

## Introduction

*Chalk, Cherries and Chairs* is a Landscape Partnership bringing together diverse organisations and communities in the central Chilterns to work together towards a vision of:

“A healthy, resilient, connected landscape; with its unique natural, historical, and cultural heritage cherished by present and future generations”

Landscape has character, it is alive and evolving and the iconic chalk landscape of the central Chilterns provides a sense of place and time. Landscape is comprised of many layers including geology, nature, farming, history and culture.

The central Chilterns landscape is rich in wildlife, cultural heritage and tranquil green places for people to unwind. But this landscape is under enormous pressure; with unprecedented housing and infrastructure growth, including High Speed 2; ancient woodlands divided up and sold off; wildlife habitats severed and fragmented; traditional orchards and wood pasture disappearing.

The Chalk, Cherries and Chairs partnership aims to:

1. Restore, enhance and record wildlife habitats, landscape features and cultural heritage of the Central Chilterns
2. Create new opportunities for people to investigate and celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the Chilterns, inspiring a wider range of people to become stewards for their local heritage
3. Strengthen the capacity of local communities to take action for their local landscapes and natural heritage

The Chilterns Conservation Board were awarded a development grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Landscape Partnership Scheme. The development team are working with over 30 local organisations to develop detailed plans for many exciting projects across these 3 aims to have a real impact in the Central Chilterns.

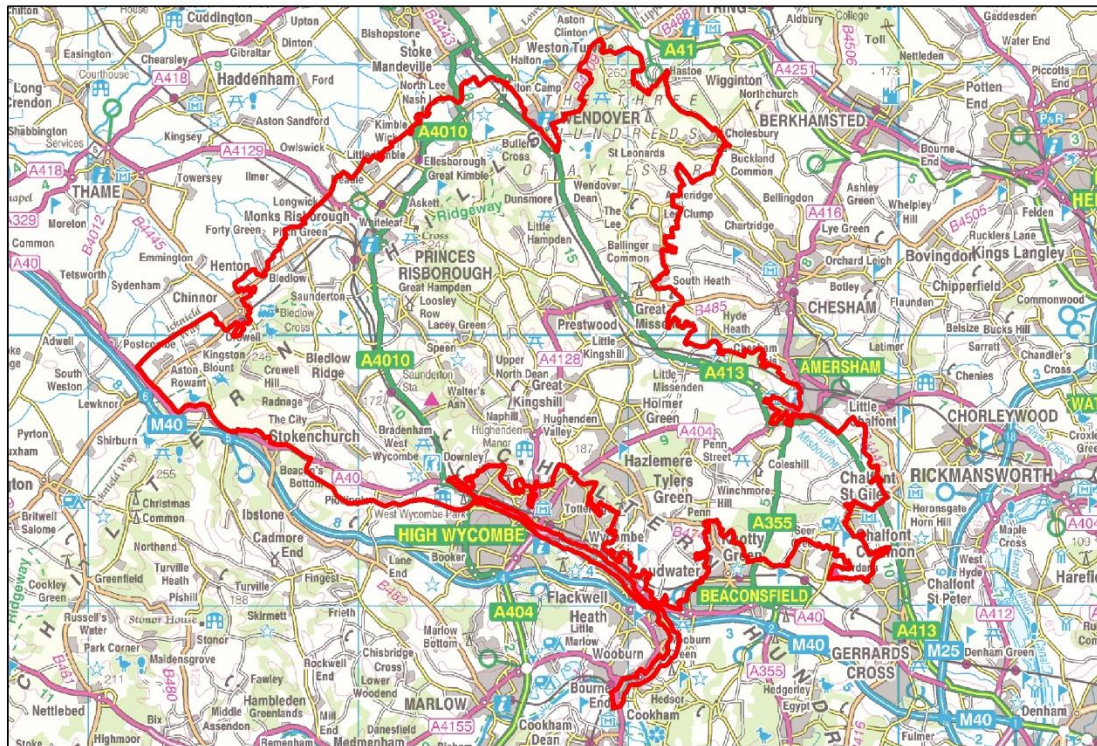
The team will submit the Stage 2 application to HLF in Summer 2018. If successful, the delivery of the 5-year Landscape Scheme will start early in 2019 and bring an investment of £2.8m to the Central Chilterns.

Key to the success of the scheme will be involving local people in getting active in caring for their local countryside; helping local communities become champions for their own local heritage and green spaces.

Landscape conservation discovers, protects and restores historical and cultural connections, it re-builds and strengthens connections between people, place and heritage, to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the social, health and economic benefits this special landscape provides.

A landscape-scale approach to wildlife conservation will leave a legacy of better connected, managed and more resilient wildlife habitats. Land managers and volunteers will have the skills and understanding to care for a changing landscape. A strengthened partnership will ensure the legacy lasts.

## Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Landscape Partnership Scheme Area



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## Theme A WILDLIFE AND LANDSCAPE

Projects within this theme will contribute to achieving the Lawton Review aims of 'more, bigger, better and more joined up' spaces for wildlife. Landscape-scale conservation activity will increase habitat quality and connectivity by linking and buffering existing wildlife habitat and creating wildlife rich corridors and stepping stones. Volunteering will be an integral part of this theme.

### Project A1 Landscape Connections

This project will deliver habitat restoration, creation and enhancement in key geographical areas to achieve greatest biodiversity gain within the Central Chilterns. It will focus on species-rich grassland, arable margins, woods, hedgerows, and wetland habitats.

Work will be carried out on farms & other private landholdings, local wildlife sites, nature reserves and publicly owned land. Landowners and managers will be offered a package of advice and support appropriate to the needs of their land, from a menu including:

- Habitat management planning
- Ways to improve condition and manage landscape features such as hedgerow trees
- Habitat/species surveying
- Capital works
- Volunteer work parties
- Kit and equipment loans
- Grazing solutions
- Bespoke advice for equine landowners
- Initiatives to support pollinators

- Ways to manage the impact of Glis Glis and Deer
- Collaborative approaches to woodland management for small woods owners
- Training opportunities

## **Project A2 Rough Around the Edges**

This project will deliver habitat restoration, creation and enhancement on a smaller scale through engaging, energising and supporting local community groups to own and develop local projects on local sites with the overall aim to strengthen wildlife corridors and 'stepping stones' in the landscape.

The project will:

- Create partnerships for wildlife-friendly golf courses, churchyards and road verges.
- Encourage and support local community groups to create new local wildlife spaces and improve monitoring on existing sites to inform future management.
- Raise awareness of the Rough Around the Edges concept and reward local groups for delivering local projects.

## **Project A3 Water in a Dry Landscape**

This project will focus on key freshwater habitats off the main river courses, by:

- Working with land owners and managers to survey and carry out practical habitat improvement.
- Discovering more about Chiltern escarpment headwaters and how to improve them
- Mapping and restoring ancient ponds
- Installing new ponds
- Looking to reintroduce Water Vole on the River Misbourne above Little Chalfont.

## **Project A4 Chilterns Orchards**

This project will celebrate the cultural heritage of orchards in the Central Chilterns. It will provide a way for local people to form a deeper connection with their local landscape, whilst improving and increasing wildlife habitat. It will involve:

- Mapping old orchard sites and training volunteers to find those still existing
- Provide training and management advice for orchard owners & assisting owners to restore traditional orchard habitat and plant new orchards
- Working with communities to plant new orchards; and to set-up, train and support groups
- Researching the cultural and economic history of cherries in the Chilterns
- Supporting groups to celebrate the cultural heritage of orchards with their communities

## **Project A5 Moving the Earth**

This project will promote greater understanding of the influence of soils, geology and extractive industries on the landscape. It will be a doorstep project to bring to life Chinnor quarry by:

- Working with partners to create and restore wildlife habitat on site and link habitat to nearby Local Wildlife Trust sites
- Tell the story of the extractive industry and its connection to local communities
- Increase walking, information and access by incorporating the Ridgway National Trail into circular routes

## **Project A6 Tracking the Impact**

Targeted wildlife and landscape surveys and recording to support all the natural environment projects. Using key ecological indicators specific to the Chilterns identified during development, this project will track the impact of projects on both a site and landscape scale as well as inform ongoing habitat management.

Tracking the Impact will:

- Agree key ecological indicators to track progress on specific sites and wider landscape impact
- Design site and landscape survey programmes
- Support the expansion of existing national specific survey programmes
- Roll out of new citizen science surveys
- Co-ordinated recruitment and training of new volunteer surveyors

## **Theme B HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE**

The area has a rich industrial heritage - famed for its cherry orchards, its brick and tile making and the world-renowned Wycombe chair making industry. The Scheme will create lots of opportunities for people to investigate these rural industries and to piece together how they have helped to shape the landscapes we know today

Projects will identify, record, conserve and record characteristic landscape elements including ancient woodlands, wood pasture, traditional orchards, hedgerows, boundary features and historic routeways.

Projects will actively engage different generations and cultural groups. The projects will create a beautiful and enduring record to inform and inspire future visitors and land managers.

## **Project B1 Woodlanders Lives and Landscapes**

A discovery of the lives of the rural communities associated with the furniture industry of the central Chilterns. The project will document how these people's lives and work have shaped the landscape we see today by:

- Establishing a research programme carried out by community groups and volunteers with training. The research will capture memories; discover and understand the lives and stories of the families, their traditions, songs, games, food, clothes, churches, education and so on.
- Contributing findings to a web-based resource, including a digital map of stories and sound.
- Developing a range of ways, the wider audience can engage with the findings; eg. exhibition display to tour, digital materials, schools information, events, festivals, and updating walking routes.

## **Project B2 Celebrating Crafts and Heritage Skills**

This project will inspire people about the distinctive natural and cultural heritage of the area by celebrating heritage crafts and skills. It will deliver:

- A programme of events, demonstrations, hands-on experience,
- Workshops and training courses on rural crafts and heritage skills such as wood turning, hedge-laying, scything, basket-making, lace-making and blacksmithing
- Networking and support for local crafts people
- Opportunities for young people to learn new skills and bring traditional crafts up-to-date.

## **Project B3 Cherry Tales**

A spoken-word project using memories of the cherry orchards and central Chilterns dialects, both of which are in danger of dying out, to inspire new works. It will be a cross-generational project to:

- Increase awareness of the legacy of cherry orchards that were once a key feature of the central Chilterns landscape
- Produce new stories and performances inspired by local dialect
- Use the arts to bring lasting stories to a new audience

## **Project B4 Routes to the Past**

This project will investigate, record, interpret and celebrate ancient routeways and their role in shaping the landscape with local communities.

The project will:

- Inspire local people to discover ancient Holloways, their origins, names, use & importance for movement of livestock, people, resources, and wildlife
- Digitize and share the results
- Implement sensitive access enhancements to ancient routeways

## **Project B5 The Mystery of Grimm's Ditch**

Despite previous research, it is still unclear what the Grimm's Ditch earthworks were for, what form they took and how old they are. Was this a permeable boundary or a defensive feature?

This project will raise awareness and understanding and enhance the protection and management of archaeological features such as Grim's ditch. Through community engagement it will:

- Investigate using Lidar & possible excavation.
- Engage local heritage groups in fieldwork
- Use HS2 archaeological investigation for positive information/interpretation
- Work with landowners to improve management and increase access to sections of Grim's ditch
- Disseminate and share results with the wider community through digital interpretation, online resources and site-based displays/walks

## Project B6 People and Mills

A community engagement project to increase awareness, knowledge, involvement and ownership by local people of the river Wye and the social and cultural heritage of its Mills. Particular effort will be made to engage with people who have not traditionally been involved, especially those within neighbouring urban areas of High Wycombe:

- A programme of volunteering and activities across different sectors of the community; such as oral histories, drama, dance & music, practical conservation, art, outdoor cooking & eating, digital & social media.
- Interpretation created through the activities, exploring the natural and cultural heritage.
- A link to shared heritage between Wycombe's milling history with that of Kashmir/Punjab paper milling from 15th century

## Theme PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPE

Projects in this theme will empower local communities to look after their local special places and landscapes by engaging effectively with the planning system, catalysing local volunteering, and caring for local green space.

Projects will promote a stronger sense of place, help people relate to today's landscape and break down barriers preventing people from engaging with the countryside. We will target the more urban, ethnically, and culturally diverse centres of population where there are opportunities to work with community groups to protect and celebrate heritage features.

## Project C1 Planning for the Future

A project to provide communities with the knowledge and tools to look after their local special places. It will deliver:

- Guidance and advice on engaging with the planning system for communities, parish councils and special interest groups
- An interactive guide to understanding the special landscape of The Chilterns AONB
- A Series of workshops presenting the information and how to use the guide.
- Potential for paid or free follow-up visits in the LPS area
- Landowner Guides to complement the interactive guide.

## Project C2 Chilterns Champions

A project to recruit, train, support, recognise and reward volunteers working across the Central Chilterns to care for their natural and historic landscape.

The project will:

- Increase number of volunteers working with partner organisations across the area
- Mentor and support local people (e.g. volunteers, landowners, naturalists) to champion and lead community action to care for, protect and raise awareness of local heritage

## Project C3 Soundscapes - can we 'hear the Chilterns?'

A community engagement project to build a sonic map, recording sounds that define the central Chilterns. It will:

- Provide a platform for people to investigate and celebrate their natural and cultural heritage by considering how their environment currently sounds, might have sounded in the past, or may sound in the future.
- Encourage new audiences to collect sound impressions or develop creative responses to the central Chilterns through the medium of sound or music.

## **Project C4 Chalks, Cherries and Chairs Festival**

An annual fortnight of Chalk, Cherries and Chairs events across the Central Chilterns with a range of partners:

- A programme of events designed to be as inclusive as possible, making heritage accessible to all through a wide range of mediums including music, poetry, walks, talks, storytelling, re-enactments, performances, food & drink, competitions, film and photography
- A show-case for heritage groups and other organisations
- A platform to share information about LPS projects
- A market-place for volunteering opportunities

## **Project C5 Coming Alive**

A digital Interpretation project. Using a wide range of creative techniques to disseminate and deliver the output of other projects, particularly heritage. Local people will be involved in creating the output:

- Geo-located sounds, poems, photos, films
- Digital/web-based interpretation and mapping. Using Lidar information and landscape character mapping

## **Project C6 Schools Settlements**

A project working with local primary schools to teach children about settlement patterns. It will use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.

It will enable children to learn:

- Why people chose to settle in parts of the Chilterns – what were the topographical features that drew them there
- How industrial change has changed settlements
- How human decision making has affected our settlement patterns forever

## **Chalk, Cherries and Chairs Partnership Advisory Group**

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

Buckinghamshire County Council

Bucks & MK Natural Environment  
Partnership

Buckinghamshire and MK Environmental  
Records Centre (BMERC)

Bucks New University

Chiltern Rangers CIC

Chiltern Society

Community Impact Bucks

Independent Landscape Architect

## **Other partner organisations:**

Amersham Museum

Bucks Visual Arts Group

Buglife

Butterfly Conservation

Chilterns Chalk Streams Project

Chiltern District Council

Chiltern Woodlands Project

Forestry Commission

Mid Shires Orchard Group

National Farmers Union

National Trust

Natural England

Oxfordshire County Council

Plantlife

River Thames Conservation Trust

Ridgeway Partnership

Thames Valley Records Centre

University of Reading

Woodland Trust

Wycombe District Council

Wycombe Museum

## **Contacts**

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