places where people can appreciate, and learn more about, the wildlife on their doorstep. It is then important to ensure that these core areas are buffered from detrimental influences, and that links are made across the countryside to allow species dispersal both between protected areas, and into the wider countryside. By viewing a landscape in its entirety, by mapping the key areas for biodiversity, and by making the links between them, it is possible to prioritise conservation management and target it to where it is needed. This can be done most effectively by working in partnership.



This plan is not being written in isolation. The targets which it sets out to achieve are based on county, regional and national action plans. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) are also being written by the adjoining local authorities, therefore this plan forms a piece of a jigsaw that operates beyond administrative boundaries at a truly landscape scale. This plan encourages the involvement of community groups and key sectors of the community. If future projects can be carried out with the support and understanding of the local community, they will have a greater chance of success.

All of the actions proposed in this plan are subject to landowner permission and availability of funding. It is hoped that this plan will provide a context for conservation action and demonstrate how projects form part of the bigger picture. This plan should also provide the opportunity for individuals and organisations to seek joint funding to achieve large gains for biodiversity within the Parish. The Biodiversity Action Plan for Hook Parish is designed to be a working document, and the actions and targets herein will be monitored to measure the success of implementation. Communication between the individuals, groups and organisations working in Hook Parish will continue, and the plan will be refined to reflect priorities and changes in the landscape in future.

The following booklets provide detailed actions that could be implemented to protect and enhance the biodiversity of Hook Parish.

Progress of the LBAP for Hook Parish

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan should be a fluid document, able to adapt and respond to changes in circumstances. This could be in response to:

- Opportunities which will allow targets to be implemented, e.g. existence of new funding streams or development control polices.
- Changes in planning policy at a national, regional or local level.
- The emergence of new issues or threats, that were not apparent at the time of writing the LBAP in 2004.
- New information on the distribution and status of species, following survey, which may highlight new priorities.
- The need to develop new targets, to reflect these changes and to update targets, as those within the existing plan are completed.

It is also important to monitor the implementation of the LBAP, assessing its strengths and weaknesses, and to promote projects which have helped to achieve LBAP targets. This can be achieved through a variety of media including articles within Hook Focus, pages on the Hook Parish Website, and dissemination though the County and National BAP Partnerships.

In order to help focus the targets within the Hook Parish LBAP, each has been given a time scale, as follows.

- Short Term (ST) – A project which is already underway or which should be in progress within 2 years following production of this plan.

- Mid Term (MT) – Aspirations for the next 10 years. These projects should be possible within a 5-10 year time frame, to have reached at least the project planning stage.

- Long Term (LT) – Targets which will achieve sustainable biodiversity within the Parish of Hook in the Long Term. These projects may be on going with minor revisions to the overall aim, or may be a long-term goal, which will require significant changes in local, regional or national policy in order to achieve them.

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