

## Quarrendon Leas and the Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust

The Buckinghamshire Conservation Trust (BCT) was created in 2008 by the then Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) specifically to manage Quarrendon Leas and similar such sites.

The Quarrendon Leas site comprises a scheduled ancient monument and its surrounding agricultural landscape on the northern outskirts of Aylesbury (centred at GR 4801 2159), which is now encompassed within new urban extensions to the town.

BCC secured the 83 hectare (205 acres) greenfield site with a view to transferring it to what was then a new charitable company the BCT to manage as agricultural land and public open space.

The Quarrendon Leas site lies between the Berryfields and Weedon Hill MDAs its boundaries being defined on the west by the Berryfields MDA, the east by Weedon Hill MDA, south by the River Thames and north by the Western Link Road (WLR).

The site is occupied by the Quarrendon scheduled ancient monument (SAM), associated meadows and water courses and other agricultural land. Its defining special interest is one of Buckinghamshire's finest ancient monuments, the remains of a medieval village, church and Tudor garden and its landscape setting.

Quarrendon Leas is ideally placed to meet a deficit in "green infrastructure" identified in various documents produced by the then Aylesbury Vale Advantage Schedule of Infrastructure, AVDC and in the Buckinghamshire Green Infrastructure Strategy 2008 and its various updates.

The BCT was deemed to be the favoured vehicle specifically created to manage this most important asset and to protect it for future generations whilst integrating it with the new and existing communities of Aylesbury and beyond.

Sadly due to the financial crash of 2007/08 and its devastating effects on the construction industry the site was not acquired by the Trust until 2015.

Whilst only being in Trusts ownership for six years the Trust has made remarkable progress in landscape recovery and the restoration of the historic and natural environment after years of dereliction.

Quarrendon Leas offers a unique opportunity to link the local community of today with its history and day to day conservation of the historic and Natural environment of the site. A physical link to the past, (hands on experience), is so much more powerful than a book or painting. The Trust also provides a means of engaging the local schools in the development of the interpretation of the site.

A better understanding of this resource within in the local community will foster better custodianship in the future, as more people have access to this new greenspace. By increasing awareness of the site we aim to engage the community in their heritage and its protection.

The Trust with its strong associations with Buckinghamshire Council, continues to work with them and is grateful for their on-going support and advice, indeed it is engaged in the Aylesbury Garden Town initiative and the Greenway, part of which will pass through Quarrendon Leas, to which we actively working with officers from BC's Strategic Transport team and Greenways and Cyclerroutes Limited.

The Trust is well versed and experienced in land management both historic and natural and is actively looking to develop it's portfolio and close associations with communities by the further acquisition of green spaces and indeed has been in discussion with the consortium developing Kingsbrook.

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